

Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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These study materials are produced by Bob Jones University
for use with the Classic Players production of *As You Like It*

As You Like It: An Introduction

In the spirit of its unusual title, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* invites audiences to take pleasure in the delights it affords as measured by their own tastes. Accordingly, AYL has maintained its popularity onstage for 400 years. It was written most likely in 1599 and was registered in 1600 as belonging to Shakespeare's theater company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

AYL is pure romantic comedy, a play about love and simple pastoral pleasures, complete with two disguised princesses, a court jester, and more songs than any other Shakespearean play.

There is not a hint of heartbreak in Shakespeare's sunny ending. Although four romantic couples meet some resistance along the way,



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the chase proves pleasantly piquant and the outcome, fulfilling. In addition, two evil brothers amend their ways, and two virtuous brothers reclaim the rights and titles that have been usurped from them.

As the prime mover of the romantic plot, Rosalind is the play's central character and one of Shakespeare's most spirited, intelligent female roles. Not only does she manipulate events to produce the multiple marriages at the end; she also clarifies Shakespeare's portrayal of love as the highest of human values. Her wry, matter-of-fact comments as the boy "Ganymede" reveal her own progress in understanding love's enduring truths. She employs her quick wit to educate and test Orlando, guiding him from a literary conception to a mature, experiential knowledge of love.

In contrast to the play's comic values, Shakespeare includes a measure of satire, voiced by the characters Touchstone and Jaques. Touchstone, Duke Frederick's court jester, is the first of Shakespeare's so-called wise fools who delight in ridicule. He makes witty jibes at aristocratic manners, love, and the pastoral life. With regard to his own romance, however, he fails to act wisely, for love plays no role in his taking Audrey the goatherd to wife.

The melancholic lord Jaques (Jay' queez) is unique in Shakespeare's gallery of characters. He is a malcontent, or chronically dissatisfied, pessimistic person. His mockery and railing prevent AYL from becoming overly sentimental.

The English critic and essayist William Hazlitt wrote of him, "Jaques is the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare. He thinks and does nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he [takes no regard for] his body and fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers."

Jaques' Seven Ages of Man speech, which begins "All the world's a stage," is one of the most familiar passages in all of Shakespeare. Interestingly, almost as soon as Jaques has concluded his cynical remarks on the debilitating impairments of old age, the playwright brings on Adam, the highest exemplar of faithfulness, loyalty, and enduring love in AYL.

It is no surprise that, despite his humanizing final lines, Jaques remains disdainful of society at the play's end.

By using the court and the country as contrasting settings for AYL,



Jean Cook as Rosalind disguised as "Ganymede," and Rachel Fisher as Celia disguised as "Aliena," in the 1999 Classic Players production of *As You Like It*.

Shakespeare invites his audience to consider the differences between two ways of life often contrasted by writers of his day. In artificial court society men selfishly obtain and exercise their authority, producing enmity and corruption. But in the forest of Arden genuine civility prevails and love thrives.

When Adam and Orlando arrive in Arden, for example, Orlando goes in search of nourishment for the old servant, who is near starvation. Accustomed as he is to the harsh ways of court, Orlando is prepared to obtain food at sword's point. But when he bursts in upon Duke Senior's band of exiled courtiers as they eat, the duke introduces him to the unwritten law of kindness in Arden: "Your gentleness shall force, / More than your force move us to gentleness."

The action of AYL begins in the environs of Oliver's estate and Duke Frederick's court, where hate displaces love. In this society two men usurp that which rightfully belongs to their own brothers: Duke Frederick has deposed his elder brother and exiled him to the forest of Arden. Oliver not only takes his brother's patrimony but even attempts to have him killed.

Such perversion of family bonds suggests that love is not inherited and that hate, in fact, may be. Duke Frederick drives away first his niece Rosalind and then Orlando, not because either commits any offense but because he hates their fathers. Virtuous characters cannot survive in such unnatural, corrupt society.

The forest of Arden, Shakespeare's version of Ardennes near Bordeaux in northeast France, becomes a place of refuge for the exiles from court. Of the play's 22 scenes, 19 occur in the forest. In creating his own "greenwood," Shakespeare modifies the major source for the play, a popular prose romance by Thomas Lodge entitled *Rosalynde* (1590), which also employs urban and rural settings. Lodge's Ardennes is the haunt of Robin Hood and his merry men, a place of escape from society's strictures and injustices.

In Shakespeare's Arden the exiled Duke Senior and a band of his followers live at one with nature, far away from the strife and greed of court. But in order to be content in this setting, they must accept certain natural hardships and adjust to the changes of the seasons. When the second company of exiles from court reach the forest, they spend their time talking of romance, writing poetry, and observing the life and loves of the country characters.

It is also in Arden that both wicked brothers, Oliver and Duke Frederick, are converted from their evil ways. Oliver's view of life is entirely transformed when Orlando saves him from an attacking lioness and a snake. The conflict between brothers is thus resolved in a moment's time. The point is, according to Oliver, that kindness is "nobler ever than revenge," and genuine love is stronger than the desire to strike back at those who wrong us.

The parallel change in Frederick has a religious cast to it. Having led an army into the forest to kill the brother he abhors, he meets "an old religious man" and is "converted." He then gives both crown and lands back to their rightful owner, Duke Senior.



"Heavenly Shepherd,"
Bartolome Esteban
Murillo, Spanish,
1618–1682

SMART Enrichment Activity

"The Heavenly Shepherd" by the Spanish painter Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618–1682) is a favorite work with frequent visitors to the Bob Jones University Museum & Gallery. The painting is notable for both its portrayal of the Christ Child in the adult role of a shepherd and the pastoral background Murillo employs. As for Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, a rural setting with sheep and shepherds reflects the themes or ideas conveyed by Murillo's work.

Christ's designation as "The Good Shepherd" is derived from John 10:1-6, which describes Him as One Who will lay down His life for His sheep. In Murillo's depiction, the lamb that appears beside the Christ Child also symbolizes His role as the Lamb of God, One Who will present Himself as a sacrifice for sins.

To schedule a tour during next school year of one of the most highly acclaimed collections of religious art in America, call 242-5100, extension 1050. The Gallery offers Shakespeare students many opportunities to see paintings that date from the playwright's age and/or parallel his subject matter.

No doubt Shakespeare regarded the instant transformations of Oliver and Frederick as unbelievable in real-life terms but perfectly acceptable as conventions of a romantic story. Both "conversions" take place off-stage and are reported by other characters. But contrived as they may be, these character changes serve the plot's movement from hate and wrongdoing to love and reconciliation.

It is virtue that prepares the way for the triumph of love in AYL's genial finale. Once Oliver has been reformed, everything is in place for the union of four pairs of lovers. To add to the joyous occasion, Rosalind and her father, Duke Senior, are reunited even before Duke Frederick's conversion and consequent abdication have been announced.

In the final scene Shakespeare includes a quaint masque which is often

As You Like It Plot Summary

Background: Bitter conflict between two pairs of brothers creates confusion and unhappiness in the societies in which they live. Their strife also accounts for the two settings in which the action occurs: in and near the Duke of Burgundy's palace and in the forest of Arden.

Orlando, the youngest son of the late Sir Rowland de Boys, is humiliated and deprived of his rights by his older brother, Oliver. At the same time the Duke of Burgundy (Duke Senior) lives as an exile in the forest of Arden because his younger brother, Frederick, has illegally taken his territory and rights.

The Plot: To the faithful old servant Adam, Orlando expresses his dissatisfaction with the treatment he has received at the hand of his older brother, Oliver. When Oliver approaches, Orlando confronts him, and they quarrel bitterly. Because Orlando needs money before striking out on his own, he prepares to wrestle against Frederick's champion, Charles. Oliver secretly urges Charles on, hoping that Orlando will be severely beaten, if not killed, in the match.

Rosalind and Celia are cousins and devoted friends even though their fathers have been estranged since Frederick exiled the rightful duke. As they watch the wrestling match, Rosalind immediately falls in love with Orlando, who surprises the onlookers by defeating Charles. But rather than honoring the winner, Duke Frederick slights Orlando because his father was a friend of the banished Duke Senior.

Further riled by thoughts of the brother he despises, Frederick banishes his niece Rosalind. As a loyal friend, Celia decides to flee her father's court with Rosalind. Together they will seek Duke Senior in the forest. Rosalind disguises herself as a young man she calls "Ganymede," and Celia pretends to be Ganymede's "sister" named "Aliena." The court jester Touchstone agrees to accompany the women in exile.

Adam learns that Oliver plans to kill Orlando and counsels him to flee. Thus the old servant and the young man seek asylum in the forest of Arden.

Upon arriving in Arden, Rosalind and her companions overhear the shepherd Silvius declaring to the old shepherd Corin his love for Phebe, a scornful shepherdess. After speaking with Corin, the women arrange to buy a cottage, pasture, and sheep and transform them-

selves into make-believe shepherds.

Orlando also arrives in Arden, where he comes upon Duke Senior's courtiers, who are now foresters, and joins their gentle band. Of all those attached to the banished duke's court, Jaques alone strikes a melancholy pose.

Orlando, smitten by love for Rosalind, hangs love poems on trees. He meets "Ganymede" and "Aliena" and fails to recognize their true identities as Rosalind and Celia. Ganymede persuades Orlando to think of "him" as Rosalind and to court her as a means of being cured of his lovesickness. The couple even enact a mock wedding ceremony with Aliena as priest.

Touchstone begins to pursue the affections of the country wench Audrey, while Phebe, still proud and pitiless toward Silvius, finds herself attracted instead to Ganymede.

Having been ordered by Duke Frederick to find Celia and Rosalind, Oliver arrives in Arden. As he sleeps under a tree, his brother Orlando rescues him from an attacking lioness. Deeply moved that Orlando has been kind and forgiving toward him rather than seeking revenge, Oliver experiences a complete transformation of character. Seeing a napkin stained with blood shed by Orlando as he rescued his brother, Ganymede faints.

Two weddings are planned for the forest of Arden. In spite of interference from the country bumpkin William, who also pursues her, Audrey intends to stand before the priest with Touchstone. After Oliver reveals to Orlando that he is in love with the shepherdess Aliena, the brothers also plan a wedding for the next day.

The sense of anticipation builds when Ganymede promises to bring forth Rosalind on the following morning if Orlando will consent to marry her then. He heartily gives assent. Phebe also agrees that if she cannot marry Ganymede, she will be united with faithful Silvius instead.

When the morning at last arrives, Rosalind appears in feminine garb, and the four couples prepare for a quadruple wedding ceremony. Then, as if to multiply the joy, the middle brother of Oliver and Orlando, Jaques de Boys, appears in Arden to announce that Duke Frederick has been converted and has entered a monastery. Thus Duke Senior's lands and title have been restored, and all the exiles in Arden may now return to their homes in safety and harmony.

The ending implies that, with the exception of Duke Frederick and Jaques, the exiles in Arden will return to the comforts of court, where their lives will be much fuller because of the discoveries they have made about themselves in the greenwood. They have also taken steps that will humanize the society in which they live.

cut from modern productions. In it Hymen, god of marriage, offers a formal summary of the play's outcome: "Then is there mirth in heaven, / When earthly things made even / Atone [are at one] together." He then blesses four couples: Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Audrey and Touchstone, and Phebe and Silvius.

‘Most love is mere folly’

Here is a selection of photographs from past productions of *As You Like It* by Classic Players. See if you can correctly match each photo twice: once with a numbered caption identifying role(s), actor(s), and the year of production; and once with the lettered lines of dialogue each photo suggests. Answers appear in the shaded box on page 8.



year/actors/role:

dialogue:

B





F

year/actor/role: dialogue: 

H

year/actor/role: dialogue: 

G

year/actor/role: dialogue: 

I

year/actor/role: dialogue: year/actors/role:

J

dialogue:

year/actor/role

(1) 1939; Willie George as Rosalind

(2) 1939; Bob Jones, Jr., as Jaques

(3) 1948; Leslie Lyles as Touchstone, Dawn Elliott as Celia, and Betty Britt as Rosalind

(4) 1959; Beneth Jones as Rosalind and Bob Jones, III, as Orlando

(5) 1967; Bill Moose as Touchstone

(6) 1976; Sharon Woodruff as Rosalind

(7) 1984; Darren Lawson as Oliver and Tigg Vanaman as Charles

(8) 1984; David Burke as Jaques

(9) 1992; Tamar Pundys as Audrey

(10) 1992; Katie Steenson as Rosalind

dialogue

A. All the world's a stage,/And all the men and women merely players. (II.vii.139-40)

B. "From the east to western Inde,/No jewel is like Rosalind." (III.ii.88-89)

C. Doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat; therefore courage, good Aliena. (II.iv.6-8)

D. Wear this for me, one out of suits with Fortune. (I.ii.246)

E. 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. (II.iv.54-56)

F. It is not the fashion to see the lady in the epilogue; but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord in the prologue. ("Epilogue," 1-3)

G. I'll tell thee, Charles, it is the stubbornest young fellow of France, . . . a secret and villainous contriver against me his natural brother. (I.i.141-45)

H. There is sure another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark. (V.iv.35-36)

I. I thank God I am not a woman, to be touch'd with so many giddy offenses as He generally tax'd their whole sex withal. (III.ii.347-50)

J. "Sweet lovers love the spring." (V.iii.21)

As You Like It Plot: The Short of It

Photo 2: Although Frederick has ousted his elder brother from court and usurped his title, he allows his niece Rosalind to live as companion to his own daughter, Celia. The two young women pass their time by engaging in witty exchanges with the court jester, Touchstone.



Photo 1: Oliver, oldest son of the late Sir Roland de Boys, hates his youngest brother, Orlando, and treats both him and the elderly servant Adam with contempt. Hearing that his brother has planned to compete against Charles, the deadly wrestler from Duke Frederick's court, Oliver urges Charles to kill Orlando.

Photo 3: Hearing of plans for a wrestling match between Orlando and Charles, Rosalind and Celia express their concern to Orlando for his safety.



Photo 4: With Rosalind and Celia among the surprised onlookers, Orlando defeats Charles. Rosalind, finding herself falling in love with Orlando, requests that he wear a chain she gives him, dubbing him her "champion."

Photo 5: Jealous of his niece and still resentful of her father, Frederick banishes Rosalind from court. Celia, acting as a loyal friend and cousin, resolves to go with Rosalind to find her father in exile, Duke Senior.

Accompanied by the jester, the women leave for the forest of Arden, Rosalind disguised as a young male named "Ganymede" and Celia as "his" sister, "Aliena."



Photo 7: Following a tiring journey, Touchstone, Rosalind, and Celia arrive in Arden and find its landscape less than pleasing.



Photo 6: After Adam warns Orlando that Oliver is plotting against his life, the two also seek safety in the forest.



Photo 8: Touchstone resolves to be content with Arden as his home.



Photo 9: Among the courtiers of Duke Frederick who live in the forest, the melancholy Jaques alone is discontent with his manner of existence and cynical about human folly.



Photo 10: Orlando hangs his love poetry in praise of Rosalind on the trees of Arden.



Photo 11: Orlando meets Rosalind disguised as “Ganymede” and, ignorant of her true identity, accepts her proposal to cure him of his infatuation. The two meet each day, and Orlando “courts” Ganymede, who “pretends” to be Rosalind and scorns his love. With Aliena’s help, they even engage in a mock wedding ceremony.



Photo 12: Meanwhile Touchstone begins to woo the country wench Audrey.



Photo 13: Soon thereafter Jaques advises Touchstone to find a priest and wed Audrey.



Photo 14: Rosalind and Celia are shocked to encounter Oliver in the forest and learn that he too has been banished by Frederick. Having arrived alone in Arden, Oliver was threatened by a lion as he slept, but Orlando, repaying his brother’s earlier hateful actions with kindness, saved him. Seeing a napkin stained with Orlando’s blood, Ganymede swoons.

“Most love is mere’ folly”

Answer key:

A: 8, H

D: 2, A

H: 5, E

B: 4, D

E: 3, C

I: 10, I

C: 9, J

F: 1, B

J: 7, G

G: 6, F

The Finale: With the reconciliation of Orlando and Oliver, the way is paved for Shakespeare’s all-encompassing happy ending, which includes the resolution of Duke Senior’s conflict with his brother Frederick and wedding bells for four couples.