

# As You Like It



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's father was a glove-maker, and Shakespeare received no more than a grammar school education. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582, but left his family behind around 1590 and moved to London, where he became an actor and playwright. He was an immediate success: Shakespeare soon became the most popular playwright of the day as well as a part-owner of the Globe Theater. His theater troupe was adopted by King James as the King's Men in 1603. Shakespeare retired as a rich and prominent man to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613, and died three years later.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*As You Like It* was written near the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign over England. Elizabethan England was a highly patriarchal society in which women had very few rights and marriages were arranged. To marry someone out of love was considered foolish and the court in general dictated strict rules for the conduct of English royalty and citizens. In this light, *As You Like It* may be thought of as a wishful exploration of another, freer world, in which people coexist with nature, fall in love, and marry each other of their own volition.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The settings and themes of *As You Like It* situate the play within the genre of pastoralism. Pastoralist works, which were inspired by ancient Greek literature and Virgil's *Eclogues*, generally take place in the countryside and feature a transition from a more complex lifestyle to a simpler one. The genre of pastoralist drama had become popular on the Italian and English stages around the mid-to-late 16th century, when Shakespeare was writing. One of the primary sources for *As You Like It* was the 1590 prose romance, *Rosalynde, Euphues' Golden Legacie*, by Thomas Lodge, which provided all of the characters for Shakespeare's play except Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey. Shakespeare's addition of Touchstone, it is thought, serves to exaggeratedly embody the excessive style of the source from which Shakespeare borrowed, and along with much of the humor in the plot indicates that while Shakespeare is certainly working within the conventions of pastorals he is also playing with and making fun of those traditions.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *As You Like It*

- **When Written:** 1598-1600
- **Where Written:** Stratford, England
- **When Published:** 1623, First Folio
- **Literary Period:** The Renaissance (1500-1600)
- **Genre:** Comedy
- **Setting:** French Court and the Forest of Arden
- **Climax:** Rosalind, dressed as Ganymede, sets the terms for the marriages of all the characters that surround her, assuring Orlando that she will use her magic to bring Rosalind to him, promising Phebe that "he" will marry her if "he" ever marries a woman, and making Phebe promise that she will otherwise marry Silvius

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Shakespeare or Not?** There are some who believe Shakespeare wasn't educated enough to write the plays attributed to him. The most common anti-Shakespeare theory is that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays and used Shakespeare as a front man because aristocrats were not supposed to write plays. Yet the evidence supporting Shakespeare's authorship far outweighs any evidence against. So until further notice, Shakespeare is still the most influential writer in the English language.



## PLOT SUMMARY

The play begins with Orlando complaining to Adam that his brother, Oliver, has unjustly withheld his inheritance from him. Oliver enters, and Orlando expresses his discontentment. Before telling Orlando to leave, Oliver hastily assures Orlando that he will receive some of his will. With Orlando gone, Oliver receives Charles, the duke's wrestler, who informs him that the new duke, Duke Frederick, has banished his older brother, Duke Senior. He reports furthermore that Rosalind, the banished duke's daughter, has remained in court with Celia, and that the old duke has retreated to the Forest of Arden. The wrestler also tells Oliver that he is scheduled for a match with Orlando the next day; he advises Oliver to stop Orlando from fighting in order to protect his life. Oliver deceitfully tells Charles that he has already tried to dissuade Orlando and that Orlando is, in any case, a "villainous contriver," leaving Charles determined to win the match the following day. Oliver remains alone and articulates, in a passionate soliloquy, his irrational hatred for his brother.

Celia tries to console Rosalind about the banishment of her father, and to convince her to think of *her* father, Duke Frederick, as Rosalind's own. They are interrupted by

Touchstone, the court fool. Monsieur Le Beau enters and informs Celia, Rosalind, and Touchstone that there will soon be a wrestling match, between a young man and an undefeated wrestler who has recently won matches against a set of three brothers. Rosalind and Celia beg the young opponent, Orlando, to withdraw from the fight, but to no avail. Orlando wins, to the astonishment of all spectators.

Celia and Rosalind are discussing Rosalind's newfound adoration for Orlando when Duke Frederick interrupts and orders Rosalind to leave the court, at threat of death. Upon Frederick's exit, Celia promises that she will leave with Rosalind; they plot to go, with Touchstone and in disguise, Rosalind dressed as a man and Celia as a shepherdess, to find Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden.

Meanwhile in the forest, Duke Senior is optimistically relishing in his natural surroundings, and planning to hunt some venison. Back at the court, Duke Frederick discovers that Celia has gone missing with Rosalind, and orders his lords to go retrieve Oliver, who might know where Orlando (who's suspected to be with the girls) is. At Orlando's own residence, Adam warns Orlando that Oliver is inside and intends to burn down the house; he convinces Orlando to seek exile, and offers him his own money and company.

On their way into the forest, Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone meet Silvius and Corin, a young man and an old man engaged in a dispute about love. When Rosalind and Celia discover that Corin has no food to give them, they decide, on a whim, to buy the cottage, pasture, and flock that he mentions are for sale.

Jaques returns after a long absence to Duke Senior and describes a fool he met in the forest. Orlando rudely interrupts their conversation and, requiring food and thinking that he must act savagely in the savage forest, demands that they give it to him. He is met with a warm invitation by Duke Senior to join their meal, and briefly departs to retrieve Adam, who is weak and hungry, so that he, too, may join.

At the court, Duke Frederick orders Oliver to bring Orlando to court within the year. In the forest, Orlando begins posting [love poems](#) to Rosalind on trees. Privately, Celia reveals to Rosalind that she knows Orlando to be the infatuated poet. Soon after, Orlando enters and Rosalind (in disguise as a man named Ganymede) mentions the tree poems to him. When he admits to being their author, she offers to cure him of his love: she will pretend to be Rosalind and act as a despicable version of her.

Touchstone and Audrey, Touchstone's fiancée, are conversing about Audrey's non-poetical nature when Sir Oliver Martext arrives to perform their wedding service. At Jaques's suggestion, however, Touchstone decides to have a proper marriage in a church, and so dismisses Martext.

Corin invites Rosalind and Celia to come witness an exchange between Silvius and his lover, Phebe, in which Silvius pleads with Phebe not to scorn him and calls her cold. When Rosalind,

dressed as **Ganymede**, intervenes and attacks Phebe with a slew of insults, Phebe falls immediately in love with "him."

Orlando comes late to meet Rosalind (as Ganymede), and she scolds him for his tardiness. After Rosalind (as Ganymede) gives Orlando a lesson in love, he departs. Soon after, Silvius arrives with a love letter that Phebe has written for Ganymede. Oliver enters shortly after and gives Rosalind a bloody napkin, sent to her from Orlando, who recently fought off a lioness in order to save Oliver's life. Rosalind faints.

Oliver reveals to Orlando that he has fallen in love at first sight with Celia (who he thinks is the shepherdess, as that is her disguise). Rosalind enters and tells Orlando that she is skilled in the art of magic and can promise him that, if he truly loves Rosalind, he will be married to her the next day. She articulates all of the unions that will happen the next day: Orlando, Silvius, and herself will all be married; Orlando will marry Rosalind, Ganymede will marry Phebe if he ever marries a woman, and if he doesn't then Phebe will marry Silvius.

The next day, Touchstone recounts to Duke Senior a humorous report of a quarrel he has just had with a courtier. Then Hymen, the god of marriage, enters singing, and escorts Rosalind to Orlando and her father. Rosalind's disguise as Ganymede is revealed, and she marries Orlando, while Phebe agrees to marry Silvius. Just then, Jaques de Boys (Orlando and Oliver's third brother) enters to inform everyone that Duke Frederick, while on his way to attack Duke Senior in the forest, came across a religious man and was converted to a life of peace. Duke Frederick has also decided to return his crown to his banished brother and restore all of his lands. Duke Senior welcomes Jaques de Boys, and praises the fortune of the occasion; he suggests that they continue on in their revelry and marriages. Jaques, meanwhile, announces that he will go join Duke Frederick in his new monastic lifestyle.

The play finishes with an epilogue, spoken uncharacteristically by a woman, in which Rosalind expresses her aim to "conjure" the audience.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Orlando** – The youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, Orlando is, in many respects, the hero of the play. Though cheated of his inheritance by his older brother, Oliver, and therefore uneducated and disadvantaged, he succeeds in the beginning of the play at winning both a wrestling match and Rosalind's affection. Passionate and loving, he cares deeply for his servant, Adam, and composes countless (bad, though passionate) poems about his beloved Rosalind. He is educated on the subject of love by Rosalind (who is in disguise and whom he thinks is a man) throughout the play, and at the end, he proves his moral strength when he courageously fights a lioness to save his the

life of his previously cruel brother.

**Duke Senior** – Duke Senior is Rosalind’s father and the rightful duke of the land. Before the action of the play, his brother, Duke Frederick, banished him from the land, forcing him to seek exile in the Forest of Arden. He lives there with faithful lords and attendants and generally keeps a positive outlook, embracing his circumstances, however unfortunate. His kindness toward Orlando and Adam demonstrates his generosity. The goodness of his character is rewarded in the end of the play by his daughter’s return and Duke Frederick’s renewal of his rule.

**Duke Frederick** – Duke Frederick is the brother of Duke Senior and the usurper of his throne. While he initially allows Rosalind, Duke Senior’s daughter, to remain in the company of his own daughter, Celia, he then forces her, too, to leave court, on a seeming whim. Then, when he finds that Celia is missing and might be with Orlando, he forces Oliver to bring Orlando back to court, at the threat of death. Frederick is a forceful ruler, who often seems to assert his power just because he can. In the end, however, he undergoes a spiritual transformation after meeting a religious man on the road, and gives the dukedom back to Duke Senior, its deserving holder.

**Oliver** – The oldest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, Oliver harbors an irrational hatred for his brother, Orlando. He deprives him of his inheritance and education and plots to burn his house down. When ordered by Duke Frederick to find his brother, Oliver ventures into the Forest of Arden, where Orlando saves his life by fighting off a lioness, thereby inspiring in him a change of character. He becomes more loving and less spiteful, improvements that are demonstrated by his instant and profound love for Celia (when she is dressed as Aliena) despite her uncivil shepherdess’s exterior. He and Celia are eventually married.

**Rosalind** – Duke Senior’s daughter, Rosalind is the voice of reason and wisdom, and the heroine of the play. When Duke Frederick finally forces her to abandon the court as he did her father, she and Celia go looking for Duke Senior, Rosalind dressed as **Ganymede**. Rosalind is clever and cunning, and in the end of the play, she acts as a prudent judge of love, articulating the characters’ romantic associations, and arranging them in sensible marriages, including the joining of herself and Orlando. She is not altogether above becoming passionate and a bit ridiculous regarding her love for Orlando, however.

**Celia** – The daughter of Duke Frederick, Celia cares inordinately for her cousin, Rosalind, and consistently proves her selfless generosity. After insisting that her father allow Rosalind to stay in court with her, she promises that Rosalind can inherit her father’s throne when Duke Frederick dies. Celia then risks her own safety and family loyalty by accompanying Rosalind into the Forest of Arden after Rosalind is banished. Her capacity for romantic love, too, is proven at the end, by her

engagement with Oliver.

**Jaques** – A faithful lord to Duke Senior, Jaques has an exaggeratedly melancholy disposition and is a devoted though cynical observer of the world that surrounds him. His meeting with Touchstone inspires him to become a fool, so that he may make use of his critical eye. However, Jaques’s extreme melancholy often seems to indicate a degree of foolishness rather than the counterintuitive wisdom of the true fool. In the end of the play, his consistently external, observing position is further confirmed by his decision to join Duke Frederick in a monastery.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Amiens** – One of the lords that joins Duke Senior in the forest, Amiens is jovial and often singing.

**Jaques de Boys** – The middle brother of Sir Rowland de Boys, Jaques enters at the end of the play to inform the crowd of Duke Frederick’s religious transformation.

**Sir Rowland de Boys** – The father of Jaques, Oliver, and Orlando, Sir Rowland de Boys died before the action of the play. The division of his inheritance characterizes his sons’ relationship and competitiveness toward one another.

**Le Beau** – One of Duke Frederick’s courtiers, Monsieur Le Beau informs Celia and Rosalind of the coming wrestling match between Orlando and Charles, and, later, Orlando of the identity of Duke Senior’s daughter, Rosalind.

**Charles** – A court wrestler, Charles tries to convince Oliver to prevent Orlando from fighting with him, because he considers himself very likely to win and perhaps harm Orlando. Ultimately, however, he loses the match (and his reputation).

**Adam** – The loyal servant to Orlando and, before him, Sir Rowland de Boys, Adam warns Orlando of his brother’s murderous plans, and accompanies him in his exile to the Forest of Arden.

**Touchstone** – The court fool, Touchstone accompanies Celia and Rosalind, at their request, into the Forest of Arden. He is witty, silly, and bawdy, but his fooling is seldom foolish. At the end of the play, he marries Audrey.

**Dennis** – Oliver’s servant.

**Sir Oliver Martext** – A country curate who arrives to marry Touchstone and Audrey, when Touchstone decides that they will be married in a church instead.

**Silvius** – A shepherd who adores Phebe with slavish devotion, even though his love is not reciprocated. He is a ridiculous model of the traditional pastoral tradition of the male lover scorned by his beloved.

**Corin** – A fellow shepherd and friend of Silvius, Corin tries, to no avail, to counsel Silvius on the subject of love, and helps Rosalind and Celia purchase the sheep flock and cottage.

**Phebe** – A dull shepherdess, Phebe rejects Silvius’s love, and instead falls in love at first sight with **Ganymede**. When Ganymede becomes Rosalind again, however, she contentedly marries Silvius. Just as Silvius is a ridiculous example of a scorned lover, Phebe is a parody of a scornful beloved.

**William** – A young boy of the country who loves Audrey, but cannot compete with Touchstone’s more wicked and complex wit.

**Hymen** – God of marriage, Hymen reunites Rosalind with her father and lover, and sings songs of love at the collective wedding.

**Audrey** – Touchstone’s beautiful but not very poetic or intelligent bride.

**Lords** – The First and Second lord keep Duke Senior company in exile in the Forest of Arden.

**Hisperia** – Celia’s gentlewoman.

them. These instances of disguise and deception, along with serving as important plot points and providing great comic potential, thus represent the playacting and deception performed by every character in the play and, moreover, by every person in his or her life. They illustrate and exaggerate the extent to which “All the world’s a stage/ And every man and woman merely players.”



## ROMANTIC LOVE

*As You Like It* mocks traditional dramatizations of love, inspiring folly, servitude, and sorrow in its victims. Orlando’s bad, omnipresent poetry; Silvius’s slavish commitment to Phebe, a plain and unloving shepherdess; and Rosalind’s, Oliver’s, and Phebe’s speechless and instantaneous infatuations (they all fall in love at first sight) are all exaggerated instances of the dramatized representations of love that the play is mocking. At the end of the play, Rosalind serves as a fair judge of love, assessing the relationships of each character in the play and rationally determining who shall marry whom. The final scene is a grand wedding, with vows said between four couples (Rosalind and Orlando; Celia and Oliver; Touchstone and Aubrey; and Silvius and Phebe). The play thus concludes by celebrating a more reasonable, sustainable form of love, demonstrated in four instances of its most potent and permanent manifestation.



## COUNTRY VS. CITY

All the characters, at some point in the play, leave the royal court for the Forest of Arden. This mass exodus results from various characters being forced into exile (Duke Senior, Orlando, Rosalind), and then various others voluntarily joining them (the Lords, Adam, Celia). The forest thus serves as the theater of the play. A space in which time and conduct are relaxed, it is a setting that allows for things to happen and people to act in ways that they wouldn’t within the bounds of mannered city life: royalty and shepherds comingle (Rosalind and Celia interact with Silvius, Phebe, and Corin; Touchstone marries Audrey), the former pose as the latter (Rosalind and Celia dress themselves as people of the forest), and Cupid’s presence is potent (romance is sparked, vows are said). To welcome the weddings at the end of the play, Duke Senior declares, “in this forest let us do those ends / That where were well begun and well begot.”



## LOVE AND RIVALRY BETWEEN RELATIVES

The play is structured around two pairs of siblings and one pair of cousins—Orlando and Oliver, Duke Senior and Duke Frederick, Celia and Rosalind. Each pair has a different dynamic, defined by varying degrees of familial love and desire for power. Whereas the relationships between



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don’t have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



## DECEPTION, DISGUISE, AND GENDER

*As You Like It* is structured around acts of deception that complicate the play’s narrative and allow for events to unfold that otherwise might not. The primary tricksters of the play are Rosalind and Celia, who disguise themselves in order to go undetected into the Forest of Arden. Rosalind dresses as a man and goes by the name “**Ganymede**”; Celia pretends to be a shepherdess and calls herself “Aliena.” By constructing false appearances and presenting themselves dishonestly, Rosalind and Celia incidentally inspire their lovers to act more truly and honestly toward them. When Rosalind is dressed as Ganymede, Orlando reveals to her how deeply he loves Rosalind, without knowing that he is addressing her. Rosalind’s disguise thus permits Orlando to speak more openly and perhaps less intentionally than he might if he knew the true identity of his conversation partner. Celia’s attire does not alter her seeming identity as radically as Rosalind’s, but it, too, changes her lover’s initial conduct around her, by making her seem to be not of courtly upbringing. Whereas Rosalind’s disguise provokes honest speech from her lover, Celia’s tests the honesty of her lover’s love: the fact that Oliver falls in love with her despite her shepherdess’s exterior indicates how genuine his love is. When Rosalind and Celia act out roles, they alter not only the way they act, but also the way that other people act toward

Oliver and Orlando and between the two dukes are characterized by competition, envy, and power mongering, Celia and Rosalind maintain a relationship characterized by love and inseparability.

By the end of the play, however, love and mutual understanding become defining features of all of these close family ties, even for the spiteful male siblings: Orlando looks past Oliver's prior evil and saves his brother from a potentially fatal attack; returning his brother's generosity, Oliver revokes his previous intent to kill Orlando and treats him as a true brother. Oliver and Orlando are then further united by their simultaneous marriage to the inseparable cousins, Rosalind and Celia. Even the malignant relationship between the dukes is resolved, as Duke Frederick, en route to fight his brother, encounters a religious man and is suddenly inspired to devote his life to a monastic existence. To fulfill his purpose and undo his past evil, he restores power to Duke Senior. In all of these relationships, conflict arises out of competition, jealousy, and a desire for unchallenged power. In all, these forces are shown to be ultimately less powerful than the force of love (for family, for God).



### FOOLS AND FOOLISHNESS

There is a distinction developed throughout *As You Like It* between those who are fools and those who are foolish. Touchstone is the exemplary fool: he is witty and "poetical," and his comments, though cloaked in clownish language, are wise and apt. He is, moreover, self-conscious about his own identity as a fool, and philosophizes on the very characterization, commenting "the more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly," and "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool." In the former, he reflects on the fool's lack of authority; in the latter, he suggests that those who call themselves fools may well be wiser than those who call themselves wise. In both, he reveals himself to be more wise than foolish. Jaques, on the other hand, is an exemplar of foolishness. He is foolish enough to aspire to become a fool (and, moreover, is unsuccessful) and he does not have Touchstone's wisdom or quickness of expression. While Touchstone is embraced by the court and admired by the Duke, Jaques is out of place throughout the play, and ultimately retreats with Duke Frederick into a monastic existence.

There is also a sense in which foolishness is universal, especially in matters of romance: Orlando looks foolish when he is wildly posting his poems, and Rosalind and Oliver, too, when they fall instantaneously in love. Foolishness in these cases is simply the manifestation of an irrational state of extreme emotion.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### HORNS

A popular symbol for cuckoldry, supposedly grown on the heads of men whose wives have cheated on them, horns come up in conversation at various points in the play. Jaques, for instances, proposes that the lords put the horns of a deer they have slaughtered on the duke's head, like "a branch of victory" and Touchstone later asserts that the only audience he will have for his wedding with Audrey will consist of "horn beasts," and that "by so much is a horn more precious than to want." In both instances, the symbolic mention of horns does not refer to an actual cuckold or cheating wife, but rather to cuckoldry in theory, and both come down positively on the hypothetical cuckold, though with a good deal of irony. Jaques posits horns as a source of victorious pride, and Touchstone suggests that it is preferable to be a cheated-on husband than a respected bachelor, better to be married and slighted than alone and unharmed.



### GANYMEDE

Ganymede, whose name Rosalind takes on as part of her disguise, was a divine Trojan hero, described in *The Iliad* by Homer as the most beautiful mortal in history. In one myth, Zeus abducts Ganymede in an act that has since been recognized as an act of sodomy. The name's mythical association with homosexuality further complicates Rosalind's gender identity.



### ORLANDO'S POEMS

Orlando expresses his love for Rosalind in the form of poems placed all about the forest. They allow him to speak his emotions without addressing Rosalind in person. The ubiquity of their placement around the forest and the sentimentality of their language attest to how great Orlando's feelings are; their poor quality indicates how much he needs the romantic education he ultimately receives from Rosalind in the guise of Ganymede.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Simon & Schuster edition of *As You Like It* published in 2009.

## Act 1, Scene 1 Quotes

☝☝ My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentlemanlike qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it.

**Related Characters:** Orlando (speaker), Oliver

**Related Themes:** 


**Page Number:** 1.1.65-70

### Explanation and Analysis

*As You Like It* begins with a conflict between Orlando and his brother Oliver. After the death of their father, Oliver was tasked with taking care of his younger brothers Orlando and Jaques. Here, Orlando laments on how poorly his brother has treated him. This moment introduces readers to the theme of rivalry between relatives. Oliver has done a great disservice to Orlando and their father by keeping his brother uneducated and "ungentlemanly"—by doing so he leaves Orlando in a unique and subordinate position. He is still a member of the court, but was not taught how to behave like a nobleman, and thus is likely to be scorned and looked down upon. This internal struggle within Orlando will come to play out throughout *As You Like It*.

☝☝ I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle, never schooled and yet learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved.

**Related Characters:** Oliver (speaker), Orlando

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 1.1.161-165

### Explanation and Analysis


Charles, a wrestler and friend of Oliver's, enters and tells Oliver that his brother Orlando plans to disguise himself and fight against Charles in a wrestling match. Charles warns Oliver that he will likely hurt or embarrass Orlando if he is allowed in the wrestling ring. Oliver lies and tells Charles that he has already warned Orlando. He then calls his brother a villain and encourages Charles to break his neck as if it were a "finger." He also warns Charles that if he doesn't beat Orlando he must never wrestle for money again. In all this we see the extent of Oliver's cruelty and

irrational hatred toward his brother. He even acknowledges that Orlando is a good and admirable man, but Oliver still can't seem to help hating him—and he accepts this hatred and acts upon it. This moment also sets up the wrestling match as an important plot point in the play; the physical conflict begins here as well as Orlando's relationship with Rosalind.

## Act 1, Scene 2 Quotes

☝☝ The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.

**Related Characters:** Touchstone (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 



**Page Number:** 1.2.85-86

### Explanation and Analysis

Touchstone, a fool, interrupts Rosalind and Celia's conversation and tells Celia that her father (Duke Frederick) is looking for her. He pokes fun at Duke Frederick, frustrating Celia. She tells him that if he keeps going he will be whipped. He responds with this line, suggesting that while fools may behave foolishly, *what* they say is often true. Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *As You Like It* uses the character of the fool (in this case Touchstone) as a source of unadulterated, objective truth. While comedic, he will turn out to be one of the wisest characters in the play. And, often times, the non-fools, like Rosalind and Celia, make the most "foolish" and rash choices of the play. The irony is that the fool is the most perceptive character and source of crucial information for the audience, as the other characters are too deeply enmeshed in the conflicts of the story.

☝☝ What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.

**Related Characters:** Orlando (speaker), Rosalind

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 1.2.258-259

### Explanation and Analysis


After winning the wrestling match, Orlando admits his true identity to Rosalind and Celia. Rosalind tells him that if she

knew who he was she would have stopped him from fighting, and she then gives him a chain as a congratulatory gift and symbol of her respect for his father and his victory. Orlando is immediately smitten. He says this line after Rosalind and Celia exit. Orlando, who earlier stood up to his brother with keen articulation is, for the first time, at a loss for words. This is the first time of many where his love for Rosalind will make him speak foolishly.

## Act 1, Scene 3 Quotes

☝☝ Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

**Related Characters:** Celia (speaker), Rosalind

**Related Themes:**  



**Page Number:** 1.3.21

### Explanation and Analysis

In a moment alone, Rosalind tells Celia that she is now overwhelmed with fear for both her father and her "Child's father", suggesting that she has two men on her mind: her banished father Duke Senior, and Orlando. Here, Celia tries to comfort Rosalind, telling her to control her emotions. The use of "wrestle" is playful, as Celia is referring to both Rosalind's internal struggle as well as the flirtation that transpired between Rosalind and Orlando after Orlando's wrestling match. Just as Orlando physically wrestled with Charles, so Rosalind must now wrestle with her own feelings for him. Even though they are cousins, Celia is a constant source of support and sisterly love for Rosalind. This is a tender moment leading up to the conflict that will occur between Rosalind and Celia's father.

☝☝ Let's away and get our jewels and our wealth together, devise the fittest time and safest way to hide us from pursuit that will be made after my flight. Now we go in content to liberty, and not to banishment.

**Related Characters:** Celia (speaker), Rosalind

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 1.3.140-145

### Explanation and Analysis

The Duke storms in and interrupts Celia and Rosalind's conversation, telling Rosalind that she is officially banished

from the court. The two cousins are inseparable, however, and Celia refuses to remain in the court without Rosalind. They decide that they will flee to the forest of Arden, Rosalind disguised as a man and Celia disguised as a shepherd girl. Here, Celia tells Rosalind that they will not let themselves be "banished," but rather are leaving the city willfully in pursuit of freedom. Celia's loyalty to Rosalind supersedes her love and loyalty to her father and her inheritance. She would rather live a poor, happy life in the forest than a lavish life alone in court. Like in many Shakespeare plays, the city here becomes a symbol of oppressive social structures and edicts and the forrest and nature is a place of freedom and fluidity.

## Act 2, Scene 1 Quotes

☝☝ Are not these woods more free from peril than the envious court? Here feel we not the penalty of Adam.

**Related Characters:** Duke Senior (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 



**Page Number:** 2.2.3-5

### Explanation and Analysis

Duke Senior, Rosalind's banished father, enters in the Forest of Arden with his lords. Here, he explains to his lords that their life in the forest is not only more enjoyable but safer than their former lives in the court. For the Duke, the court represents a place of "painted pomp"; an artificial and oppressive place filled with the danger of betrayal and intrigue. The forest, however, is a place of freedom—and even of spiritual innocence, as the Duke suggests with his invocation of "the penalty of Adam" (that is, the original sin that is supposed to plague all humanity because of Adam and Eve's disobedience). This moment is also an indicator of the type of person Duke Senior is. He has been banished, yet he is making the most of his banishment (just as Celia did earlier): he is a strong willed optimist. As the play continues we will see nature becoming a big part of Duke Senior's language and rhetoric. He references it often, as if he has accepted his fate in the forest and has become one with it.

☝☝ Poor old man, thou prun'st a rotten tree that cannot so much as a blossom yield in lieu of all thy pains and husbandry. But come thy ways, we'll go along together.

**Related Characters:** Orlando (speaker), Adam

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 2.3.64-67


### Explanation and Analysis

Adam warns Orlando to not return to his house in fear that Oliver will kill him. Trying to convince Orlando to flee, Adam tells him that he will give up his possessions and come with him to escape the court. In this speech, Orlando shows deep gratitude for the old man who has served his family. He respects Adam's devotion and agrees to leave the court together with him. Using the natural imagery of the tree, Orlando tells Adam that in agreeing to go with him he is "pruning a tree with no blossoms"—they will lose everything, and there is probably no reward to result from their hardships. Here we see Adam and Orlando mirroring Rosalind and Celia—although not relatives by blood, they behave and love each other as such.

## Act 2, Scene 4 Quotes

☝☝ O, thou didst then never love so heartily! If thou rememb'rest not the slightest folly that ever love did make thee run into, thou hast not loved.

**Related Characters:** Silvius (speaker), Phebe

**Related Themes:** 



**Page Number:** 2.4.32

### Explanation and Analysis

Here we meet Silvius and Corin, Shepherds in the Forest of Arden. Upon entering, Silvius laments about his unrequited love for a woman (Phebe). He asks Corin if he remembers anything foolish that he has done in the name of love, and Corin cannot remember anything. Silvius replies with this quote, claiming that if Corin cannot remember the things he has done for love, he was never truly *in* love. Silvius suggests that love cannot exist without foolishness, echoing the remarks of both Rosalind and Orlando earlier in the play. Once again, love makes a fool out of everyday people—an idea exaggerated and satirized throughout *As You Like It*, as in many other Shakespeare comedies.

☝☝ We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly.

**Related Characters:** Touchstone (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 2.4.53-55

### Explanation and Analysis

Rosalind, Touchstone and Celia have overheard Silvius' conversation with Corin. Rosalind tells the group that she can relate to Silvius. Touchstone then reflects on his own past lover, Jane Smile, and says once again that folly and foolishness are a direct result of deep love. Shakespeare brings up an interesting irony here. The memory of love causes Touchstone, the snide fool, to open up and have a moment of deep earnestness. While still comedic and couched in wordplay (using "mortal" to mean both that all living things eventually die and the foolishness of love eventually dies as well), his speech is truthful, suggesting that love can make even the funniest fool reflective and the most serious person foolish.

## Act 2, Scene 5 Quotes

☝☝ I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs.

**Related Characters:** Jaques (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 2.5.12-13

### Explanation and Analysis

Amiens, a lord of Duke Senior, enters singing to Jaques, another lord. Jaques begs Amiens to continue to sing his song. Amiens tells him that he is worried that the song will make Jaques sad. Jaques replies with this (unintentionally) humorous line, claiming that his cynicism and depression makes any song seem melancholy. In this moment Jaques proves that even former members of the court can appear foolish. He brags about his own sadness, almost celebrating his ability to find melancholy in anything. Furthermore, in his exaggerated commitment to his melancholy state, Jaques' character is actually comedic—an example of "foolishness" that lacks the lively wit and wisdom of the true fool, Touchstone.

## Act 2, Scene 7 Quotes

☝☝ When I did hear the motley fool thus moral on the time, my lungs began to crow like chanticleer that fools should be so deep contemplative.



**Related Characters:** Jaques (speaker), Touchstone

**Related Themes:** 


**Page Number:** 2.5.29-32

### Explanation and Analysis

Duke Senior describes a man he saw in the forest, and Jaques tells him that it may have been the fool he met in the forrest—Touchstone. Jaques describes the fool, claiming he was incredibly wise, philosophizing on the concept of time—so wise, indeed, that he made Jaques "crow like chantecleer" (a rooster) in delight. Once again, the fool is seen as a source of truth and wisdom. Jaques, the person who finds cynicism and melancholy in everything, was touched by Touchstone's philosophical nature, and now decides that he admires this kind of "foolishness," and even aspires to it. Jaques clearly desires to be seen as wise, and after this revelation he thinks that wisdom only comes in a jester's costume—so that is what he wants to wear.

☛ All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.

**Related Characters:** Jaques (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 2.7.146-150

### Explanation and Analysis

Orlando finds the Duke and Jaques and, desperate to feed the starving Adam, barges in on them demanding that they give him food. The Duke happily accepts, and Orlando apologizes for his behavior, claiming that the forest has made him savage. When Orlando leaves, the Duke reflects on this encounter, telling Jaques that the world is like a theatre where people suffer together as if on a stage. The Duke tries to compare Orlando's suffering to Jaques' need to feel melancholy about life. Jaques replies with this iconic quote. Here, he depicts life as being as inconsequential as actors on a stage. People go through their lives as if they are living in acts and scenes of a play, following a script that they have no control over until that play simply ends.


This idea of performing a role is an important one in *As You Like It*. Many of the characters in the play physically wear disguises, or more metaphorical masks (as seen in Jaques' cynicism) in order to protect themselves. Rosalind disguises herself as Ganymede, enabling her the freedoms of a man,


and here Jaques notes that throughout life, we all wear disguises and play the parts that we are told to play. This moment also brings up a certain comedic irony, as Jaques himself is merely a character in a play on a stage, and his life is written by William Shakespeare.

## Act 3, Scene 2 Quotes

☛ Run, run, Orlando, carve on every tree the fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.

**Related Characters:** Orlando (speaker), Rosalind

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 3.2.9-10

### Explanation and Analysis

In a moment alone, Orlando soliloquizes about his love for Rosalind. He reads a poem that he has written comparing her to the Queen Of The Night, Diana, and shares his plan to post all of his love poems on the trees of the Forest of Arden. As predicted, love has turned him into the fool. He is mad with it. His poem is extremely romantic, calling the trees his "books" where he can share his undying love for Rosalind with the entire forest. His desire to post his love poems on every tree indicates the vast expanse and extent of Orlando's love for Rosalind, also shows that he feels that especially foolish desire, often associated with lovers, to make his feelings as public as possible.

☛ O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all whooping!

**Related Characters:** Celia (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 3.2.195-197

### Explanation and Analysis


Dressed as Ganymede and a poor woman, Rosalind and Celia read the poems Orlando has posted onto the trees in the forest. The poems are extremely cliché and overly


romantic, yet Rosalind doesn't seem to notice.

Celia then tells her that she knows who wrote the poems. She teases Rosalind by giving her hints, telling her that it is the wrestler Rosalind gave the chain to on their last night in court. She describes him as "wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful" and then tells Rosalind that the man who loves her is Orlando. Here, Celia once again pokes fun at Rosalind's passionate affection for Orlando. In this line she mimics the over-the-top nature of Orlando's poems. She also jests at Rosalind's ability to be blinded by love so much that she doesn't realize how corny the poems truly are.

☛ Then there is no true lover in the forest, else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.

**Related Characters:** Rosalind (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 3.2.307-310


### Explanation and Analysis

Orlando comes upon Rosalind and Celia in the forest—but they are dressed as Ganymede and a poor woman, so he does not recognize them. Rosalind decides to tease Orlando a bit to see how he acts, and to test the supposed strength of his love. She asks him the time and he says that he doesn't know. She then taunts him saying that he must not be a true lover, because a true lover sighs every minute and groans every hour, just as regularly as a clock ticks. By toying with Orlando and maintaining her disguise, Rosalind shows the audience that she has some control over her own love for Orlando. Orlando is also more casual and open with Rosalind in this moment because he sees her as a fellow man, talking openly and freely about love. In many ways both find freedom in the role of Rosalind-as-Ganymede, as for the moment neither act like tongue-tied, foolish lovers.

☛ Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

**Related Characters:** Rosalind (speaker), Orlando

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 3.2.407-412

### Explanation and Analysis

"Ganymede" and Orlando continue to discuss life and love. Yet unbeknownst to Orlando, the young boy he is speaking to is actually his one true love Rosalind. She then taunts him, telling him that she would like to give some advice to the young man who keeps carving love notes on trees. Orlando reveals that he is the one doing so. She tests him, asking him if he truly loves Rosalind as much as he says he does. He replies by telling her that "neither rhyme nor reason" can express his love. She retorts with this quote, in which she claims that love is a disease that needs to be cured. (In Shakespeare's time, mental illness was often "treated" by locking the patient in a dark room or beating them—and here Rosalind suggests the same "cure" for lovers.) She then offers to assist Orlando in curing his love sickness by pretending to be the woman he loves and coaching him on how to manage his feelings for her.

Rosalind finds freedom in her disguise, playing with Orlando and testing his love for her by calling his poetry a sign of madness. This also begins the relationship of Rosalind (Ganymede) as teacher and Orlando as student. She aims to teach Orlando to be a suitable lover for her while also spending time with him without the foolishness that love incites in both of them.

## Act 3, Scene 5 Quotes

☛ O, for shame, for shame, lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers. Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.

**Related Characters:** Phebe (speaker), Silvius

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 3.5.19-21

### Explanation and Analysis

In another part of the forest, Silvius the Shepherd begs Phebe, the woman he loves, to not hurt his feelings. He asks her to tell him if she loves him, and if she doesn't to do so nicely, comparing her to an executioner. Phebe replies with a speech criticizing Silvius' language. Here she rejects the hyperbolic nature of his rhetoric, saying that her eyes are


not capable of murder. She challenges him to show her the physical scar that her eyes have caused, making the metaphorical literal.

Here, Phebe rejects the very language of love that characters like Orlando thrive on. She is not in love with Silvius, so she cannot understand why he is behaving so foolishly. This lack of love keeps her pragmatic and honest. She is not as easily wooed or manipulated by love the way some of the other characters in the play are, making her a stark comedic contrast and logical voice in the play.

☝☝ Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, "Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

**Related Characters:** Phebe (speaker), Silvius, Rosalind

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 3.5.86-87

#### Explanation and Analysis


After her tiff with Silvius, Phebe meets Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede). Ganymede tells her that she isn't pretty enough to behave the way she is behaving. It is this cruelty and criticism that causes Phebe to in love with Ganymede at first sight, not knowing that she is truly a woman.


After Rosalind leaves, in a moment of great irony, Phebe turns to Silvius and says this line. Phebe, who was critical of love language just moments before, has fallen into the pit immediately, claiming that true love is love at first sight. Furthermore, when faced with love, Phebe's entire language shifts. She is no longer logical or pragmatic but is rather hopelessly and foolishly in love, finding Ganymede's scorn attractive, even romantic.

### Act 4, Scene 1 Quotes

☝☝ Nay, you were better speak first, and when you were graveled for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers, lacking – God warn us! – matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

**Related Characters:** Rosalind (speaker), Orlando

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 4.1.77-82

#### Explanation and Analysis

Orlando arrives late for his first lesson on love from Ganymede. Rosalind (as Ganymede) scolds him for missing their meeting that morning, and makes Orlando apologize to her as if she is Rosalind. She then asks him what he would do in this moment if she were Rosalind. Orlando tells her that he'd kiss her. Rosalind replies with this line, telling Orlando that lovers must always speak first and then only kiss when they run out of things to say. Once again, Rosalind finds great satisfaction in educating Orlando under the guise of Ganymede. She finds freedom in her disguise and is able to speak to him in a way that she wouldn't be able to as a woman. This moment also reveals how hasty and dumbfounded Orlando is by his love for Rosalind. He immediately resorts to kissing as opposed to thinking and speaking.

### Act 4, Scene 2 Quotes

☝☝ Twice did he turn his back and purposed so; but kindness, nobler ever than revenge, and nature, stronger than his just occasion, made him give battle to the lioness.

**Related Characters:** Oliver (speaker), Orlando

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 4.2.155-158

#### Explanation and Analysis

Oliver enters and notices that Rosalind and Celia fit the descriptions of Ganymede and Aliena, the two he has been searching for. He hands Rosalind a bloody napkin, explaining that the reason why Orlando never showed up for their meeting was because he saw an unconscious man with a snake slithering around his neck, and a lion hiding in the woods near the man. Orlando then realized that the man was Oliver, and contemplated whether or not to leave him there to die. He twice decided to leave, but then ultimately decided to save his brother, and was wounded in the process. This act of kindness changed Oliver. Seeing his brother choose the power of nature over revenge influenced him to become a better person.


The rivalry between Orlando and Oliver has come to a close in a moment of self sacrifice (and one which occurs off-stage). What is more, Orlando, who was never given any

proper education due to the cruelty of his older brother, makes the choice to do the kind and noble thing, whereas Oliver, a man raised in the court, has always turned a blind eye to the needs of his brother. The social freedom forest can change people so much that even the seemingly evil Oliver can actually become good.

## Act 5, Scene 2 Quotes

☝ Your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed; no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage.

**Related Characters:** Rosalind (speaker), Orlando, Oliver, Celia

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 5.2.33-39



### Explanation and Analysis


Oliver has fallen in love with Aliena (Celia). He asks his brother Orlando for consent, and, thinking he is going to marry a shepherdess- as opposed to a noblewoman- he decides to give his fortune to Orlando. As he exits, Rosalind enters and talks with Orlando about the unusual romance that has sparked between Aliena and Oliver. Here she reflects (both poetically and humorously) on the immediacy of their love as well as how deep it seems to be.

Similar to Phebe, Oliver has been wooed at first sight and throws away all pragmatism to be with the woman he loves. The man who once valued wealth and esteem in the court more than his own brother is now giving away his entire fortune to be with a shepherdess. This indicates how much romantic love changes the entire world view of an individual, especially in the exaggerated action of the comedy.

☝ [To Orlando] As you love Rosalind, meet. [To Silvius] As you love Phebe, meet. And as I love no woman, I'll meet. So fare you well.

**Related Characters:** Rosalind (speaker), Orlando, Silvius, Phebe

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 5.3.124-126

### Explanation and Analysis

All of the lovers unite in one scene. Phebe tells Rosalind (as Ganymede) that she is furious that "he" shared her letter. Silvius still pines for Phebe. Oliver loves Aliena (Celia) and Orlando is downtrodden at his inability to find Rosalind.

Rosalind quiets the group by explaining that the next day all will be answered (as she plans to reveal herself). She tells each of the lovers that they will meet the one they love as they really are. Once again Rosalind is the authority, the teacher of all things regarding love. Although the group doesn't understand how, they trust that she will bring all of their problems to a resolution. Yet it is important to note that she also maintains her leadership position because she is still thought to be a man. Her disguise has given her the freedom of manhood, the ability to lead.

This moment also depicts the true chaos caused by Rosalind's disguise. Love has driven all the characters mad, and Rosalind knows that she cannot wait any longer to reveal herself.

## Act 5, Scene 4 Quotes

☝ Peace ho! I bar confusion; 'Tis I must make conclusion of these most strange events. Here's eight that must take hands to join in Hymen's bands, if truth holds true contents.

**Related Characters:** Hymen (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 5.4.130-135

### Explanation and Analysis

After promising Orlando that he will marry Rosalind the day before, Rosalind appears at the altar as herself next to Hymen, the god of marriage. She is finally reunited with her father and Orlando sees her as she truly is. Hymen then sings a wedding song to marry the couple (along with the three other couples, as almost all the characters have paired off). Marriage is seen as the decisive way to end the confusion of the events that have ensued in the forest. Suddenly including Hymen, a god, is perhaps an indication of the kind of magic or even divine power that love can bring. And, in a more traditional viewpoint, Shakespeare suggests that it is marriage, supposedly the ultimate expression of

romantic love, that leads to clarity.

●● Play, music, and you brides and bridegrooms all, with measure heaped in joy, to th' measures fall.

**Related Characters:** Duke Senior (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 5.4.184-185

### Explanation and Analysis

Jaques De Boys, the brother of Orlando and Oliver, enters and tells the group that Duke Frederick (Celia's Father) was about to enter the woods to fight with his brother Duke Senior (Rosalind's father), but on the way encountered a

man who encouraged him to convert and become a more peaceful and pious man. Duke Senior welcomes Jaques De Boys and encourages the celebrating to continue. He incites the group to celebrate as freely and happily as they desire, "in rustic revelry" of the forest. As it has been throughout the play, the forest and nature is a place of freedom and love.

By the end of the play, romantic love has developed nearly mystic powers. The marriage union of Orlando and Rosalind, Celia and Oliver, Touchstone and Audrey, and Phebe and Silvius meshes with the powers of the forest in a kind of magical, pagan way (a common theme in Shakespeare's comedies). The message here is that love makes fools of us, but it also betters us. Almost all the characters have found happiness in love, including Duke Frederick, apparently, who has rediscovered a love of God.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## ACT 1, SCENE 1

The play opens with Orlando lamenting his sorry fate to Adam, his servant: Orlando's father, upon his death, granted most of his estate to his other son, Oliver, and instructed him to raise his brothers, Orlando and Jaques, well. While treating Jaques fairly, however, Oliver has routinely denied Orlando all of the money, education, and basic respect that he deserves. Orlando concludes his lament by declaring that he will no longer tolerate Oliver's tyranny, though at the same time acknowledging the impossibility of resisting it.

Oliver approaches and Adam slips away to observe the brothers' exchange. Oliver orders Orlando to quit his idleness and Orlando replies by complaining of his forced poverty. He proceeds to argue that, although Oliver's age renders him legally superior, Orlando is still their father's son and should be treated more like an equal. Oliver strikes him and calls him a villain.

Orlando expresses offense at the mere possibility that their father, Sir Rowland de Boys, could be said to have had villains for sons. He swears that he would kill Oliver if they weren't brothers. Adam tries to intervene but Orlando continues to demand that Oliver grant Orlando either the bearings of a civil existence or the money that was left for him in his father's will. Oliver orders that Orlando leave, hastily promising to Orlando that he "shall have some part of" his will. Orlando exits.

Oliver orders his servant Dennis to call in Charles, the duke's wrestler, who has been waiting to see him. Charles informs Oliver that Duke Frederick has usurped and banished his older brother, Duke Senior, whom several lords have since willingly joined in exile. He adds that Rosalind, the banished duke's daughter, has remained in court with her beloved cousin Celia (Duke Frederick's daughter), and that the old duke has retreated to the Forest of Arden, where he and his men live like Robin Hood.

Charles informs Oliver that he is scheduled to wrestle the next day with Orlando, who plans to fight in disguise. Because he must win every match in order to preserve his reputation, Charles advises Oliver to prevent Orlando from fighting if he cares for his brother's well being.

*This scene sets the stage for the rest of the play. It introduces the acrimonious sibling relationship between Orlando and Oliver, and establishes Oliver as the crueler and more powerful of the two, and Orlando as the victim of his brother's cruelty. Note also how Orlando has not been allowed an education—meaning that while he is from the court, he has something natural about him in contrast to Oliver's more sophisticated scheming.*



*Orlando expresses the same discontent that he expressed to Adam, but here to the very source of his woes. The verbal combat between Orlando and Oliver further illustrates the antagonistic nature of their relationship.*



*Orlando becomes more forceful in his dealings with Oliver, and Oliver appears to concede to his demands. Given what we know about his cruel history, however, it's hard to believe that Oliver means what he says. Again, Oliver's likely lack of honesty makes him more of a figure, or product, of the political court.*



*In his update on the state of the world, Charles introduces a new set of settings (the court and the Forest of Arden) and relationships into the action of the play. The tense relationship between Duke Frederick and Duke Senior mirrors that of Oliver and Orlando, while the loving relationship between Rosalind and Celia provides a contrast with the competitive brothers.*



*Charles assumes that Oliver cares for Orlando as a normal, loving brother would. His assumption highlights how unusual Oliver's fraternal antipathy is.*



Oliver feigns gratitude and falsely claims that he has already tried to dissuade Orlando from fighting. He goes on to describe his brother as “the stubbornest young fellow of France” and “a secret and villainous contriver.” Charles leaves newly resolved to beat Orlando and, if he does not win, to never wrestle for money again.

The scene ends with Oliver acknowledging in a soliloquy his irrationally extreme hatred for his brother: “my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he.”

*Oliver’s lies to Charles reveal the extent of his cruelty and his desire to do great harm to Orlando. The play here sets up a lot of anticipation around the wrestling, as Charles is so confident of his victory over Orlando.*



*Here Oliver addresses a question that has been lurking and remains unanswered throughout the play: Why does Oliver hate Orlando so much? Oliver reveals that even he doesn’t know the answer, that his hatred is irrational, that he simply hates his brother because he does.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 2

Celia coaxes Rosalind to be “merry.” Rosalind asks how she is supposed to feel merry given that her father has been banished from court. Celia tries, and succeeds, to convince Rosalind to consider Celia’s father as her own, even promising that Rosalind shall be heir to the throne.

Rosalind, with renewed gratitude and merriment, goes on to ask Celia what she thinks of falling in love. Celia answers that she thinks of it as a sport, and that one should not love in earnest or let her honor be threatened.

The two cousins joke about the roles of Fortune and Nature in determining a person’s appearance and character. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Touchstone, whose dullness is a source of humor, “the whetstone of the wits.”

Touchstone reports to Celia that her father desires to see her and makes various jesting side-comments. He remarks, for instance, that fools are never considered wise, though they may speak wisely, while wise men are always assumed wise, though they may speak foolishly.

*From the tense relationship between Orlando and Oliver in the first act, the play jumps to the warm and loving relationship between Celia and Rosalind in the second. Celia proves herself very generous in offering Rosalind her right to the throne. However, the friendly world of these two women is imperiled and controlled by the conflict between their fathers, who are themselves brothers.*



*The sisters’ conversation about love foreshadows the great importance that falling in love will come to assume in the course of the play. Celia’s comments indicate how those not in love think of love, as something to be overwhelmed by. Once love does strike, though, it proves overwhelming to all who experience it.*



*The lighthearted conversation between Celia and Rosalind provides a stark contrast with the serious conversation that Oliver and Orlando had in the previous scene. Touchstone’s entrance further contributes to the scene’s lighthearted tone*



*In his remarks on the wisdom of fools and the foolishness of the wise, Touchstone reveals himself to be one of the wise fools that he describes. He also suggests that the perception of fools and wise men is often based more on how they present themselves than on what they actually say.*



Monsieur Le Beau, who is one of Duke Frederick's courtiers, enters, and Celia, Rosalind, and Touchstone continue jesting with him in the same vein. Le Beau tells of three brothers, all of whom wrestled with Charles and were defeated, leaving their father in mourning. Rosalind asks if there is more wrestling to be seen and Le Beau answers that there is, and that it will happen very shortly, right where they are currently standing.

The upcoming opponent, Orlando, enters with Duke Frederick, Charles, and various attendants, and Celia remarks on how young Orlando looks. Duke Frederick confirms that he should not fight on account of his youth, and encourages Celia and Rosalind to try to dissuade him. The sisters call Orlando over and try to convince him not to fight. When he insists on fighting, the girls promise to support him.

Before an audience of Duke Frederick and the sisters, Charles and Orlando commence the match. Charles is thrown, leaving Orlando the victor. Duke Frederick, impressed by anyone who can defeat Charles, asks who Orlando is. When Orlando informs Duke Frederick that he's the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, Frederick is displeased: de Boys had been a supporter of Duke Senior, yet he praises Orlando nevertheless.

Having learned the identity of Orlando's father, Rosalind declares that she would have been all the more insistent that he not fight: her own father dearly loved Sir Rowland de Boys. Celia and Rosalind congratulate and thank Orlando, and Rosalind gives him a chain as a token of her respect, leaving him smitten. Rosalind and Celia take their leave.

Le Beau then advises Orlando to leave, since he has unintentionally displeased the duke. Orlando thanks him, then asks which of the girls is the daughter of the duke. Le Beau tells him it is Celia, but also reveals that Duke Frederick has recently taken a dislike to Rosalind because she is the banished duke's daughter. He predicts that this dislike will soon be made clear.

## ACT 1, SCENE 3

Celia begs Rosalind to break her silence. She jests, "Cupid have mercy, not a word?" Rosalind explains that she is distraught not only for her father now, but also for her "child's father." Celia tries to cheer her and jokes that she must "wrestle with thy affections." She asks if it is truly possible that she should fall so suddenly in love with Orlando, to which Rosalind responds in the affirmative.

*The theme of brothers appears again. This time, the brothers we hear of did not fight with each other, but rather each fought with, and was defeated by, the court wrestler. Charles's success in his matches with the brothers suggests that the odds are great that his next opponent—Orlando—will be defeated as well.*



*The two plotlines that have so far been developed—with Oliver and Orlando on the one hand and Rosalind, Celia, and the Dukes on the other—converge here, as Duke Frederick, Rosalind, and Celia come in contact with Orlando. In insisting to fight, Orlando expresses a strong will and great determination, which win the girls over to his side.*



*Orlando's victory is particularly impressive because it was assumed that he would lose out to his older and undefeated opponent. The match reveals Orlando's unexpected strength. Meanwhile, old animosities are brought to the fore in Duke Frederick's comment on Orlando's family.*



*By commenting on Duke Senior's fondness for Sir Rowland de Boys, Rosalind positions herself and her father in opposition to Duke Frederick. Rosalind's gift to Orlando commences an amorous relationship that will develop between them throughout the play.*



*Orlando's question suggests that he may have become infatuated with one of the sisters. Le Beau's prediction that Duke Frederick will act upon his dislike for Rosalind will shortly be proven correct. Rosalind's situation also shows how vulnerable women are to men.*



*It becomes clear that Rosalind has fallen in love with Orlando at first sight. Celia puns on the theme of wrestling, suggesting that just as Orlando wrestled with Charles (an act that won Rosalind's instant love), Rosalind must now wrestle with and control her own emotions. Also note how love transfers Rosalind's concern from her father to her beloved; this is a transfer embodied in a wedding when the father "gives away" the bride to her husband.*





Duke Frederick enters and orders Rosalind to leave the court. He threatens her with death if she does not comply. Shocked, she asks what she's done to offend him, and the duke responds simply that she is a traitor, and that it is enough of an offense that she is the daughter of her father. Rosalind tries, unsuccessfully, to plead that "treason is not inherited."

Celia declares that if Rosalind is banished, she will go with her, maintaining her refusal to leave Rosalind's side. When Duke Frederick leaves, Celia proposes that they disguise themselves as peasants and go seek Rosalind's father in the Forest of Arden.

Rosalind agrees, but says that she'll disguise herself instead like a man, given her height, and call herself **Ganymede**. Celia will call herself Aliena. They decide to bring along Touchstone, and Celia concludes their scheming with a declaration of freedom: "now go we in content / To liberty and not to banishment."

*While Duke Frederick already acted upon his immense antipathy toward his brother, Duke Senior, only now have his feelings extended to Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind. The motivation for his sudden order for her banishment is never made entirely clear.*



*Celia demonstrates her loyalty to Rosalind—holding that love higher than her duty or love to her own father—and introduces the theme of disguise and deception, as well as the idea that there is freedom in the forest that is absent in the court.*



*The girls look optimistically at their situation and embrace it as an opportunity for freedom. In sneaking away and disguising themselves they are liberated not only from the tyranny of Duke Frederick, but also, in disguising themselves, from the confines of their own identities. Rosalind's decision to dress up as a man for safety indicates the greater freedom and security for men in the this world. Her selection of the name Ganymede is a kind of symbolic joke. Ganymede was mentioned in *The Iliad* as the most beautiful man in the world who was abducted by Zeus, with whom he had a sexual affair. That Rosalind would disguise herself as a man thus connected to homosexuality captures the kind of gender confusion that will result from her disguise through the rest of the play.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 1

In the Forest of Arden, Duke Senior addresses the lords who have joined him in exile. He remarks on the sweetness, freedom, and safety of living in the woods, as compared to the "envious court" which is artificial and full of "painted pomp." He describes nature as providing nourishment for the life of the mind, with "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Lord Amiens praises the duke for having such a positive outlook on his unfortunate circumstance.

*Duke Senior sets up a distinction between the forest and the court, the former as a place of freedom and nature and the latter as a place of envy and artifice. The strength of his character is demonstrated by his ability to make the most of his residence in the forest, even though he is not there of his own will.*



Duke Senior suggests that they go hunt for venison, and the First Lord agrees, though adds that “the melancholy Jaques, one of the duke’s lords (not to be confused with Jaques de Boys), is known to grieve at their slaughtering of animals, and was recently found sobbing at the sight of a wounded stag. Jaques, the Lord recounts, considers hunters to be even worse “usurpers, tyrants” than Duke Frederick because hunters kill animals in their “native dwelling place.” Duke Senior, desiring to console him, asks the Second Lord to lead him to Jaques.

*A comparison is presented between evil performed on mankind and evil performed on animals. The play so far has been primarily about the former—about Duke Frederick and Oliver’s cruelty to their respective brothers—but here, Jaques suggests that killing animals is no worse than doing harm to humans. At the same time, Jaques concerns here—to these men who are hunters—are presented as somewhat ridiculous and foolish, as him being upset over something that is not worth being upset about.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 2

The scene begins with Duke Frederick asking if anyone has seen his daughter and niece. The First Lord reports that Celia’s chambermaids put Celia to bed the night before but that her bed was found empty in the morning. The Second Lord enters and informs the Duke that Touchstone, too, is missing, and that Hisperia, Celia’s gentlewoman, thinks the girls are in the company of Orlando, because she’d heard them speaking fondly of him. Duke Frederick orders the lords to retrieve Orlando’s brother and send him to find Orlando.

*Duke Frederick discovers that his orders were obeyed—Rosalind has indeed left the court—but that his command has resulted as well in the undesired consequence of his own daughter’s disappearance. Hisperia’s guess that the sisters are with Orlando, while mistaken at the time, foreshadows their later meeting in the forest.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 3

Orlando, about to enter his home, is met with a long soliloquy by his servant, Adam, who seems to both praise and regret his master’s virtuousness: “Why are you virtuous?... And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant?” The servant elaborates that Orlando’s virtues serve him not as graces but as enemies, as “sanctified and holy traitors.”

*In his speech, Adam describes Orlando’s strengths as flaws. That these strengths, which are natural and true, would be seen as flaws is an implicit condemnation of the court, which thrives not on these values but on deviousness and political maneuvering.*



Orlando asks what’s the matter, and Adam responds that Orlando cannot enter his own home, because his brother is inside. Oliver, it seems, has heard of Orlando’s success in the wrestling match and intends to burn down Orlando’s house, with the intent of killing him. Adam insists that Orlando leave, but Orlando does not know where to go, despairingly claiming that he would rather face his brother than lead a beggar’s life.

*Oliver’s hatred for his brother has grown ever stronger, to the point of murderous intent. It seems that the heightening of Oliver’s detestation may have resulted from his envying Orlando for having won the wrestling match, for having proven his strength and goodness.*



Adam offers to give his master his own savings of five hundred crowns, and to remain his servant in exile. He swears that, because he never drank too much in his youth, he is stronger than his old age might suggest. He promises to do all the jobs that a younger man would.

*By sacrificing his own possessions and future to his master’s cause, Adam displays great generosity and a strong sense of commitment to Orlando. He plays the part of Orlando’s loving brother, which Oliver has failed to do.*



Orlando praises Adam's ethic of servitude—prizing duty over reward. He adds that this attribute was more common in ancient times than it is in modern times, in which, Orlando describes, it is more common that a person work hard only for public recognition and promotion. While praising Adam's work ethic, however, Orlando also pities him, for pruning "a rotten tree that cannot so much as a blossom yield in lieu of all they pains and husbandry." Nevertheless, he agrees to take Adam along with him in his banishment.

Adam promises to follow Orlando forevermore, and reflects on his departure from the court, where he has served since he was seventeen years old. He recognizes that it is too late for him to embark on a new ambition and that he would be happy to die in the service of his master.

*The relationship between Adam and Orlando is marked by mutual admiration—Adam admires Orlando for his virtuousness and sanctity, and Orlando admires Adam for his strong ethical values and devotion.. Orlando does not take advantage of his servant, but rather respects and protects him, and treats him almost as he might treat a friend or brother.*



*While many characters in the play decide or are forced to relocate from the court to the forest, at least temporarily, most do so without comment or reflection. Adam vocalizes the significance of this transition for him.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 4

The scene opens with Rosalind (disguised as **Ganymede**) rejoicing in her merry spirits and Touchstone complaining of tired legs. Rosalind admits that she, too, is weary, but, because of her disguise, must play the part of the strong and untiring man. Touchstone quips that he is more foolish in Arden than he was at court, but determines that "travellers must be content."

*Though for most of the play, Rosalind will have to operate without making any acknowledgment of the fact that she is in disguise. Here, though, alone with Celia, she can describe the effort of having to suit her behavior to her costume. Touchstone's remarks indicate how a person dislocated from the place with which they are familiar feels more foolish—though perhaps it also indicates that in the court wit and subtlety are more prized than in the forest.*



A young man and an old man, Silvius and Corin, enter, in serious conversation. Silvius is saying that Corin cannot understand how deeply Silvius is in love. Silvius asks Corin how many ridiculous things *he* has done out of love, and Corin replies up to a thousand, but all of which he's forgotten. Silvius launches into a poetic monologue, accusing Corin that, if he cannot remember his love-borne follies or has not shown other such traits of love, then "thou hast not loved." He concludes by calling out the name Phebe three times.

*The conversation between Silvius and Corin echoes the conversation that Celia and Rosalind had about falling in love at the beginning of the play. Celia then advised to treat love as a game, to not be overwhelmed by it. In this conversation, though, Silvius associates love with foolishness and argues that you can't be in love unless you are overwhelmed by it—in other words, he states that you're only in love if you're doing foolish things.*



Rosalind and Touchstone are touched by Silvius's speech, which they have overheard. Touchstone fondly remembers his old lover, Jane Smile, and muses that "all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly."

*Silvius's speech about love reminds Touchstone and Rosalind of their own loves. Touchstone re-emphasizes that folly naturally accompanies love.*



On Celia's request, Rosalind approaches Corin and asks if he has any food for Celia, who's become faint with hunger. Corin regrets that he is merely a shepherd to a coarse employer, but he invites Rosalind to come see their sheep-cottage and pastures, which are now for sale. Rosalind and Celia, on an apparent whim, order Corin to buy the cottage, pasture, and flock for them with their money, which he happily agrees to do.

*In purchasing the plot of land, Rosalind and Celia demonstrate that they have committed themselves to a life in the country, apart from the court. In some sense, buying the cottage is a doubling down on their disguises.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 5

Amiens enters, singing an ode to nature, which invites its listener to "come hither" to the greenwood tree. Jaques persistently begs Amiens to keep singing, despite Amien's warning that it will make him melancholy (Jaques retorts that he could "suck melancholy" out of *any* song.) Before finishing the song, Amiens mentions that Duke Senior has been looking for Jaques all day, and Jaques admits that he's been avoiding him.

*As in Duke Senior's initial lines of Act 2, Scene 1, in Amiens's song here nature is invoked as a positive and welcoming presence. Jaques recognizes his own tendency to toward melancholy, which has already been commented on by the lords around him. But again, though Jaques is serious, almost bragging about his ability to be sad, it is rather silly to be proud of the fact that he can find sorrow in any song.*



Jaques hands Amiens a poem he's written, which describes a man who leaves his wealth to live amongst fools. Amiens sings it aloud. It includes the word "duc-dame," which seems invented, though Jaques claims it to be a Greek word. Jaques and Amiens split ways, the former to "rail against the first-born of Egypt," and the latter, to find the duke.

*Jaques's poem stands in contrast to Amiens's first song. While the latter rejoiced in nature and the abandonment of ambition and wealth, the former takes a disdainful attitude toward the same. Yet Jaques poem also includes a made-up ridiculous word, and he's so over the top that he seems mostly silly.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 6

As Orlando and Adam enter the Forest of Arden, Adam complains that he can go no further and will die of hunger. Orlando tries to lift his spirits and orders Adam to persist at least while he goes to find something for him to eat.

*While Adam made an initial sacrifice in giving up his possessions and future to join Orlando in the forest, here Orlando makes a reciprocal sacrifice in going to find something for Adam to eat.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 7

Duke Senior is saying of someone that he must have become an animal, because he cannot be found anywhere. Just as he is ordering his lords to go find this missing man, however, Jaques, the man in question, approaches. Jaques proceeds to describe a fool he ran into in the forest, who philosophized on the passing of time, musing "thus we may see how the world wags. ... from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe, and then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot." He describes the fool fondly.

*From Jaques's description, it seems that the fool in question is Touchstone. Jaques acknowledges the fool's potential for great wisdom, which Touchstone himself hinted at earlier, and makes a fool's life seem desirable and enviable. It also indicates how much Jaques wants to be seen as wise himself, and suggests that his whole insistence on being melancholy—on seeing everything as something that could or should make you sad—is what he considers to be wisdom. But remember also Touchstone's earlier comments about how those considered to be wise are never recognized as saying things that are foolish.*



Jaques concludes by declaring his own wish to be a fool and his ambition to have “a motley coat.” He elaborates that, when he becomes a fool, Duke Senior must still consider Jaques to be wise and that Jaques must be granted great liberty to speak with whomever he pleases, as all fools are. He theorizes on why those who are most galled by a fool’s folly are likely to laugh most at the fool, and suggests that it is because people whom fools mock do not want to appear foolish before the fool’s perceptive eye, and so protect themselves with laughter. Jaques asks the Duke to allow him to assume the role of the fool and promises in return to cleanse the Duke’s “foul body of th’infected world” with his honest criticisms.

Duke Senior accuses Jaques of being hypocritical in pointing out the sins of others, having himself committed sins of the flesh. Jaques goes on to wax eloquent on the subject of pride, calling it a self-exhausting trait, and arguing that his criticisms will do no harm to those for whom they are inaccurate, and that, for those to whom they ring true, they will only point out the ways in which the victim “hath wronged himself.”

Orlando enters and orders, “eat no more!” With drawn sword he demands food. Duke Senior and Jaques are taken aback, and the former inquires if the intruder is distressed or simply poorly mannered. When Orlando continues to plead for food, they answer his entreaties very civilly, welcoming him to their table and thus shaming Orlando for having been so uncivil. Orlando apologizes, explaining that he assumed that all manners in the woods were savage. He gives an elegant lament, hopes that the men have lived some time in a more civilized circumstance and have been to church, and that they might therefore accept his renewed gentleness as compensation for his temporary misbehavior.

Duke Senior attests that they have seen better days and have been to church, and that they accept his forgiveness and hope to fulfill his needs. Orlando asks if they will wait a moment to eat their food while he goes to find his old servant, and the Duke accepts his request.

*The role of the fool becomes further developed. The fool, as Jaques understands it, is, at heart, a social critic and is extremely perceptive of others’ character traits. In laughing at the fool’s jests, Jaques suggests, people are merely trying to guard themselves against his critical eye and too-true words. If they laugh, then they show that they are in on the joke. Jaques further announces his own ambition to become a fool, but the fool he wants to be is one who levels “honest criticisms”—he doesn’t seem like someone who would make anyone laugh.*



*Duke Senior draws attention to the hypocrisy of faulting the sins of others while committing sins of one’s own. Jaques remarks that the fool’s critiques will only be painful for those for whom the fool’s criticisms are true. But note, in this speech in which Jacques mocks pride, just how prideful and self-serious Jaques is. He comes off like a guy who brags about how humble he is.*



*Orlando’s rude entrance exaggeratedly and humorously portrays the stark contrast between manners in the court and manners in the forest, or at least as Orlando sees it. The entrance is humorous because all characters in the scene are, in fact, from the court and have courtly manners, but Orlando assumes that because they are in the forest they must be savages. But, of course, his assumption results in him being the one who takes on those characteristics. Further, of all the characters who are originally from the forest, some are simple, but none are savages.*



*Duke Senior, in a humble gesture, does not explicitly mention his rightful royal status, and demonstrates noble generosity in inviting Orlando to dinner despite his rudeness. The duke’s openness and honesty mirrors Orlando’s own, and sets them in contrast to the courtly evil and power-hungry machinations of their respective brothers.*



Duke Senior and Jaques comment on how their own unhappiness is matched by the unhappy situations of so many others. Duke Senior compares life to a theater and speaks of how many “woeful pageants” are played out in it. Jaques declares, “All the world’s a stage, / And all the men and women merely players,” and goes on to describe all the parts that a single man might play: infant, schoolboy, lover, soldier, justice, old man.

*In one of the most famous lines in the play, and in all of Shakespeare’s repertoire, Jaques compares life to a play, the world to a stage, and the people within it to performers. The speech, motivated by Jaques’s melancholy mood, paints a picture of life as inconsequential and predictable, with men obediently performing pre-determined roles. Yet there are some critics who point out that while Jaques lines have become famous, they are (and were even when Shakespeare wrote the play) kind of cliché, and that Shakespeare’s intent was for Jaques not to seem wise but to seem like he was trying to be wise.*



Orlando and Adam return, and Amiens sings a depressing song about the unkindness and invisibility of man’s ingratitude, and the folly of love and friendship.

*Amiens’s song contributes to the melancholy mood of the scene. And the play as a whole certainly does support the idea of love as full of foolishness, but in contrast to the mournfulness here on display here about that fact, those actually in love seem instead to be full of passion and deep feeling.*



Duke Senior, having recognized Orlando as the son of Sir Rowland de Boys, tells Orlando that he truly loved his father and thus welcomes him all the more to his cave and asks him to tell his story.

*Duke Senior and Orlando, who mirror each other in their respective roles as slighted brothers, here unite under the common cause of Sir Rowland de Boys. They become, themselves, a kind of family.*



## ACT 3, SCENE 1

Duke Frederick instructs Oliver to go find Orlando, wherever he is. He says that if Oliver does not bring Orlando to him, dead or alive, within a year that he will seize all of Orlando’s lands and belongings. Oliver promises that his heart is very much in the task, because he never did love his brother. Duke Frederick calls Oliver “more villain” and tells him that his officers will make an inventory of his estate while he is gone on his task.

*Following the warm-spirited union between the good Duke Senior and Orlando, comes this bitter meeting between their evil brothers, Oliver and Duke Frederick. And as befits their different natures: Duke Senior kindly and openly invites Orlando to join with him; Duke Frederick uses schemes and threats of power to compel Oliver to do what he wants him to do.*



## ACT 3, SCENE 2

Orlando is reading what appears to be his own poetry from a piece of paper in his hand. The poem is overly sentimental and alludes to the Queen of Night, the huntress Diana, describes the moon as a pale sphere in the sky, and includes a resolve to post **poems** about Rosalind on every tree in the forest. Having finished reading the poem in his hand, Orlando runs off to continue posting the verses all about the forest.

*Orlando is madly in love with Rosalind. The poem’s extreme sentiment (verging on cliché) and his desire to post these poems on every tree illustrate the extent of his love. They also indicate the power of love to drive a person to utter foolishness.*



Touchstone and Corin enter, with Corin asking Touchstone whether he likes the shepherd's life. The fool answers in the affirmative, but then proceeds to equivocate, saying such things as, "in respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life." When asked if he has any philosophy of his own, Corin responds with a list of obvious facts of the world, expressed in dull-witted fashion, such as, "the more one sickens the worse at ease he is" and "a great case of night is lack of the sun."

Touchstone calls Corin damned for never having lived in court; he reasons that Corin has not learned good manners and must therefore have wicked manners and that wickedness is sin. Touchstone and Corin proceed to banter about the suitability of court manners in the country and country manners in the court, and specifically about the possibility of shepherds adopting the practice of kissing each other's hands. Corin says that he is content to lead a simple life and care for his ewes and lambs. Even this, Touchstone critiques, declaring it a sin to make a living off of the forced "copulation of cattle."

Rosalind, dressed as **Ganymede**, enters, reading one of Orlando's **poems** that she has pulled from a tree and is holding in her hands. Touchstone, hearing the poem, tries to compete with its rhymes and so improvises a series of six senseless and poorly metered couplets about Rosalind. Touchstone insults then insults the original poems, to which Rosalind takes offense.

Celia enters, reading another of Orlando's **tree poems**, which describes Rosalind as the synthesis of all the best features of Helen, Cleopatra, Atalanta, and Lucretia. At Celia's request, Touchstone walks away with Corin to leave Celia and Rosalind alone. Celia tells Rosalind that she knows who is behind these badly written poems. Rosalind is impatient to know, and Celia teases her, declaring the man "wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful," and then finally revealing him to be Orlando. Rosalind is very excited by this news and asks many questions about Celia's discovery of his identity.

Celia recounts having found Orlando under a tree, dressed like a hunter. Rosalind comments that Orlando is dressed that way because he has come to kill her heart. Then she pardons herself for her constant interruptions by explaining that she is a woman, and, like all women, must speak when she thinks.

*While Touchstone says things that make him sound wise but are in fact nonsensical, Corin says things that make him sound simple but are perfectly logical. The contrast between their modes of speech indicate the larger differences between the two characters, in terms of their natural settings—court vs. country—and professions—clown vs. shepherd.*



*The contrast between city life and country life, and between Touchstone and Corin as representatives of those two locales is increasingly developed here. The two men try to determine whether there are good reasons for court manners to remain in court, and country manners to remain in the country. Yet in transposing the idea of kissing hands from courtly folk to shepherds, and in focusing on the idea that farming is in fact the "forced copulation of cattle," all that they succeed in doing is making both court and country look ridiculous.*



*The audience knows who has written the tree poems, while Rosalind remains unaware, creating a level of dramatic irony. Touchstone's purposely bad poetry about Rosalind is no worse than Orlando's love poetry about her. And yet, Rosalind takes offense at Touchstone's insults of the love poetry because it is love poetry, about her. Rosalind's taste takes a back seat when it comes to love, and being loved.*



*The overwhelming power of love to push lovers into an extreme and ridiculous view of their beloved is here on display, as Orlando compares Rosalind to famed beauties of history and myth. Rosalind, however, does not note this as strange; she's just excited that the man she loves also loves her.*



*Rosalind's comment about women is at once potentially denigrating, but also humorous, given that she says it while dressed as a man.*



Orlando and Jaques enter, bickering. Jaques insults Rosalind's name, and tells Orlando that being in love is the worst fault. He says that he had been looking for a fool when he came across Orlando, and Orlando tells him to look in the brook to see the fool he was looking for, but Jaques catches on to the trick (that he will simply see himself in the brook). When the two men part, Jaques calls Orlando "Signor Love," and Orlando calls Jaques "Monsieur Melancholy."

Rosalind (still disguised as **Ganymede**) approaches Orlando and asks what time it is. When he answers that he doesn't know because there is no clock, Rosalind quips that a lover would serve just as well to tell the time, because a true lover sighs on the minute and groans on the hour.

Orlando doubts that Rosalind, who he takes for a country shepherd, could have acquired her manner of speaking in the countryside, but she claims to have had an articulate and religious uncle. She then thanks God that she is not a woman, in light of all the womanly evils her uncle used to speak of.

Rosalind mentions the **poems on the trees** and expresses her desire to meet and advise the love-swept poet who's posted them. Orlando admits to being the very poet. Though Rosalind (as **Ganymede**) at first pretends to express doubts that Orlando is truly in love (just to hear Orlando's declarations of love for Rosalind), she then pretends to be convinced and offers to try curing him of his lunatic love. She tells Orlando that he must imagine her (or him, rather, as she is dressed as Ganymede) as his mistress and woo her, while she acts moody, shallow, and undesirable. This method, she claims, has succeeded before in driving a man in a similar position out of mad love into pure madness, and finally into monastic retreat.

Orlando agrees to try her method, which begins with calling her by the name Rosalind.

*Jaques is trying, without much success, to act upon his ambition of becoming a fool. Yet Orlando seems to see through Jaques instantly—to see that Jaques is himself actually a fool, and not in the sense of being a professional fool. Jaques farewell comment to Orlando indicates Orlando's foolishness in love; but Orlando's response indicates Jaques' foolishness in melancholy.*



*The hijinks about gender roles and identity begins in earnest here, as Orlando discusses love with what he thinks is a man but is actually not only a woman but his beloved! It's ironic that Rosalind is speaking abstractly about love to Orlando, given that he does not recognize her as his own object of love. It's also ironic that she is making fun of lovers, as just moments ago she couldn't stop herself from interrupting Celia while she was talking about Orlando. Though this does suggest that Rosalind has some control over herself when in love, unlike all the other lovers in the play.*



*In these remarks, Rosalind pretends that she does not bear two qualities that, in fact, distinctly characterize her: her royal upbringing, and her femininity.*



*This establishes what will become a major plot point for the rest of the play—Rosalind's romantic education of Orlando. In this exchange, as in future exchanges, Rosalind shows off her wit and cleverness, and she does so both to build Orlando (who, remember, was left uneducated by Oliver) into a suitable lover for her (at least to some extent shifting him from "natural" to "courtly"), while also allowing herself to play the role of beloved by pretending to be a man who is playing that role. The symbolism of Rosalind's chosen name of Ganymede, associated as that mythological name is with homosexuality, how ratchets up a notch as "Ganymede" now pretends to be a woman in love.*



*Orlando thinks that he is calling a man named Ganymede "Rosalind," when in fact Rosalind is pretending to be Ganymede who is pretending to be Rosalind. Incidentally, it's also worth remembering that in Shakespeare's time all actors were male, so in this scene you actually have a male actor pretending to be Rosalind, pretending to be Ganymede, pretending to be Rosalind.*





## ACT 3, SCENE 3

Touchstone enters, talking to a goatherd named Audrey. He compares himself to Ovid, saying he is amongst Audrey's goats just as Ovid was amongst the Goths. When Audrey doesn't understand, Touchstone expresses regret that she's not more "poetical." He elaborates that "the truest poetry is the most feigning, and lovers are given to poetry," and explains that Audrey need not be honest because she is already beautiful, and it is excessive to be both honest and beautiful. Throughout their exchange, Jaques stands nearby and makes occasional asides about Audrey's stupidity.

Touchstone announces his decision to be married to Audrey by Sir Oliver Martext, a vicar from a neighboring village. He then riffs on the theme of **horns**, which were said to grow from the foreheads of men whose wives cheated on them, and concludes that it is more desirable and honorable to be a 'horned' (cheated-on) married man than a bare-browed bachelor.

Sir Oliver Martext arrives and inquires if there is anyone to give away the woman in the marriage ceremony. Jaques steps forward and offers to do it, but then convinces Touchstone that the marriage should actually occur in a proper church. Touchstone agrees, despite his reservation that a poorly-administered wedding would provide a better excuse for him to leave the marriage if he wanted to later on. The three of them depart, leaving Martext alone and confused in the forest.

## ACT 3, SCENE 4

Rosalind confides to Celia that she feels like weeping. She is upset that Orlando did not come to meet with **Ganymede** (i.e. Rosalind in disguise) that morning as he had promised to. She alternates between speaking adoringly of Orlando, and expressing how devastated she is by his absence. Celia plays along, both supplementing Rosalind's adulations and nursing her sense of injury.

Rosalind then tells Celia of having met with Duke Senior the day before and of him laughing at her claim that she was of a parentage as good as his own. But immediately after, Rosalind suggests that they need not talk about fathers when they can talk instead about Orlando. At Rosalind's provocation, Celia concedes that Rosalind's lover is brave but reasons that "all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides."

*Touchstone once again demonstrates his sophistication and ability to make remarks that have an air of intelligence. This ability, previously contrasted with Corin's simple-mindedness, is here contrasted with Audrey's. The content of Touchstone's comments is also worth noting, with its connection of "lovers" with "feigning", i.e. dishonesty. And as Orlando's poetry comparing Rosalind to Helen of Troy indicates, there is a kind of exuberant dishonesty inspired by love—Orlando is even lying to himself in that he thinks those comparisons are valid!*



*Touchstone deems that it is preferable to be with someone, even if that person is unfaithful, than to be alone. His verbalized preference for company makes sense, given that he is never found alone within the context of the play, and always seems to assume the role of someone's side-kick or companion.*



*Touchstone's convictions regarding marriage are revealed to be rather weak, both concerning how his marriage should take place, and even, it seems, whether it should take place at all. Further, his initial interest in getting married seemed to be connected to also being able to easily get out of the marriage.*



*Though Rosalind is taking on the task of "teaching" Orlando how to love, she, like Silvius and Orlando, is also overwhelmed by emotion and overly sensitive in her amorous state.*



*Rosalind recounts the humorous story of having met with her father, Duke Senior, without him knowing he was speaking with his daughter. It's clear how much her priorities have shifted: though she initially went into the forest to find her father, she now cares primarily for Orlando. Romantic love shifts a woman's love from father to lover.*



Corin then enters and invites Celia and Rosalind to come witness the "pageant" of Silvius, whose helpless love Rosalind had been so touched by earlier, try to win over his beloved, the scornful shepherdess Phebe. Rosalind agrees to come and watch, and vows not just to watch, but in fact to intervene.

*Rosalind, dressed as Ganymede, will counsel on matters of love. The role is one she's grown accustomed to, in her dealings with Orlando.*



## ACT 3, SCENE 5

Silvius begs his mistress, Phebe, not to scorn him and compares her to a hardhearted executioner. Rosalind and Celia enter, in their disguises as **Ganymede** and Aliena, along with Corin, just as Phebe cruelly mocks Silvius's "poetic" language of love, and comments that though he says her eyes are murderous such a thing is impossible because eyes are incapable of inflicting harm. Silvius responds that the wounds of love are invisible and that some day she may know of them. She remains unpitying and tells him that, until she feels such invisible wounds, he ought not approach her again.

*Phebe here is calling attention to and dismissing the exaggerated and unrealistic language of love (or what Touchstone in Act 3, Scene 3 referred to as the "feigning" associated with love). As she is not in love herself, she sees the things that those in love are saying as being ridiculous, as not making literal sense. Note also that Silvius and Phebe are playing out classic roles of the genre of pastoral love: the helpless, desperate male lover and the scornful beautiful female beloved.*



Rosalind (as **Ganymede**) steps forward and interjects with an extended insult directed at Phebe: she accuses Phebe of being too plain to be so proud and of having an inflated ego because of Silvius's infatuation. When "Ganymede" finishes, Phebe proclaims that she prefers "his" insults to Silvius's praise. "Ganymede" realizes what is happening and tries to dissuade Phebe from falling in love with "him," but it seems that Phebe's fallen in love at first sight.

*Rosalind's insult adds a twist to the pastoral love scene by pointing out that Phebe isn't actually pretty enough to play the role of scornful beloved (though Silvius, blinded by love, thinks she is). And now, suddenly, while Phebe just before scorned the senselessness of love, as soon as she herself is scorned Phebe herself falls into a foolish love, with the very person who has just insulted her. Phebe, in other words, has fallen into the same role that she was just mocking Silvius for playing.*



After Rosalind and Celia leave, Phebe decides to keep Silvius around so she can talk to him about love. She gives a lengthy description of **Ganymede**'s attributes, equivocates on whether she loves or hates him, and then orders Silvius to deliver to **Ganymede** a taunting letter that she plans to write.

*Phebe is cruel to employ her smitten and obedient admirer to help her win the love of another, though of course it's funny too.*



## ACT 4, SCENE 1

Jaques approaches "**Ganymede**," wanting to get better acquainted. Rosalind calls Jaques a "melancholy fellow," and Jaques accepts the characterization, but specifies that his kind of melancholy is not like any other and is rather "a melancholy of [his] own, compounded of many simples" and inspired by many experiences and travels. Rosalind declares that she would rather have a fool make her happy than experience make her sad. Jacques departs.

*Jaques continues to fail in his attempt to match Touchstone's sophisticated foolishness. While Touchstone is experienced and joyous, Jaques is experienced and sad—and again tries to explain how his melancholy is a form of wisdom—but in fact it just makes him an unpleasant companion and an unsuccessful fool.*



Orlando enters and Rosalind (dressed as **Ganymede**) scolds him for missing their meeting that morning, claiming that she'd rather have a snail for a lover. She orders Orlando to woo her, and he says that if she were really Rosalind, he would kiss her before saying anything. She responds that he should save the kiss for the moment when he runs out of things to say.

Rosalind teases Orlando that she will not accept him as a lover and he dramatically replies that he will die. Rosalind objects, citing that no one has ever died from love, and then she finally announces that she will love Orlando. She gets Celia to play the role of a priest in a play-acted marriage between the two of them.

Next, Rosalind (as **Ganymede**) tries to make herself (Rosalind) seem unappealing by promising Orlando that she will be jealous and temperamental in their marriage, all the more so because of, and not despite of, her wisdom. Orlando does not believe this could be true. He then departs to dine with the Duke, over Rosalind's protests, but promises to return by two o'clock.

Celia criticizes Rosalind for portraying women so badly. Rosalind responds by gushing to Celia how much she's in love—she says that only Cupid could assess the depth of her love.

## ACT 4, SCENE 2

Jaques addresses the First Lord, who has killed a deer, and suggests that he present his kill like a Roman conqueror, and give the deer's **horns** like a victory branch. The Second Lord accompanies the presentation with a song. The song touches on cuckoldry and includes the line, "take thou no scorn to wear the horn... the horn, the horn, the lusty horn, is not a thing to laugh to scorn."

## ACT 4, SCENE 3

Rosalind (still disguised as **Ganymede**) is impatiently awaiting Orlando, who is now late. Celia suggests that he has gone to sleep.

*Again Rosalind's disguise creates a humorous effect: Orlando describes what he would do if he were talking to Rosalind, unaware that he is actually talking to her.*



*This play-acted marriage foreshadows their actual marriage at the end of the play, and at the same time allows Rosalind to get to enjoy "marrying" the man she loves. Note also that Rosalind is less ridiculous about love than Orlando is: she refuses to agree that someone could die from love.*



*Rosalind and Orlando's amusing banter indicates their mutual compatibility. Rosalind's comments about women are also rather stereotypical—of the delightful girl in love who becomes a terror as a wife.*



*Celia calls Rosalind out on her simplistic and unflattering depictions of women, but Rosalind is too mired in the depths of her love to concern herself with anything else.*



*As in Touchstone's remark, here horns are associated with cuckoldry and cuckoldry is posited as something natural and not shameful.*



*Rosalind is extremely sensitive to Orlando's presence, absence, or tardiness.*



Silvius approaches and gives a letter to Rosalind, which, he reports, Phebe wrote with an angry look on her face—a “stern brow.” Rosalind reads it and tells Celia it is a list of insults, and wonders why Phebe would write such a letter; she first accuses Silvius of being its author, assuming no woman could write so rudely and injuriously.

Rosalind then reads the letter aloud, interjecting “Did you ever hear such railing?” The content of the letter, however, is an expression not of insults or chiding but of adoration. It proclaims such things as “Whiles you chid me, I did love; / How then might your prayers move!” Celia says that she is sorry for Silvius, since his love now loves **Ganymede**. But Rosalind says that she has no pity for him since he loves someone like Phebe. Rosalind then orders Silvius to go report to Phebe that she (i.e. Ganymede) will only love Phebe if Phebe loves Silvius. Silvius departs.

Oliver enters, looking for the sheep cottage owned by Ganymede and Aliena. He then notes that the two people he is speaking to fit Orlando’s description of Aliena and Ganymede, and asks if in fact they are the owners of the cottage. When they confirm that they do, Oliver gives to Rosalind a bloody napkin, which was sent to her by Orlando. Rosalind is confused, and Oliver explains: a little bit ago, Orlando came across a man (Oliver, though Orlando didn’t recognize him yet) sleeping under a tree with a snake wrapped around his neck. At the sight of Orlando, the snake slithered away, drawing attention to a lion crouching in the bushes. When Orlando discovered that the sleeping man was in fact Oliver, he initially planned to leave his cruel brother as lion’s prey, but then kindness got the best of him, and he fought off the beast, getting wounded in the process.

Oliver reports that in response he himself has had a conversion to kindness and that he cared for Orlando’s wound before coming to deliver the napkin to Ganymede so that he would excuse Orlando’s “broken promise.” Rosalind faints, and Celia tries to excuse it as an effect of the sight of blood. When Rosalind comes to, Oliver comments that she lacks “a man’s heart,” but she responds by telling Oliver to report to Orlando how well she “counterfeited” her swoon, just as she had taught him in their lessons. Oliver thinks the faint must have been authentic, but Rosalind assures him it was faked.

*Silvius, blinded by love, has followed Phebe’s orders to deliver her love letter to Ganymede. As she does earlier, Rosalind makes a generalization about women, while appearing as a man.*



*Rosalind has misrepresented the contents of Phebe’s letter. We can assume that she described Phebe’s outpouring of affection as insulting because even though it is not actually injurious, she herself is disgusted by it. Meanwhile, the gender games are getting wilder: Phebe loves “Ganymede,” Orlando is pretending to love Rosalind who he thinks is being played by “Ganymede” whom he doesn’t love, while “Ganymede” loves Orlando.*



*The men of Frederick’s court—primarily Frederick and Oliver—are characterized by their deviousness, hunger for power, and hatred and envy. But Orlando has always been depicted as more natural—he was denied even an education. In this scene, his natural bravery and goodness win out over his momentary “courtly” instinct to just let his brother be killed. Orlando is truly good and principled, and in the forest these traits which were his “enemies” when he was at court are once again truly virtues.*



*Orlando’s moral strength and ability to overlook his brother’s evildoings, has—in the realm of the forest—inspired a dramatic change in Oliver, who turns suddenly and completely good. Rosalind is overwhelmed by the sight of Orlando’s blood, and faints. But fainting is not a “manly” thing to do, and so to preserve her disguise as “Ganymede” she has to pretend that she fainted in order to convincingly play the role of “Rosalind” that she has taken on for Orlando.*



## ACT 5, SCENE 1

Touchstone promises Audrey that they will be married. A young man named William enters, who appears to be smitten with Audrey. William speaks with a country accent and admits to having been born in the forest. When he claims himself to be witty, Touchstone retorts that only fools think themselves to be wise. He provokes William and mocks him for being unlearned. Finally, he calls him a clown and threatens to kill him in one hundred and fifty ways if he does not abandon the scene.

*The exchange between Touchstone and William dramatizes the conflict between country and court manners. Touchstone ridicules William for his lack of sophistication. Though Touchstone may be wiser than William, however, he is unfairly cruel to him, which suggests that learnedness and sophistication does not necessarily lend itself to goodness.*



## ACT 5, SCENE 2

Orlando is asking Oliver if it is possible that he could have fallen so instantly in love with her (we later learn "her" to be Aliena aka Celia). Oliver assures him that it is, and, in light of his engagement with Aliena (who he thinks is a shepherdess), bestows upon Orlando their father's estate and revenue. Orlando gives his consent to Oliver's wedding.

*Though Oliver had already begun to undergo his conversion, love has hastened and strengthened his moral transformation, and has inspired him to give to Orlando his fair share (and more) of their father's inheritance. Though it is unclear why Oliver is doing this, it may be because he thinks that Aliena (i.e. Celia) is a shepherdess and so may be giving up his "courtly" life in order to be with her.*



Rosalind enters just as Oliver departs, and discusses with Orlando the sudden love between her cousin and his brother. Orlando says he is glad to see his brother's happiness, but admits that he does not feel happy himself, because his mental imagination of **Ganymede** as Rosalind can no longer satisfy his longing for the real thing.

*Again, a scene potent with dramatic irony and humor: Orlando claims that Ganymede-pretending-to-be-Rosalind can no longer satisfy his longing for the real Rosalind, though of course Ganymede is, in fact, the very person for whom he longs.*



Rosalind responds that that she is skilled in the art of magic and promises that, if Orlando loves Rosalind as much as he claims to, he will be married to her tomorrow at the same time when Oliver marries "Aliena."

*Rosalind invokes the power of magic, when actually all she needs to do to bring Rosalind to Orlando is remove her costume.*



Silvius and Phebe enter, and Phebe says that she's upset that "**Ganymede**" shared her letter. Rosalind again tries to persuade Phebe to love her faithful shepherd, Silvius. Silvius then defines love as "all made of sighs and tears...of faith and service... all adoration, duty, and observance...", and proclaims himself to be all of those things for Phebe, just as Orlando is for Rosalind, Phebe for Ganymede, and Rosalind for no woman.

*All the lovers of the play—Silvius, Orlando, Phebe—unite under the common cause of overwhelming love.*



Rosalind resolves the scene by telling everyone what will happen the next day: Orlando, Silvius, and she (i.e. **Ganymede**) will all be married; and she (i.e. Ganymede) will satisfy Orlando, content Silvius, and marry Phebe if she ever marries a woman. Silvius, Phebe, and Orlando promise not to fail to show up the next day at Oliver's wedding.

*Rosalind again assumes the position of an authority figure on love. While before she was attempting to convince one person or other in or out of love, here she is arranging relationships and setting up marriages to provide resolution to the gender confusion created by her disguise.*



## ACT 5, SCENE 3

Touchstone and Audrey speak excitedly about their marriage. Two of Duke Senior's pages enter and sing a song for them. They sing of love in springtime, with singing birds, flowers, and cornfields. The song's refrain is "with a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino," and most of its stanzas end with "etc." Touchstone deems the song "untuneable," foolish, and not worth his time.

*The pages' song is absurd and amusing. It is overly sentimental, and the use of the academic "etc." in a love song has a humorously jarring effect. Touchstone's rejection of the song as too "foolish" suggests perhaps that love has made him less tolerant of foolishness than he was before.*



## ACT 5, SCENE 4

Duke Senior, Amiens, Jaques, Orlando, Oliver, and Celia (as Aliena) enter. In response to Duke Senior's questions about **Ganymede's** promise, Orlando says that he sometimes believes and sometimes doubts that it will come true. Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede) enters along with Silvius and Phebe and makes sure that everyone is ready for what is to come to pass: that Duke Senior will give Rosalind to Orlando, that Orlando will marry Rosalind, and that Phebe will marry Ganymede unless for some reason Phebe refuses, in which case she will marry Silvius.

*Again, Rosalind reigns over matters of love, reiterating the plan that she announced previously.*



When Rosalind (as **Ganymede**) and Celia leave, the Duke remarks that **Ganymede** reminded him of his daughter, and Orlando confirms the resemblance but recounts "Ganymede's" alibi about getting her courtly manners from her articulate uncle.

*It is amusing, perhaps unbelievable, that Duke Senior has only a fleeting suspicion of **Ganymede's** true identity, given that "he" is the Duke's daughter. Also interesting is that he seems to recognize her because of her courtly manners, not just her physical resemblance.*



Touchstone enters with Audrey, and Jaques identifies him as the fool he had mentioned meeting earlier in the forest. Touchstone claims that he has just had a quarrel that was taken "upon the seventh cause." At Jaques's pressing, Touchstone explains what he means by "seventh cause": that, after he told a courtier he met along the road that the man's beard was poorly cut, there were seven levels of retorts, including the Retort Courteous and the Quip Modest. Touchstone goes on to suggest that every level of retort could be avoided but the Lie Direct. Duke Senior praises Touchstone for his wit, remarking that "he uses his folly like a stalking horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit."

*Touchstone proves his wit before an audience, and gets the approval of Duke Senior, who immediately recognizes the clown's wisdom. His reference to seven levels of retorts is reminiscent of Jaques's description of the seven stages in a man's life, in his "all the world's a stage" speech.*



Hymen, the god of marriage, enters, with Celia and Rosalind at his side, dressed now as themselves. Rosalind presents herself to Duke Senior and to Orlando, both of whom express some disbelief at her appearance; the former remarks “if there be truth in sight, you are my daughter,” and the latter, “if there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.” At the sight of Rosalind, Phebe bids adieu to her chance at love with **Ganymede**. Hymen sings a marriage hymn, in which he says he will remove all confusion and addresses all pairs of lovers present: Orlando and Rosalind, Phebe and Silvius, Oliver and Celia, and Touchstone and Audrey.

Jaques de Boys enters and reports that Duke Frederick, who had been on his way to the Forest of Arden fight with his brother, came across a religious man along the way and was converted to a love of peace. After his conversion, he decided to return his crown to his banished brother, restore all of Duke Senior’s lands, and go to live in a monastery. Duke Senior welcomes Jaques de Boys, and praises the good fortune of the occasion; he suggests that they “let us do those ends that here were well begun and well begot” and that they “fall into... rustic revelry.”

Everyone rejoices that they can return to the royal court, except for Jaques who announces that he will go join Duke Frederick in his life of contemplation at the monastery. He explains that he feels himself to be suited “for other than for dancing measures,” and says his goodbyes to Duke Senior, Orlando, Oliver, Silvius, and Touchstone. Jaques exits and all the other characters, except for Rosalind, dance off the stage.

## EPILOGUE

Rosalind begins the Epilogue by acknowledging that it is unusual in a play for a woman to give the epilogue, but reasons that it is no more so than for the lord to give the prologue. She says that a good play shouldn’t need an epilogue, but can be improved by one. She adds that since she isn’t dressed like a beggar she won’t beg for their approval.

*At last, all of the play’s characters assemble together. Rosalind and Celia assume their true identities, and present themselves to their lovers, and the gender confusion disappears as the god of marriage appears to bring the couples together in matrimony. Marriage here is seen in a conservative light—as something that ends confusion by bringing together a man and a woman. Even Phebe rather easily transfers her love from "Ganymede" to Silvius.*



*Duke Frederick’s reported conversion mirrors Oliver’s earlier conversion— while the latter was inspired by Orlando’s exemplary moral conduct, the former was motivated by a spiritual enlightenment. The monastery is unique, and distinct from both court and countryside, in being neither wholly refined and mannered nor wholly unmannered and free—it is instead a place of thought and prayer, away from people of all types, away from the messiness of the world.*



*Jaques, as someone who sees the world as almost solely full of sadness, decides that he is unsuited for that world. The monastery may be the only place where the world doesn’t feel so much like a “stage,” where nobody is acting at all because they are all in contemplation. And yet there remains something deeply silly about Jaques, who is so serious about everything, who seems to want to look wise more than anything.*



*After a play in which she has pretended to be a man pretending to be a woman (who was herself), it is fitting that Rosalind should break from tradition and give the epilogue as a woman. It’s also fitting given that she has often, in the course of the play, articulated the state of affairs (primarily in love and marriage.) Finally note how she continues to equate what one looks like and what one is by saying that she won’t beg because she’s not dressed like a beggar.*

Deeming that her task is to “conjure” the audience, Rosalind tells the women to like as much of the play as pleases them based on the love they hold for men. She says the same to the men, and jokes that if she were a woman, she would kiss every one in the audience who was good-looking, and clean, enough for her to admire them. She concludes by expressing her confidence that as many men as the number she admires will applaud as she curtsies her farewell.

*Rosalind's suggestion that she will “conjure” the audience is reminiscent of her promise to Orlando that she had magical powers and could thereby assure Rosalind's presence. Rosalind might indeed be considered as a magician of sorts, in her ability to transcend normal gender roles, arrange marriages, and make both a man and a woman fall foolishly in love with her.*







## HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

### MLA

Batkin, Liza. "As You Like It." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 2 Oct 2013. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

### CHICAGO MANUAL

Batkin, Liza. "As You Like It." LitCharts LLC, October 2, 2013. Retrieved April 21, 2020. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/as-you-like-it>.

To cite any of the quotes from *As You Like It* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

### MLA

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Simon & Schuster. 2009.

### CHICAGO MANUAL

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2009.