



As You Like It

by
William Shakespeare

Know-the-Show Audience Guide

compiled and written by
the Education Department of
The Shakespeare Theatre
of New Jersey

design and additional research
by Meredith Keffer





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The Life Of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, widely recognized as the greatest English dramatist, was born on April 23, 1564. He was the third of eight children born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, England. Shakespeare's father was a prominent local merchant, and Shakespeare's childhood, though

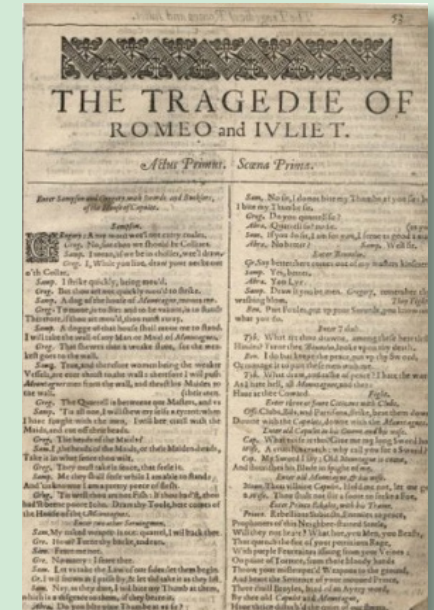


William Shakespeare, represented in a copper engraving by Martin Droeshout.

little is known about it for certain, appears to have been quite normal. In fact, it seems that the young Shakespeare was allowed considerable leisure time because his writing contains extensive knowledge of hunting and hawking. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. She was eight years his senior, and the match was considered unconventional.

It is believed that Shakespeare left Stratford-on-Avon and went to London around 1588. By 1592, he was a successful actor and playwright. He wrote 38 plays, two epic poems, and over 150 sonnets. His work was immensely popular, appealing to members of all social spheres including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. While they were well-liked, Shakespeare's plays were not considered by his educated contemporaries to be exceptional. By 1608, Shakespeare's involvement with theatre began to dwindle, and he spent more time at his country home in Stratford. He died in 1616.

Most of Shakespeare's plays found their first major publication in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, when two of his fellow actors put the plays together in the First Folio. Other early printings of Shakespeare's plays were called quartos, a printer's term referring to the format in which the publication was laid out. These quartos and the First Folio texts are the sources of all modern printings of Shakespeare's plays.

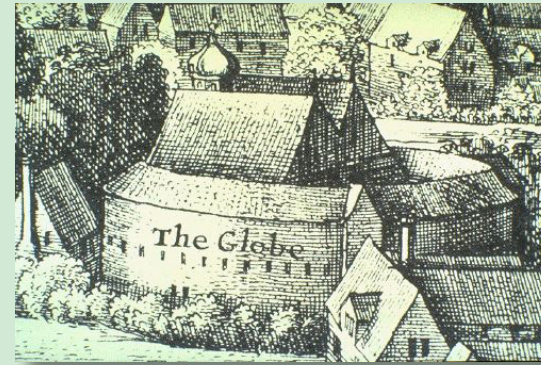


From a copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays.

Shakespeare's London

London, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, was a bustling urban center filled with a wide variety of people and cultures. Although most life centered around making a living or going to church, one of the main sources of diversion for Londoners was the theatre. It was a form of entertainment accessible to people of all classes. The rich and the poor, the aristocrats and the beggars all met at the theatre. Though often appeasing the church or the monarchy, theatre at this time did experience a freedom that was unknown in previous generations. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous bawdy and pagan references found in Shakespeare's plays. This relative artistic license and freedom of expression made theatre extremely unpopular among certain members of society, and it was later banned entirely by the Puritans. Not until the reign of Charles II (1660-1685) was the theatre restored to the status it held in Shakespeare's day.

The Globe Theatre, the resident playhouse for Shakespeare's company of actors, was easily accessible to Londoners and proved to be an active social center. Actors and performers were also regularly brought to court or to private



The Old Globe theatre in 1642.

homes to entertain. Despite their social popularity, actors were perceived as low status citizens, sometimes no better than a common beggar or rogue. Most performers were forced to earn a living doing trade

work. The aristocracy's desire for entertainment, however, did spur the development of numerous new theatre pieces. Often a nobleman would become a patron to an artist or company of actors, providing for their financial needs and sheltering them to some degree from official sanctions. In return, the company would adopt the name of the patron.

Shakespeare's acting company was originally named "Lord Chamberlain's Men" after their patron, Henry Carey, Lord Chamberlain. Later, under the patronage of King James I, they were known as "The King's Men," an unprecedented honor at the time.

Despite the flourishing of the arts at this time, London was sometimes a desolate place. Frequent outbreaks of the Black Plague killed thousands. Theatres, shops, and the government all shut down during these periods in the hopes of preventing further contagion.

THE SONNETS

You may have thought that Shakespeare wrote sonnets earlier in his career, as a type of "stepping stone" to his plays. However, Shakespeare actually penned most of his sonnets during the various outbreaks of the plague in London, when the theatres were closed.



As You Like It

An Introduction

As You Like It is one of Shakespeare's most enduring and beloved comedies. As with many of his plays, Shakespeare drew characters and plot devices from existing stories, but skillfully made the play his own. From the repressive world of Duke Frederick's court to the more idyllic life of those exiled to the Forest of Arden, we see many facets of the human experience colorfully drawn.

Two facets in particular are at the heart of the play. Shakespeare directs our attention to the experience of theatre - to the event of the play itself and to the power of role-playing in human society. He also directs our attention to the experience of nature, in the form of the forest in which the characters are healed and transformed, and where they gain self-awareness.

The courtly exiles in Arden, as well as the "true laborers" who inhabit the forest year-round, are exposed to hunger, weariness, and wild animals. But as Duke Senior describes, and Corin demonstrates, this exposure to the reality of nature is itself a kind of education for those whose minds are open to learning from it.

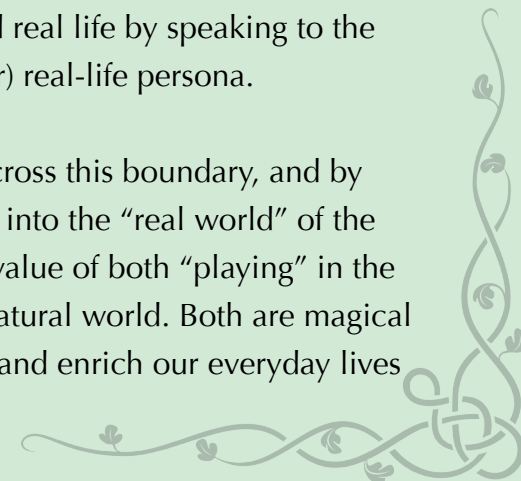
Yet even as Arden is a real forest where shepherds huddle against the cold with tarred and greasy hands, it seems to be equally a magical realm in which every malevolence or mischance is

converted to good. Each of the characters who comes to the forest is reformed or formed anew in some way: Duke Senior gains inner strength and wisdom; Orlando finds both love and trust in his fellow man; Rosalind discovers the power of her own voice and mind. As scholar Agnes Latham states in her introduction to the play:

The circle of this forest is a magic circle even though the magic does not take material forms... Its power to convert surpasses nature. When Oliver enters its confines he completely changes his character and in a twinkling of an eye becomes a fit lover for Celia. The usurping Duke fails even to enter. He lets fall his weapons as though there were some invisible barrier which evil cannot pass.

These abrupt transformations remind us not only of the magic of fairy tales but also the "magic" of the stage, most obviously through Rosalind's play-acting. Throughout the performance, the author reminds us of the fact that a play is exactly what we are seeing. In the play's final moments, Shakespeare has the boy actor who would have played Rosalind entirely dismantle the boundary between acting and real life by speaking to the audience in his (or nowadays, her) real-life persona.

By encouraging the audience to cross this boundary, and by sending his main characters back into the "real world" of the court, Shakespeare confirms the value of both "playing" in the theatre and "escaping" into the natural world. Both are magical experiences that counterbalance and enrich our everyday lives in society.



As You Like It

A Short Synopsis

Duke Senior has fled into exile from his usurping brother, Frederick. Duke Senior's daughter Rosalind, however, has been permitted to remain in the court as a friend to Duke Frederick's daughter, Celia.

Orlando, the youngest son of Sir Roland de Boys, is cruelly forced to live the life of a servant by his elder brother, Oliver. Furious, Orlando demands that Oliver give him the small inheritance promised in their father's will. Oliver refuses and begins to plot a way to get rid of his younger brother. In the meantime, Orlando valiantly wins a wrestling match at the court of Duke Frederick, and in doing so catches the eye of Rosalind who gives him a necklace as a token of her affection. Orlando returns home to discover that Oliver is plotting against his life and escapes with his elderly servant Adam into the Forest of Arden.

Immediately following the wrestling match, Duke Frederick voices his displeasure with Rosalind and accuses her of usurping the people's loyalty and affection for Celia. He banishes Rosalind. Celia's love for and loyalty to her cousin Rosalind compel her to defy her father, and the girls decide to flee to the forest of Arden to seek out Rosalind's banished father. For their

safety, the ladies disguise themselves: Celia as a young country wench, Aliena, and Rosalind as a young man, Ganymede. The ladies also take with them Touchstone, the court fool. Furious at his daughter's disappearance, Duke Frederick suspects that Orlando is somehow involved, and orders Oliver to find his brother and take him prisoner.

Deep in the Forest of Arden, Rosalind's exiled father, Duke Senior, contemplates his life away from the court. He encourages his lords to see and appreciate the merits of the simple life they now lead. The melancholy Jaques seems to be the only follower who is distressed and dissatisfied. As the lords prepare to dine, Orlando rushes in with sword drawn, demanding food for Adam, who is on the verge of death. Duke Senior tells him there



A scene from the 2005 STNJ production of *As You Like It*.



Costume designs for (left to right) Celia, Touchstone, and Rosalind/Ganymede, created by Paul Canada for the 2013 STNJ production of *As You Like It*.

is no need for violence and invites Orlando and Adam to join the gathering. Orlando discovers that the host is, in fact, Duke Senior, who was a close friend of his deceased father.

Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone arrive in the Forest of Arden exhausted, with no food or shelter. They come upon an elderly shepherd, Corin, who informs them that his master is preparing to sell all of his lands. They offer to buy the property and hurry off to their new home.

Rosalind and Celia start discovering love poems addressed to Rosalind pinned to trees throughout the forest. The author of these verses is none other than the young Orlando, whom

Rosalind fell in love with at court. When Orlando comes upon the ladies' home, Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede) teases him and vows to "cure" him of his love-sickness, if he pretends that she is actually his beloved Rosalind. Orlando takes Ganymede's challenge, not because he wants to be cured, but because he finds the distraction comforting.

While awaiting Orlando's return, Rosalind comes upon Silvius, a lovesick shepherd, chasing after Phebe, a shepherdess. Disdainful of the cruelty with which Phebe treats her loyal shepherd, Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede) steps in and attempts to convince her to accept Silvius' vows of love. Phebe, however, falls immediately in love with the young Ganymede, not realizing that "he" is actually a she. Ganymede brushes Phebe aside.

Orlando arrives an hour late for his first meeting with Ganymede, or "Rosalind." After she berates him, she advises Orlando about love. Elsewhere in the forest, Touchstone has fallen in love with Audrey, a country shepherdess. He swears to marry her and chases away William, a would-be rival suitor.

Orlando again fails to arrive on time for a meeting with Rosalind. As she and Celia discuss Orlando's questionable faithfulness, Silvius enters with a letter from Phebe in which she proclaims her love for Ganymede. Crushed, Silvius returns to Phebe at Ganymede's urging.



Oliver arrives before Celia and Rosalind (Ganymede) with a message from Orlando. He informs the pair that Orlando, after leaving them last, was injured while saving Oliver from a hungry lion. Rosalind swoons at the sight of Orlando's bloody handkerchief, which Oliver has brought with him as proof of the encounter. As they help Rosalind back to the house, it is clear that Oliver and Celia have instantly fallen in love. Rosalind rushes to see her wounded love. When Orlando bemoans the fact that he still does not have Rosalind, Ganymede (Rosalind) vows that, through magic, she/he will conjure up the real Rosalind and Orlando shall marry her the next day. Ganymede also vows to help Silvius and Phebe find happiness if they will meet together at the wedding of Oliver and Celia.

When the various couples gather as Ganymede has instructed them, Rosalind appears as herself before the group, and all the lovers are happily married. As the celebration ensues, a messenger announces that Duke Frederick has led troops to the Forest to attack Duke Senior and his compatriots, but that an encounter with a religious man at the Forest's border has converted him from his tyrannous ways. It is revealed that Duke Frederick has restored all land, titles, and power to Duke Senior and his men. As the retinue prepares to return to court following the celebration, Jaques announces that he will remain to seek out Duke Frederick and learn from his penitent reformation.



Scenes from the 2013 STNJ production of *As You Like It*: (top) Touchstone (Robert Clohessy) woos the shepherdess Audrey (Kristen Kittel); (above) Charles (Ben Sterling) wrestles Orlando (Matthew Simpson) as Rosalind (Caralyn Kozlowski) and Celia (Maria Tholl) look on.



As You Like It

Who's Who

The Court of Duke Frederick

DUKE FREDERICK: Duke Senior's younger brother and usurper; Celia's father.

ROSALIND: Duke Senior's daughter. After being banished by her uncle, she escapes to the Forest of Arden disguised as a boy named Ganymede, where by chance she encounters Orlando, the young man she has fallen in love with during the wrestling match.

CELIA: Duke Frederick's daughter; Rosalind's cousin and best friend. Celia chooses to follow Rosalind into exile disguised as the maid Aliena.

TOUCHSTONE: a court fool who accompanies Rosalind and Celia to the Forest of Arden and there falls in love with Audrey.

LE BEAU: a courtier in the court of Duke Frederick.

CHARLES: a skilled wrestler, beaten by Orlando.

The De Boys Household:

ORLANDO: the youngest son of Sir Roland. Orlando catches Rosalind's eye during a wrestling match but then must flee into the Forest of Arden to escape his brother's plot against his life.

OLIVER: the eldest son and heir of the deceased Sir Roland; he

persecutes his brother, Orlando, but eventually undergoes a total transformation in the forest of Arden.

JAQUES DE BOYS: the middle brother of Oliver and Orlando.

ADAM: a faithful old servant of the De Boys family who follows Orlando into exile.

The Exiled Court of Duke Senior

DUKE SENIOR: Duke Frederick's older brother and Rosalind's father; he has been banished by his brother and lives in the idyllic Forest of Arden.

JAQUES: one of Duke Senior's followers; he is often melancholy and critical.

AMIENS: a lord and musician among the exiled lords.

In the Forest of Arden:

PHEBE: a shepherdess who scorns the love of the shepherd Silvius, but falls in love with the disguised Rosalind.

SILVIUS: a shepherd desperately in love with, but scorned by, Phebe.

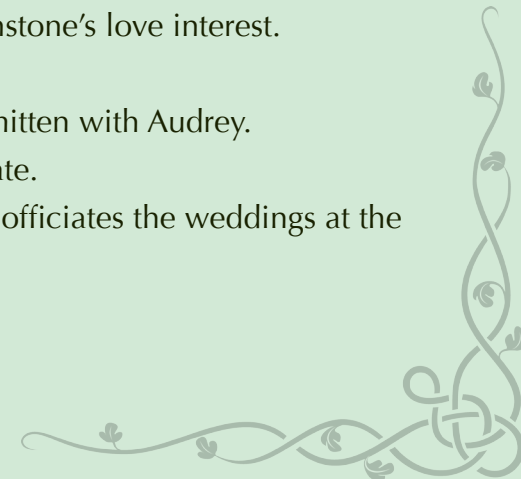
AUDREY: a shepherdess, and Touchstone's love interest.

CORIN: an older shepherd.

WILLIAM: a country man who is smitten with Audrey.

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT: a country curate.

HYMEN: the God of marriage who officiates the weddings at the end of the play.



Is This English?

Contrary to popular belief, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not write in Old English, or even Middle English. Playwrights of the 16th and early 17th centuries wrote in Modern English. Shakespeare spoke (and wrote in) the same language which we speak today. Language changes constantly through time and space (think about the differences between British and American English, or how texting and the Internet are influencing modern speech), so many older words and usages are no longer familiar to us. Nevertheless, the words and syntax in Shakespeare's plays can be understood today without any "translation."

The history of the English language is long and muddled, as full of historic battles, mass migrations, great kings, and quirky scholars as it is of phonetic shifts and syntactic changes. The foundations of **Old English** (the language of *Beowulf*) came to the British isles on the tongues of Germanic invaders in the fifth century C.E. The Norman conquest of 1066 brought French, which gradually changed Old English into what we now call **Middle English** (the language of Chaucer). **Modern English** dates to the mid-fifteenth century, when specific, universal sound changes; increased borrowing of foreign words; and the standardization of spelling brought about in part by the invention of the printing press brought English much closer to what it looks like today.

That is the history of English sketched in only the very broadest of strokes, since language constantly changes for all sorts of reasons and in all sorts of ways. One fun (or frustrating, depending on how you look at it) example happened in the 1600s when some scholars thought that French-derived words in English ought to look more like their original Latin roots. *So they purposefully added letters that weren't pronounced.* Examples of this include the 'b' in 'debt' and the 'c' in 'indict.' And then in some cases, people started *pronouncing the added letters* - for example, the 'd' in 'adventure' and the 'c' in 'picture,' which were not originally there.

* * *

Religious texts are often the easiest way to clearly see language change, since they are frequently translated and updated. Check out the passage below, given in Old, Middle, and Modern English, and try to identify the common elements as well as what has changed. To help you out, each instance of the words 'forgive' and 'debtors' have been underlined (see the spelling change in 'debt'!). Note that þ = 'th'; 'u' and 'v' are essentially interchangeable; and 'g' in certain places is pronounced 'y.'

Urne gedægwhamlican hlaf syle us todæg. / And forgyf us ure gyltas, / Swa swa we forgyfaþ urum gyltendum. (995 C.E.)

giv to vs this day our breed ouer other substaunce; / and forgeue to vs oure dettis, / as we forgeue to oure dettours; (1389 C.E.)

Giue vs this day our daily bread. / And forgiue vs our debts, / as we forgiue our debtors. (1611 C.E.)



**all the
world's
a stage**

**working-day
world**

**for ever
and
a day**

**too much
of a
good
thing**

**EXPLORING
OUR LANGUAGE**

Many expressions, words, and ideas still common in our everyday speech made their first appearance in Shakespeare's plays. The examples shown on this page are all from *As You Like It*.

**sweet are
the uses
of adversity**

**we
have seen
better days**

**neither rhyme
nor reason**

**a better
world
than
this**





Explore Online

Hear how Shakespeare's words would have sounded in his own day, and learn about how pronunciation has been reconstructed:

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/shakespeare-critical-analysis> (see track 11)



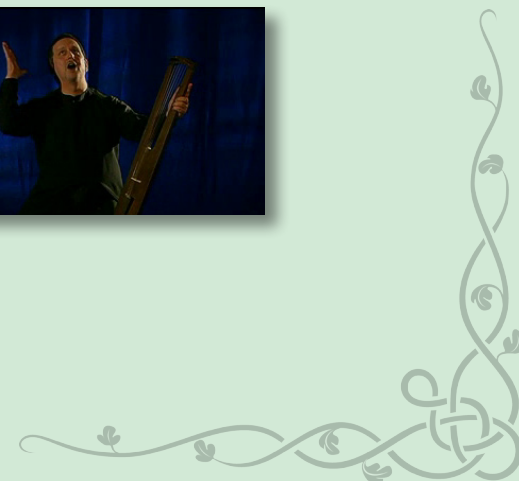
Hear University of Pennsylvania professor David Wallace read excerpts from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English:

<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Wallace.html>



Watch a performance of *Beowulf* in the original Old English, as it might have been performed by a traveling bard:

<http://bagbybeowulf.com/video/index.html>



Sources & History

As You Like It was probably written in 1599 or 1600. It does not appear in the list of Shakespeare's plays that was published by Francis Meres in 1598. In 1600, however, Shakespeare's acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, prevented the play from being published in order to keep it from being staged by other companies. It was finally published in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623.

Shakespeare based *As You Like It* on a popular novel of the day, *Rosalynde* by Thomas Lodge, which was published in 1590. The novel was itself based on an earlier poem, *The Cook's Tale of Gamelyn*. The novel *Rosalynde* clearly belongs to the genre known as pastoral romance, of which Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* is the best-known example. Pastoral romance was developed in classical Greece and Rome, and was revived by a number of Renaissance authors in Europe, including the Italian poet Petrarch.

As with *Rosalynde*, the typical pastoral romance was written for educated courtiers and nobility, and presented an idealized vision of country life, a golden world in which shepherds and shepherdesses frolic and speak in poetry. Love was almost

always the main topic of the pastoral - a romance between the country folk, or the love of a suave gentleman for some simple but adorable country girl, or a romance between two nobles who, for some reason or another, frequently implausible, find themselves temporarily in the country, having to deal with country life. Because the pastoral romance was "high literature," based on a classical model, the courtiers and shepherds alike tend to speak in complex classical allusions and Latin proverbs.



Matthew Simpson as Orlando and Greg Jackson as Jaques in the 2013 STNJ production of *As You Like It*.

While Shakespeare follows the basic plot of Lodge's *Rosalynde* and uses many of his main characters, he also made some significant changes. The characters of Touchstone and Jaques, as well as Audrey, Amiens, William, and LeBeau, were



An engraving by Charles Cousen of Audrey and Touchstone. 19th c. Source: Folger Shakespeare Library.

invented by Shakespeare. The long introductory sections of Lodge's story were significantly cut by Shakespeare, who moves the action of the play very quickly to the Forest of Arden. The play's villains, Oliver and the Duke Frederick, are significantly less villainous than in Lodge's version, and Shakespeare presents the young lovers more realistically than Lodge's models of courtly elegance.

In fact, Shakespeare's play seems to be in some ways a gentle parody of its source and the genre of pastoral romance. The many love sonnets of Lodge's version reappear in Shakespeare as the comically bad love poetry of Orlando. The Touchstone-Audrey and Phebe-Silvius subplots present less than perfect

versions of romance that mock the hyper-romantic Petrarchan ideal. Rosalind, for her part, seems much more interested in winning Orlando's respect than his starry-eyed adoration.

Since the day the Lord Chamberlain's Men succeeded in restricting production rights to the play, *As You Like It* has been one of Shakespeare's most popular and most frequently produced plays. Rosalind has the longest role of any of Shakespeare's female characters, and has become a favorite part for actresses. In 1961, at age 24, Vanessa Redgrave launched her acting career into stardom playing a barefoot, tomboyish Rosalind in Stratford, England. Beloved by critics and audiences alike, *As You Like It* seems to have

led many to agree with George Saintsbury's 1898 remark that the play is "one of the topmost things in Shakespeare, the masterpiece of romantic comedy, one of the great type-dramas of the world."

SEARCHING FOR ARDEN

Much debate has focused on the idyllic Forest of Arden. In the source material, the story takes place in France, which suggests that he may have been thinking of the wooded region of Ardennes, on the border between modern-day France and Belgium. Others have argued that the quintessentially English nature of the country-dwellers depicted in the play indicate that the Bard was thinking of the Forest of Arden located just north of his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. Still others believe that the naming of the forest was to honor his mother, Mary Arden.



Commentary & Criticism

THE TRUTH IN THE LIE: “Like other comic places, Arden is a place of discovery where the truth becomes clear and where each man finds himself and his true way. This discovery of the truth in comedy is made through errors and mistakings. The trial and error by which we come to knowledge of ourselves and of our world is symbolized by the disguisings which are a recurrent element in all comedy, but as we have already seen particularly common in Shakespeare’s. Things have, as it were, to become worse before they become better, more confused and farther from the proper pattern. By misunderstandings men come to understand, and by lies and feignings they discover truth.”

– Helen Gardner, in *Shakespeare: The Comedies*

A POPULAR HEROINE: “The popularity of Rosalind is due to three main causes. First she only speaks blank verse for a few minutes. Second, she only wears a skirt for a few minutes (and the dismal effect of the change at the end to the wedding dress ought to convert the stupidest champion of petticoats to rational dress). Third, she makes love to the man instead of waiting for the man to make love to her—a piece of natural history which has kept Shakespeare’s heroines alive, whilst generations of properly

governessed young ladies, taught to say ‘No’ three times at least, have miserably perished.”

– George Bernard Shaw, *Shaw on Shakespeare*

REMARKABLE ROSALIND: “Of all Shakespeare’s comic heroines, Rosalind is the most gifted, as remarkable in her mode as Falstaff and Hamlet in theirs.”

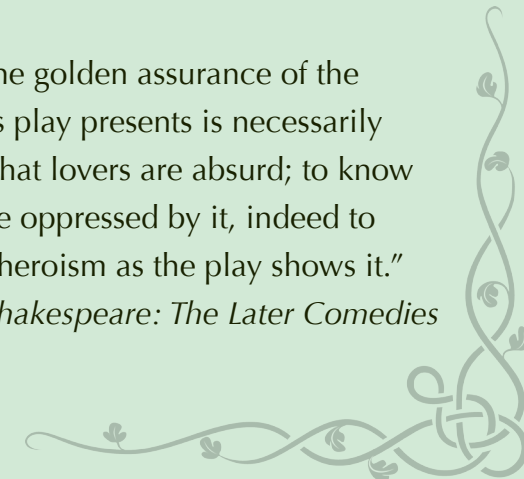
– Harold Bloom, in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*

IN MEN’S CLOTHES: “In male garb, Rosalind automatically becomes the dominant figure...She restrains Touchstone’s arrogance and disparages Jaques’ melancholy; she chides Silvius and Phebe; she is flip with her father. Above all, she is able to speak to Orlando about love without coyness or concealment, without having to defend against romantic or erotic attitudes or demonstrations. In short, she can be a person.”

– Marilyn French, *Shakespeare’s Division of Experience*

KNOW YOUR ABSURDITY: “Indeed, the golden assurance of the conquering good in love that this play presents is necessarily connected with the assumption that lovers are absurd; to know one’s own absurdity, yet not to be oppressed by it, indeed to enjoy it, is the basis of romantic heroism as the play shows it.”

– G. K. Hunter, *Shakespeare: The Later Comedies*





Terms from *As You Like It*

ACT I

hinds – servants

mines – undermines

physic your rankness – cure your rebelliousness

eke out – supplement

quintain – a wooden post often mounted with a stuffed figure used in jousting practice and rural games

ACT II

painted pomp – gaudy display and splendor

sequestered stag – a deer separated from the herd

cope – meet with; contend with

roinish – scabby, scurvy, base

desert place – uninhabited location

entertainment – in this case, food and shelter

churlish – stingy, grudging

cote – cottage or sheepcote (a shelter for sheep)

motley – multicolored outfit worn most often by court jesters

in good set terms – in deliberately composed language

dial – in this case, a watch

poke – without

ACT III

instance – in this case, evidence or proof

mutton – sheep

civet – perfume (Touchstone points out that civet derives from the anal pouch of a civet cat, and so has a less-than-appealing origin)

flux – discharge

berhymed – celebrated in rhyme

give me justice – listen to me

as lief – just as soon

quotidian – daily, commonplace

moonish – fickle, changeable

apish – affected, silly

God'ild you – thank you, literally, “God yield reward to you”

bawdry – immorality

'Od's – “God save,” part of an exclamation, as in ‘Od's my little life!’

ACT IV

I'll warrant him – I'll guarantee that he is

videlicet – that is to say

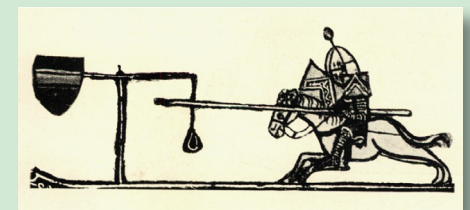
napkin – handkerchief

ACT V

trip – move quickly

serve your turn – suffice

quip – sharp retort



A knight charging at a quintain
(Source: Shakespeare Navigators).



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Costume design by Salvador Dalí for a 1948 Italian production of *As You Like It*. Source: Folger Shakespeare Library.