

THE DUBUQUE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

at the Carnegie Stout Library, Dubuque, IA

Winter/Spring 2024

THE MAKING OF A PLAYWRIGHT

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Synopsis: The titular two gentlemen start out as friends, but inconstancy in love leads to strife. The play features the first instance of cross-dressing, much used and abused in Shakespeare's later comedies. The cast is small, comic plots abound, but the dog Crab steals the show along with its master Launce.

Discussion Topics:

- Friendship and love are the dominant themes with women intruding on male brotherhood. The climactic scene is ambiguous in how the two intertwine, especially the problematic line "All that was mine in Silvia I give thee". What interpretations does this line and scene offer?
- One of the dominant themes of Shakespearean comedies is the inconstancy of young men in love. How does that inform how this early play is viewed? What other Shakespearean themes and motifs can we see in this play?
- Language itself is a theme in this play with nobles and servants using verse and prose respectively. How does Shakespeare use language to delineate the differences between the two and puncture the pompousness of the nobles?

A short presentation on Shakespearean comedy will precede the discussion.

Folger Text Link: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-two-gentlemen-of-verona/>

CS Library also has paper copies of the play.

Kanopy Film link: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/dubuque/video/5332702>

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Carnegie-Stout Public Library 360 W 11th Street, Dubuque, IA