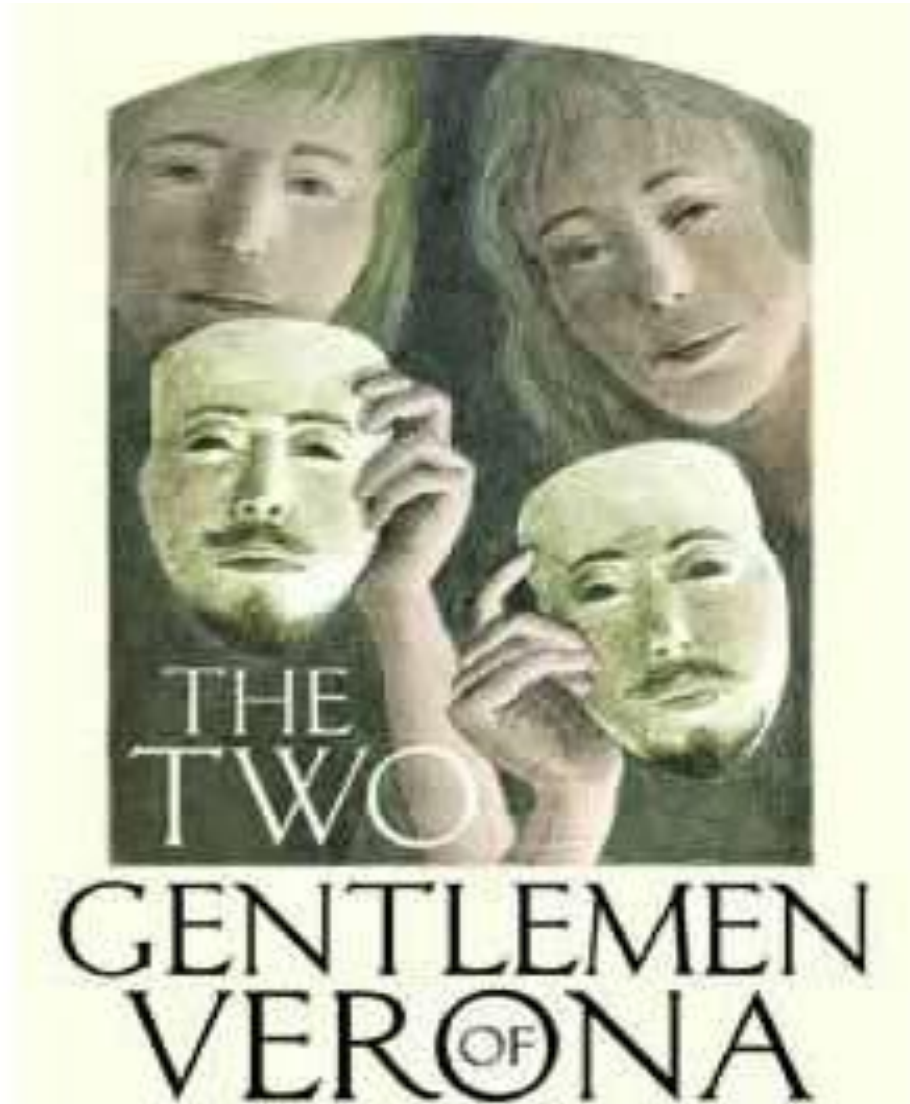


The Two Gentlemen of Verona



It is believed to have been written between 1589 and 1593.



It is the first of his plays in which a heroine dresses as a boy.

It deals with the themes of friendship and infidelity, the conflict between friendship and love, and the foolish behaviour of people in love.

King John



King John, a history play by William Shakespeare, dramatises the reign of John, King of England.



I

The life and death of King Iohn.

Actus Primus, Scena Prima.

Enter King Iohn, Queen Eleanor, Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury, with the Chartreux of France.

King Iohn.
Now say Chartreux, what would France wish vs?
Chartreux. Thus (after greeting) speaks the King of France,
 In my behaviour to the Majesty,
 The borrowed Majesty of England here,
Eleanor. A strange beginning; borrowed Majesty?
King Iohn. Silence (good mother) heare the Embassie.
Chartreux. Philip of France, in right and true behalfe
 Of thy deccid brother, Geffreyes sonne,
Arthur Plantagenet, laies most lawful claime
 To this faire land, and the Territories
 To Ireland, Poytiers, Anjoue, Torgne, Maine,
 Desiring thee to lay aside the sword
 Which swaies usurping these severall titles,
 And put the same into young *Arthurs* hand,
 Thy Nephew, and right royall Soueraigne.
King Iohn. What followes if we fallow of this?
Chartreux. The proud controle of force and bloody warre,
 To enforce these rights, is forcibly withheld,
King Iohn. Heere have we war for war, & blood for blood,
 Contrelement for contrelement, for answer France.
Chartreux. Then take my Embassie
 The farthest limit of my Embassie
King Iohn. Beare mine to him, and so depart in peace,
 Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;
 For ere thou canst report, I will be there;
 The thunder of my Cannon shall be heard,
 So hence: be thou the trumpet of our wrath,
 And silent preface of our owne decay;
 An honourable conduct let him have,
Pembroke looke too't: farewell *Chartreux.*
Exit Chartreux and Pembroke.

Eleanor. What now my sonne, haue I not euer said:
 How that ambitious *Constance* would not cease,
 Till she had kindled France and all the world,
 Vpon the right and party of her sonne,
 This might haue bene prevented, and made whole,
 With very easie arguments of loue,
 Which now the maninge of two kingdomes must
 With fearefull bloody issue arbitrate.
King Iohn. Our strong possession, and our right for vs.
Eleanor. Your strong possession much more then your right,
 Or else it must go wrong with you and me,
 So much my conscience whispers in your eare,
 Which none but heauen, and you, and I, shall heare.

Enter a Sheriff.
Essex. My Liege, here is the strangest controuerfie
 Come from the Country to be iudg'd by you:
 That ere I heare: shall I produce the men?
King Iohn. Let them approach:
 Our Abbies and our Pories shall pay
 This expeditious charge: what men are you?
Enter Robert Faulconbridge, and his helpe.
Philip. Your faithfull subiect, & a gentleman,
 Borne in *Northamptonshire*, and eldest sonne
 As I suppose, to *Robert Faulconbridge*,
 A Souldier by the Honour-giving hand
 Of *Cordelion*, Knighted in the field.
King Iohn. What art thou?
Robert. The son and heire to that same *Faulconbridge*.
King Iohn. Is that the elder, and art thou the heyre?
 You came none of one mother, then it seemes.
Philip. Most certain of one mother, mighty King,
 That is well knowie, and as I thinke one father:
 But for the certaine knowledge of that truth,
 I put you 're to heauen, and to my mother,
 Of that I doubt, as all mens children may.
Eleanor. Out on thee rude man; dost thou shame thy mother,
 And wound her honor with this difidence?
Philip. I Madame? No; I haue no reason for it,
 That is my brothers plea, and none of mine,
 This which he can proue, a pops me out:
 At least from faire five hundred pound a yere:
 Heauen guard my mothers honor, and my Land.
King Iohn. A good blunt fellow; why being yonger born
 Dost he lay claime to thine inheritance?
Philip. I know not why, except he get the Land:
 But once he slandered me with bastardy:
 But where I be as true begot or no,
 That still I lay vpon my mothers head,
 But that I am as well begot my Liege,
 (Faie fall the bones that tooke the paines for me)
 Compare our faces, and be Iudge your selfe:
 If old Sir *Robert* did beget vs both,
 And were our father, and this sonne like him:
 Oould sic *Robert* Father, on my knee
 I giue heauen thanks I was not like to thee.
King Iohn. Why what a mad-cap hath heuen lent vs here?
Eleanor. He hath a tricke of *Cordelions* face,
 The accent of his tongue affecteth him:
 Dost you not read some tokens of my sonne
 In the large composition of this man?

King Iohn.

The Two Noble Kinsmen



It is a tragicomedy, first published in 1634.

