

As You Like It

by William Shakespeare

Presented by Paul W. Collins

As You Like It

By William Shakespeare

Presented by Paul W. Collins

All rights reserved under the International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Except as permitted under the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this work may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, audio or video recording, or other, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Contact: paul@wsrightnow.com

Note: Spoken lines from Shakespeare's drama are in the public domain, as is the Globe (1864) edition of his plays, which provided the basic text of the speeches in this new version of *As You Like It*. But *As You Like It, by William Shakespeare: Presented by Paul W. Collins*, is a copyrighted work, and is made available *for your personal use only*, in reading and study.

Student, beware: This is a *presentation*, not a scholarly work, so you should be sure your teacher, instructor or professor considers it acceptable as a reference before quoting characters' comments or thoughts from it in your report or term paper.

Chapter One Discord

A sunny glow suffuses the fragrant apple orchard this fine summer morning in Ardennes, a northeastern region of 16th-century France. The well-ordered trees laden with plump fruit are part of the sprawling country estate governed by Sir Oliver de Bois, the eldest son of the manor's late lord. But sharp words break the tranquility: Orlando, the youngest of three sons, feels mounting resentment over long-borne wrongs; he complains to old Adam, who had been his father's most devoted servant.

"And there begins my sadness," says Orlando. The handsome, well built man of twenty-two paces as he talks, hands clasped behind his back. "As I remember, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will: poor, but for a thousand crowns, and—as thou sayest—the charge that my brother, for his blessing, *raise me well*."

"My brother *Jacques* he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of *his* profit." The middle son, a university student, resides happily in Paris.

"As for *my* part, he keeps me rustically at home—or, to speak more properly, *stays* me here at home *unkept!* For call you that 'keeping' for a gentleman of my birth which differs not from the *stalling* of an ox? His *horses* are bred better!—for, besides that they are fair with their tending, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders are dearly hired.

"But I, his *brother*, gain nothing under him but *growth*—for the which his *animals* on his *dunghills* are as much bound to him as I! Besides this *nothing* that he so plentifully gives me, the something that Nature gave me his countenance seems to *take from me!* He lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and—as much as in him lies—*undermines* my gentility by my 'education!'"

He stops. "This it is, Adam, that grieves me."

During the old man's long service to Orlando's father, he had watched all three sons grow to manhood, and he well understands what is troubling this one. He nods, patiently.

Orlando runs a hand through his thick, glossy hair. "And the spirit of my *father*, which I think is within me, begins to *mutiny* against this servitude! I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it."

Adam glances toward the massive country house. "Yonder comes my master, your brother."

"Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt *hear* how he will shake me up!" The man moves behind some nearby shrubs.

Sir Oliver stalks up to confront his brother. "Now, sir, what make you here?"

"Nothing," Orlando replies bitterly. "I am not *taught* to make anything!"

"What *mar* you then, sir?"

"Marry, sir, I am helping *you* to mar that which God made—a poor, unworthy *brother* of yours—with idleness!"

Oliver sneers. "Marry, sir, be *better* employed by being *nought* a while."

Demands Orlando angrily, "Shall I keep your *hogs* and eat *husks* with them? What prodigal portion have I *spent*, that I should come to such penury?"

"Know you where you *are*, sir?"

"Oh, sir, *very well!*—here in *your* orchard!"

Oliver, once an indulged child, now an arrogant gentleman, is affronted. "Know you before *whom*, sir?"

"*Aye*—better than him I am before knows *me!* I know you are my eldest *brother*—and in the *gentle* condition of blood you should so know *me!* The courtesy of nations allows you are my better, in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away *my* blood, were there *twenty* brothers betwixt us!"

“I have as much of my father in me as *you*, albeit, I confess, your coming before me is nearer to his reverence.”

Oliver’s anger overflows; accustomed to bullying servants, he grabs the younger man’s collar. “*What, boy?*”

With both powerful hands, Orlando seizes the front of Oliver’s coat, hoisting him briefly off his feet. “Come, *come*, elder brother, you are too young in *this!*”

“Wilt thou *lay hands on me*, villain?” sputters the landed gentleman.

“I am no *villain!*” replies Orlando, giving him a shake, then gripping his neck with his right hand. “I am the youngest son of *Sir Rowland de Bois!*—he was my *father!*—and he is *thrice* a villain that says such a father begot *villains!*” He draws Oliver’s flushed face nearer. “Wert thou not my brother,” he growls, “I would not take this hand from thy throat till this other had *pulled out thy tongue* for saying so! Thou hast railed on *thyself!*”

Adam emerges, pleading for peace: “Sweet masters, be *patient!*—for your father’s remembrance, be at *accord!*”

“*Let me go, I say!*” demands Oliver.

“I will *not*, till I *please!* You shall *hear* me!”

“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 gentleman-like qualities! The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will *no longer endure it!* Therefore allow me such exercises as may become a *gentleman*, or give me the poor allotting my father left me by testament—with that I will go *buy* my fortunes!”

“And what wilt thou do when that is spent?—*beg?*” demands Oliver. “Well, sir, get you in! I will not long be troubled with you; you shall *have* some part of your will!”

“I pray you, *leave* me!”

Orlando releases him. “I will no further offend you for my good than becomes me.”

Oliver, livid, waves Adam away: “*Get you with him*, you old dog!”

Poor Adam is stunned. “Is ‘*old dog*’ my reward?” His head shakes sadly. “Most *true*: I *have* lost my teeth in your service.

“God be with my old master! *He* would not have spoken such a word!”

Orlando, resisting a strong urge to lay hands on Oliver again, takes the stricken Adam gently by the arm, and the two of them head toward the back of the manor house.

Oliver’s indignation increases as he sits, ruminating, in the house. *Is it even so? Begin you to grow upon me? I will physic your rankness—and yet give no thousand crowns neither!*

“Holla, *Dennis!*”

The servant hurries into the room. “Calls Your Worship?”

“Was not Charles, the duke’s wrestler, here to speak with me?”

The De Bois property lies within the dominion of Duke Frederick—a usurper who installed himself in the palace; the rightful duke of Ardenne, his banished brother, has found shelter in the huge old forest near the nation’s northern border.

Dennis nods. “So please you, he is here at the door, and importunes access to you.”

“Call him in.” The man bows and goes to fetch the duke’s privileged champion. *’Twill be a good way*, thinks Oliver. *And the wrestling is tomorrow!*

The burly man arrives, hat in his big hands. “Good morrow to Your Worship.”

Oliver rises. “Good Monsieur Charles, what’s the new news at the new court?”

“There’s no news at the court, sir, but the *old* news: that is, the old duke is banished by his younger brother, the new duke. And three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile *with* him—whose lands and revenues enrich the new duke; therefore he gives them good leave to wander.”

The ambitious Oliver had once learned of an opportunity at the duchy's court. "Can you tell me if Rosalind, the duke's daughter, be banished with her father?"

"Oh, *no*," says Charles, "for the new duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being even from their cradles bred together, that she would have *followed* her in exile, or have died to stay behind her! She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his *own* daughter! And never two ladies loved as they do!"

"Where will the *old* duke live?"

"They say he is already in the Forest of *Arden*, and a-many merry men with him; and there they live like the Robin Hood of old England," the wrestler reports. "They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world"—halcyon times.

But Oliver has an immediate concern. "What, do you wrestle tomorrow before the new duke?"

"Marry, *do* I, sir!—and I came to acquaint you with a matter. I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother Orlando hath a disposition to come in, disguised, against me to try a fall.

"Tomorrow, sir, I wrestle *for my credit*—and he that escapes me without some broken limb shall acquit himself *well*! Your brother is but young and tender; and, for your love, I would be loath to foil him—as I *must*, for my own honour, if he come in.

"Therefore, out of my love to you, I came hither to acquaint you withal, that either you might stay him from his intendment, or well brook such disgrace as he shall run into, in that it is a thing of his own search, and altogether against *my* will."

"Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite." But then Oliver lies: "I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein, and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it; but he is *resolute*.

"I'll tell thee, Charles: he is the stubbornest young fellow of France!—full of *ambition*, an envious *emulator* of every man's good parts—a secret and villainous *contriver* against me, his natural *brother*!"

"Therefore use thy discretion; *I* had as lief thou didst break his *neck* as his finger!

"And thou wert best *look to 't*," adds Oliver ominously, "for if thou dost him any slight disgrace, or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will *practise* against thee!—by poison, or entrapping thee by some treacherous device—and never leave thee till he hath *ta'en thy life* by some indirect means or other!

"For, I assure thee—and almost with tears I speak it—there is not one so young and so *villainous* this day living! I speak but *brotherly* of him—but should I anatomize him to thee as he *is*, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale, and wonder!"

Charles does not pale. "I am heartily glad I came hither to you! If he come tomorrow, I'll give him his payment! If ever he go *alone* again,"—walks without help, "I'll never more wrestle for prize," says the big bruiser grimly. "He bows. "And so God keep Your Worship."

"Farewell, good Charles," says Oliver, as the grappler clomps away.

Oliver thinks about his young brother. *Now will I stir this gamester!*

I hope I shall see an end of him! For my soul hates nothing more than he! Yet I know not why—he's gentle; never schooled, and yet learned; full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved, and indeed so much in the heart of the world—and especially of my own people who best know him—that I am altogether misprised!

But it shall not be so for long: this wrestler shall clear all! Nothing remains but that I kindle the boy thither—which now I'll go about!

Chapter Two Challengers, Matches

Strolling on the terrace at the edge of a well tended stretch of lawn beside the new duke's palace, two beautiful gentlewomen, both twenty, enjoy the pleasant morning air. But one lady finds her companion quieter than usual. "I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry!"

"Dear Celia, I show *more* mirth than I am mistress of—and would you I were *merrier* yet? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished *father*, you must not yearn for me now to remember any extraordinary pleasure!"

Celia pouts: "Herein I see thou lovest *me* not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished *thine* uncle, the duke *my* father—and thou hadst been still with me—I could have *taught* my love to take thy father for *mine*! So wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee!"

Rosalind manages to smile. "Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours."

Celia touches her hand gently. "You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is likely to have—and, truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir!—for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will *render* thee again in *affection*! By mine honour, I *will*! And when I break that oath, let me turn *monster*! Therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry!"

Patting her friend's sleeve, Rosalind rises to the challenge. "From henceforth I *will*, coz—and devise *sports*!" She considers various ways that young ladies might amuse themselves. "Let me see," she says, thinking. She grins. "What think you of *falling in love*?"

"Marry, I prithee, *do*, to make sport withal!" laughs Celia. "But love no man in good *earnest*—nor no further in sport neither, than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in *honour* come off again."

Asks Rosalind, romance thus debarred, "What *shall* be our sport, then?"

"Let us sit and *mock* the good housewife Fortune *from her wheel*,"—off the turning globe on which she's pictured as walking, "so that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed *equally*!"

"I would we *could* do so, for her benefits are mightily misplaced—and the bountiful blind woman doth *most* mistake in her gifts to *women*!"

"'Tis true! For those that she makes *fair* she scarce makes *honest*, and those that she makes honest she makes very ill-favourèd!" argues Celia—facetiously.

Rosalind cavils: "Nay, now thou goest from Fortune's office to *Nature's*: Fortune reigns in gifts of *the world*, not in the lineaments of Nature."

As they talk, the duke's court jester, Touchstone, a man of forty wearing the motley woolen costume of his office, approaches from the palace.

Celia defends her position. "No? When Nature hath made a fair creature, may she not by fortune fall into the fire?" Her eyes twinkle. "Though Nature hath given us *wit* to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to *cut off* the argument?"

"Indeed," Rosalind admits, "there is Fortune too hard for Nature, when Fortune makes Nature's *natural*"—dunce—"the cutter-off of Nature's *wit*!"

"Peradventure this is not Fortune's work, neither," says Celia, "but *Nature's*—who perceiveth our natural wits too *dull* to reason about such goddesses, and hath sent this natural for our whetstone—for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits!"

"How now, wit?" she asks Touchstone, laughing. "Whither wander you?"

"Mistress, you must come away to your father," he tells Celia.

"Were you made a *messenger*?" she teases.

"No, by mine honour," he says haughtily, "but I *was* bid to come for you."

Rosalind is amused by his courtly phrase. "Where learned you *that* oath, Fool?"

Touchstone is ready with a riddle: “From a certain knight that swore *by his honour* they were good fritters, and swore by his honour the mustard was *nought*. Now, I’ll stand to it that the fritters were nought, and the mustard was *good*—and yet the knight was not *forsworn*.”

“How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?” asks Celia.

“Aye, marry, unmuzzle your wisdom!” says Rosalind.

“Stand you both forth, now,” orders Touchstone. “Stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a *knave*.”

The young ladies strike poses, and frown as if weighing the question sternly. “By our beards—if we had them—thou *art!*” pronounces Celia.

“By my *knavery*, if I *had* it, then I *were*,” says the fool. “But if you swear by that that is *not*, you are not *forsworn!* No more was this knight swearing by his honour, for *he never had any!*—or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those fritters or that mustard!”

“Prithee, who is’t that thou meanest?” Celia knows the gentlemen of her father’s new court.

Touchstone makes a face. “One that old Frederick, your *father*, loves.”

Celia speaks dutifully: “My father’s love is enough to honour him. Enough!—speak no more of him. You’ll be *whipped* for taxation”—chafing—“one of these days!” she warns; but her tone reveals concern for him, not for those vexed by his clever digs.

Touchstone has quickly learned about the new duke’s distaste for laughter at his own expense. “The more pity, that fools may not *speak* wisely of what wise men *do* foolishly!”

“By my troth, thou sayest true,” Celia admits sadly, thinking of her father, “for since the little wit that *fools* have was silenced, the little *foolery* that *wise* men have makes a great show!”

Celia sees a courtier striding out from the palace. “Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.”

“With his mouth full of *news*,” says Rosalind.

“Which he will put on us as pigeons feed their young,” adds Celia.

“Then shall we be news-*crammed!*”—*overfed*, as is poultry.

Celia chuckles. “All the better—we shall be the more *marketable!*”

“*Bon jour*, Monsieur Le Beau. What’s the news?”

“Fair princess, you have lost much good sport!”

“Sport? Of what colour?” asks Celia.

“What *colour*, madam? How shall I answer you...?”

“As wit and Fortune will!” says Rosalind gaily.

Offers Touchstone grandly, “Or as the Destinies decree.”

Celia applauds: “Well *said!* That was laid on with a *trowel!*”

The jester shrugs to acknowledge the compliment to his acumen: “Nay, if I keep not my *rank*...”—fail to perform to standard.

“—thou lovest thine old *smell!*” interjects Rosalind, playing on *rank*,

“You confuse me, ladies,” says M. Le Beau, nonplussed. “I would have told you of good *wrestling* which you have lost the sight of.”

“Yet tell us the manner of the wrestling,” Rosalind asks politely.

“I will tell you the beginning,” says Le Beau, “and, if it please Your Ladyships, you may *see* the end—for the rest is yet to do, and *here*, where you are, they are coming to perform it!”

“Well, then, to the *beginning* that is dead and buried...” says Celia.

Le Beau begins: “There comes an old man and his three sons—”

“I could match *this* beginning with an *old tale*,” murmurs Celia—thinking of three wishes, three little pigs.

“—three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence—”

Now Rosalind make a jest on a word: “With notes hung at their necks, ‘Be it known unto all men by these *presents*...’”

Le Beau persists. “The eldest of the three wrestled with Charles, the duke’s wrestler—and Charles *in a moment* threw him and *broke three of his ribs*, such that there is little hope of life in

him! So he served the *second*—and so the *third*! Yonder they lie, the poor old man, their father, making such pitiful dole over them that all the beholders take his part with *weeping!*”

“*Alas!*” Rosalind is appalled by the violence.

Touchstone frowns: “But what is the *sport*, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?”

“Why, this that I speak of.”

“Thus men may grow wiser every day,” says the jester sourly. “It is the first time that ever I heard *breaking of ribs* was sport for ladies!”

“Or *I*, I promise thee!” says Celia.

Rosalind thinks three victims is enough—and should provide a clear warning. “But is there any *else* who longs to see this *broken* music in his *sides*?”—playing on terms for songs with separate parts for several voices. “Is there yet *another* dotes upon rib-breaking?”

Le Beau shrugs and nods.

“Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?” asks Rosalind.

“You must, if you stay *here*,” Le Beau warns them, “for here is the place appointed for the wrestling, and they are ready to perform it!”

Celia spots movement at the doors. “Yonder, sure, they are coming! Let us stay now, and see it.”

A trumpet flourish signals the arrival on the green of Duke Frederick and his train of lords, all with attending servants. Accompanying the noblemen are Charles, the wrestling champion, and Sir Oliver De Bois. Orlando trails behind.

The duke is impatient. “*Come on!* Since the youth will not be entreated, his own peril on his forwardness!”

The wrestlers remove their shirts and prepare for the bout.

“Is yonder the man?” asks Rosalind, watching tall Orlando, and noting the challenger’s broad shoulders and strong arms.

“Even he, madam,” says Le Beau.

Celia is worried. “Alas, he is too *young!* Yet he looks to be successful...”—seems hopeful.

“How now, daughter and cousin,” says the duke, glancing their way, “are you crept hither to see the wrestling?”

“Aye, my liege, so please you give us leave,” Rosalind replies, with a curtsy.

“You will take little delight in it, I can tell you, there is such advantage in the *man*,” says the duke, glancing at Charles. “In pity of the challenger’s youth I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated! Speak to him, ladies; see if *you* can move him.”

Celia nods. “Call him hither, good Monsieur Le Beau.”

“Do so,” Frederick tells him. “I’ll not be by.” He steps away to threaten two noblemen of his court who are delinquent in paying him their taxes.

“Monsieur the *challenger*,” cries Le Beau, “the princesses call for you!”

Orlando comes toward the gentlewomen, and bows courteously. “I attend them with all respect and duty.”

Rosalind begins. “Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?”

“No, fair princess,” says Orlando. “He is the general challenger; I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.”

“Young gentleman, your *spirits* are too bold for your *years*,” says Celia. “You have seen cruel proof of this man’s strength! If you saw yourself with *our* eyes—or *knew* yourself with your own *judgment*—the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise!

“We pray you, for your sake, to embrace your own safety, and give over this attempt.”

Rosalind implores: “*Do*, young sir! Your reputation shall not therefore be misprised—we will make it *our* suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.”

Orlando is polite, but resolute. “I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts—wherein I confess me much guilty, to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything.

“But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go *with* me to my trial—wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed who was never gracious; if killed, but one dead who was willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me, do the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; I merely fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.”

Rosalind is touched by his melancholy modesty, and pleased by the eloquence—and lack of a spouse. “The little strength that I have, I would it were *with* you!” she tells him.

“And *mine*, to eke out hers!” says Celia.

“Fare you well!” says Rosalind. “Pray heaven I be deceived in you”—mistakenly assess his chances.

“Your heart’s desires be with you!” calls Celia, as Orlando goes to face the general challenger.

“Come,” growls Charles, rubbing together his big, hairy-backed hands, “where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother?—*earth!*”

“Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more decent wording,” Orlando answers sharply.

Frederick motions them closer: “You shall try but one fall.”

Charles’s condescending laugh is aimed at Orlando. “*Aye*, I warrant Your Grace!—you shall not entreat him to a *second* that I have so mightily persuaded with a first!”

Orlando glares. “If you meant to mock me after, you should not have mocked me *before*. But come your ways....”

As the men warily approach each other, hands flexing, ready to seize, the women watch.

“Now *Hercules* be thy speed, young man!” breathes Rosalind.

Celia whispers to her, “I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg!”

The wrestlers grip, pull, and heave, then scuffle, grunt and lift.

Rosalind is surprised by Orlando’s efforts so far. “Oh, *excellent* young man!”

“If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye,” says Celia, “I can tell who should down!”

Soon sweating, as he struggles against an opponent much stronger and more able than he had expected, Charles abandons his intention to torment the boy awhile, and moves instead to finish him off quickly—and brutally.

Loud shouts from the crowd greet a sudden, decisive move in the contest: Charles has been thrown to the ground—and he cannot rise.

“No more, no more!” calls Frederick.

Now it’s Orlando’s turn: “*Yes*, I beseech Your Grace!—I am not yet well *breathèd!*”

“How *dost* thou, Charles?” asks the duke.

“He cannot speak, my lord,” Le Beau reports—instantly wishing he had not: the duke does not receive bad news well.

Frederick frowns at his prostrate champion. “Bear him away,” he tells the servants, as the onlookers continue to applaud the victor. He turns to Orlando—the likely successor to Charles’s receipt of patronage. “What is thy name, young man?”

“*Orlando*, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois.”

Frederick glares. “I would thou hadst been son to some man *else*. The world esteemèd thy father honourable, but I did find him still mine *enemy*. Thou shouldst have better pleased me with this deed hadst thou descended from another house.

“But fare thee well. Thou art a gallant youth,” he adds, grudgingly, and he brusquely turns away—providing no other reward. As the duke returns to the palace, his frustration deepens. “I would thou hadst told me of another father,” he mutters darkly.

Celia is discomfited by seeing Orlando so rudely dismissed. She asks Rosalind, “Were *I* my father, coz, would I do *this?*”

Orlando is defiant. “I am *proud* to be Sir Rowland’s son!—*more* to be his *youngest* son!—and would not change *that* calling to be *adopted as heir* to Frederick!”

Rosalind tells Celia, “My father loved Sir Rowland as his *soul*, and all the *world* was of my father’s mind! Had I before known this young man his son, I should have given him *tears* onto entreaties, ere he should thus have ventured!”

“Gentle cousin, let us go thank him and encourage him!” says Celia. “My father’s rough and envious disposition sticks me at heart!”

They approach Orlando. “Sir, you have *well deserved!*” Celia tells him, “If you do keep your promises in *love* but as justly as you have exceeded all promise here, your mistress shall be happy!”

“Gentleman,” says Rosalind, removing a thin gold chain from her neck, “wear this for *me*—one out of suits with Fortune, who would give more, but that her hand lacks means.”

He accepts the gift, but he sees only her face—especially the bright, clear eyes.

“Shall we go, coz?”

“Aye,” says Celia. “Fare you well, fair gentleman!”

Watching Rosalind leave, Orlando is first flustered, then annoyed with himself. *Can I not say, I thank you? My better parts are all thrown down!—and that which here stands up is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block!*

“He’d call us back,” whispers Rosalind, after glancing over her shoulder and seeing his attentive expression. “My pride fell with my fortunes; I’ll ask him what he would.” She turns. “Did you call, sir?”

Her eyes search his face—which reveals to her more than he could imagine. “Sir, you have wrestled well—and overthrown more than your enemies,” she says—and their longing looks lock together.

“Will you go, coz?” asks Celia, after a moment.

“Have with you,” she replies, nodding. “Fare you well!” she tells Orlando—who is still speechless, his face hot. The two ladies walk up to the palace.

The young man is amazed. *What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I cannot speak to her!—yet she urged conference!*

Suddenly he feels feeble. *Oh, poor Orlando, thou art overthrown! Not Charles, but something weaker masters thee!*

As Orlando ponders both his hard-won victory and his sudden fall, Le Beau emerges from the palace, looking back apprehensively. He hurries to the youth.

“Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you to *leave* this place!” says the courtier quickly. “Albeit you have deserved high commendation, true applause and love, yet such is now the duke’s condition that he misconstrues all that you have done! What he is, indeed, more suits *you* to conceive than *I* to speak of,” he says, again glancing at the palace doors; the moody duke is often irascible.

“I thank you, sir,” says Orlando, “and, pray you, tell me this: which of the two that were here at the wrestling was daughter of the duke?”

“Neither *his* daughter, if we judge by *manners!* But yet indeed the *shorter* is his daughter; the other is daughter to the *banished* duke, and here detained by her usurping uncle to keep his daughter company—whose loves are dearer than the natural bond of *sisters*.”

“But I can tell you that of late this duke hath ta’en displeasure ’gainst his gentle niece, grounded upon no other argument but that the *people* praise her for her *virtues*, and *pity* her for her good father’s sake.

“And, on my life, his malice ’gainst the lady will suddenly break forth!”

“Sir, fare you well. Hereafter, in a better world than this, I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.”

Orlando bows. “I rest much bounden to you. Fare you well!”

Le Beau returns the courtesy, and hurries back inside, leaving Orlando alone again.

Thus must I from the smoke into the smother—from tyrant duke unto a tyrant brother!

But heavenly Rosalind!

Chapter Three Affection, Disaffection

Within Celia's chambers in the palace, the lady laughs at her best friend, who is now thoughtful—and unusually quiet. “Why, cousin!—why, *Rosalind!*” *Cupid, have mercy!* she thinks. “Not a word?”

Rosalind sighs. “Not one to throw at a dog.”

“No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs,” says Celia. “Throw some of them at *me!*—come, *lame* me with reasons!”

“Then there were *two* cousins laid up, when the one should be lamed with reasons, and the other mad *without* any!”

“But is all this for your father?”

Rosalind again pictures Orlando. She grins. “No, some of it is for *my* child's father!” She moans. “Oh, how full of *briers* is this working-day world!”

“They are but burs, cousin, thrown upon thee in holiday foolery; if we walk not in the *trodden* paths our very petticoats will catch them.”

“I could shake *them* off my 'coats; *these* burs are in my *heart*,” says Rosalind.

“*Hem* them *away!*”—trim off troubles. “Come, come—*wrestle* with thine affections!” advises Celia.

“Ah, they side with a better wrestler than myself!”

Celia smiles. “Oh, a good *wish* upon you; in time you will try, in despite of a *fall!*”

“But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest! Is it possible that on such a sudden you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?”

“The duke my father loved *his* father dearly,” Rosalind offers, lamely; she is as surprised as is her cousin.

“Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his *son* dearly?” demands Celia. “By this kind of chase, *I* should *hate* him, for my father hated his father dearly. Yet I hate not Orlando.”

Rosalind is alarmed at the very thought: “*No*, i' faith, hate him *not*—for my sake!”

“Why should I *not* like him? Doth he not deserve well?”

“Let *me* love him for that—and do you love him because *I* do!”

There is a sound in the corridor; footsteps approach. Rosalind turns to the door. “Look; here comes the duke.”

“With his eyes full of anger,” Celia notes.

Frederick arrives, with three of his lords.

He scowls at Rosalind. “Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste, and get you from our court!”

She is surprised. “*Me*, Uncle?”

“*You*, Niece! Within these ten days, if that thou be'st found so near our public court as twenty miles, thou diest for it!”

“I do *beseech* Your Grace,” says Rosalind, “let me bear with me the knowledge of my *fault!* If with myself I hold intelligence, or have acquaintance with mine own desires—if I do not dream or be not frantic, as I do trust I am not!—then, dear uncle, never so much as in a *thought unborn* did I offend Your Highness!”

“Thus do *all* traitors say,” the testy duke tells the other noblemen. “If purgation did consist in *words*, they are as innocent as grace itself!” He frowns at Rosalind. “Let it suffice thee that I trust thee not.”

She bridles. “Yet *your* mistrust cannot make *me* a traitor! Tell me whereon the likelihood depends!”

Frederick will not be questioned. “Thou art thy *father’s* daughter; there’s enough.”

“So was I when Your Highness *took his dukedom!*” retorts Rosalind fearlessly. “So was I when Your Highness *banished* him!

“Treason is not *inherited*, my lord! And if we *did* derive it from our friends, what’s that to *me?*—my father was no *traitor!*” she says vehemently, rising anger coloring her cheeks; she is, after all, addressing a traitor. “Then, good my liege, mistake me not so much as to think my *poverty* is treacherous!”

Celia steps forward. “Dear sovereign, hear *me* speak!”

“*Ah*, Celia, we stayed her for *your* sake; else had she with her father ranged along,” says the duke.

But Celia resents being used so—to influence the listening courtiers. “I did not then entreat to have her stay; it was *your* pleasure—in your own *remorse!*”

“I was too young at that time to value her; but now I know her! If she be a traitor, why *so am I!* We have always slept together, risen at an instant—learned, played, eaten together—and wheresoever we went, like Juno’s swans, we ever went coupled and inseparable!”

Frederick shakes his head. “She is too *subtle*”—devious—“for thee; and her smoothness, her very silence, and her patience speak to the *people*—and they *pity* her!” he says, resentment revealing fear. “Thou art a *fool!* She *robs* thee of thy fame, and thou wilt show more bright, and seem more virtuous, when *she* is *gone!*”

He holds up a warning hand. “Then open not thy lips! Firm and irrevocable is my doom which I have passed upon her! She is *banished!*”

Celia glares at him. “Pronounce that sentence then on *me*, my liege; I cannot live out of her company!”

“You are a fool,” the scornful duke tells his daughter again. “*You*, Niece, provide yourself; if you outstay the time, upon mine honour, and in the greatness of my word, you die!”

With that, Duke Frederick leaves; his red-faced lords, eyes cast down, follow him toward the silent throne room.

Rosalind stands at an open palace window, looking out sadly over the groves in which she played as a child.

Celia is beside herself, humiliated by her father’s callous cruelty. “Oh, my poor Rosalind, whither wilt thou *go?*”

“Wilt thou exchange fathers? I will *give* thee mine! I charge thee,” she pleads, “be not thou more grievèd than *I* am!”

“I have more cause.”

“Thou hast *not*, cousin! Prithee be cheerful!—know’st thou not?—the duke hath banished *me*, his daughter!”

“That he hath not.”

“No?—hath *not?* Rosalind lacks then the love which teacheth me that *thou and I are one!*” She takes her cousin’s hands. “Shall we be sundered? Shall we *part*, sweet girl? *No!* Let my father seek another heir!

“Therefore devise with me how we may *fly!*—whither to go, and what to bear *with us!*”

“And do not seek to take your change upon you, to bear your griefs yourself and leave me out, for by *this*,” she says, a hand at her heart, “say what thou canst, I’ll *go along with thee!* Heaven now at *our* sorrows pales!”

“Why, whither shall we go?”

Celia has a plan in mind: “To seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden!” she says, a smile already blooming on her lovely face.

“Alas, what *danger* will it be to us, maids as we are, to travel forth so far?” Rosalind is eager to see her father again, but the ancient wood is perilous, and it lies many leagues away. “Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold!”

Celia, however, is ripe for adventure. "I'll put myself in poor and mean attire, and with a kind of umber smirch my face; the like do you. So shall we pass along, and never stir assailants!"

Rosalind is already warming to the proposition. "Were it not better, because I am more than common tall, that I did suit me at all points like a *man*?—a gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh, a boar-spear in my hand!—and in my heart, lie there, hidden, what woman's fear there will.

"We'll have a *swashing* and a martial *outside*—as many other mannish cowards have, that do outface it with their *semblances*."

Celia approves. "What shall I call thee when thou art a man?"

"I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page, and therefore look you call me 'Ganymede.' But what will you be called?"

"Something that hath a reference to my state: no longer Celia, but 'Aliena.'"

Rosalind thinks of a third who is alienated. "But, cousin—what if we assayed to steal the clownish fool out of your father's court? Would he not be a comfort to our travel?"

Celia is delighted at the prospect. "He'll go along o'er the wide world with *me*; leave me alone to persuade him!

"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 go we in content to *liberty*, and not to banishment!"

And so, very soon, Frederick's court will lose its best wit, charm and beauty.

Chapter Four The Forest

In the old woods of Arden, beneath a verdant canopy of vaulting boughs and leafy branches, the rightful Duke of Ardenne celebrates simple contentment with the noblemen who have abandoned palace life, and are clothed and equipped for their roles as foresters and hunters.

"Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile, hath not our custom made this life more sweet than that of painted *pomp*?" asks the duke. "Are not these woods more free from peril than the envious *court*?"

"Here feel we but the penalty of Adam: the seasons' difference, such as the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind—to which, when it bites and blows upon my body, even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say, 'This is no *flattery*!—these are counselors that *feelingly* persuade me what I am!'

"Sweet are the *uses* of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious *jewel* in his head! And this our life, exempt from public view, finds tongues in *trees*, books in the running *brooks*, sermons in *stones*—and *good* in everything!"

"I would not change it!" says Lord Amiens. "Happy is Your Grace, who can translate the stubbornness of Fortune into so quiet and so sweet a style!"

"Come, shall we go and kill us venison?" asks the duke, taking up his longbow. "And yet it irks me that the poor, dappled fools,"—the deer, "being *native* burghers of this austere city, should in their own confines have their round haunches gored with forkèd heads"—arrows' barbs.

"Indeed, my lord, the melancholy Jacques *grieves* at that!" reports one of the noblemen. "And, in that mind, swears *you* do more usurp than doth your brother that hath banished you!"

"Today my Lord of Amiens and myself did steal up behind him as he lay along under an oak whose antique roots peep out upon the brook that brawls along this wood.

"To which place a poor, sequestered *stag*, that from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt, did come to languish—and indeed, my lord, the wretched animal heavèd forth such groans that their discharge did stretch his leathern coat almost to bursting; and the big, round *tears* coursèd one after another down his innocent nose in piteous chase! And thus the hairy fool, much markèd by

the melancholy Jacques, stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook, augmenting it with tears!”

“But what *said* Jacques?” asks the duke. “Did he not *moralize* this spectacle?”

“Oh, *yes!*—into a *thousand* similes!” laughs the nobleman. “First for its weeping into the heedless stream: ‘Poor deer,’ quoth he, ‘thou makest a testament as worldlings do, giving thy sum of *more* to that which had *too much!*’ Then for being there alone, left and abandoned by his velvet friends: ‘’Tis right,’ quoth he. ‘Thus misery *doth* part from the flux of company!’

“Anon, the careless herd, full of pasture, jumps along past him, and never stays to greet him. ‘*Aye,*’ quoth Jacques, ‘*sweep on,* you fat and greasy citizens—’tis just the fashion! Wherefore do *you* look upon that poor and broken bankrupt, there?’

“Then most *invectively* he pierceth through the body of the *country*: city, court—and yea, of this, *our* life!—swearing that we are mere *usurpers*—*tyrants* and what’s *worse*, to fright the animals, and to kill them in their assigned and native dwelling-place!”

“And did you leave him in this contemplation?”

“We did, my lord—weeping, and commenting upon the sobbing deer.”

“Show me the place,” says the eager philosopher. “I love to cope him in these sullen fits, for then he’s full of matter!”

“I’ll bring you to him straight!”

Duke Frederick, his sullen lords attending fearfully in the throne room of the palace, is furious. “Can it be possible that no man *saw* them? It cannot *be!*—some villains of my court are of consent and sufferance in this!”

“I cannot hear of any that did see her,” reports one apologetic nobleman. “The ladies, her attendants of her chamber, saw her abed, but in the morning early they found the bed untreasured of their mistress!”

“My lord, the coarse *clown* at whom so oft Your Grace was wont to laugh is *also* missing,” another courtier tells him. “Hisperia, the princess’s gentlewoman, confesses that she o’erheard, secretly, your daughter and her cousin much commend the parts and graces of the *wrestler* that did but lately foil the sinewy Charles—and she believes, wherever they are gone, that youth is surely in their company.”

“Send to his brother!” the duke commands angrily. “Fetch that gallant hither;” he says, picturing the defiant Orlando. “If he be absent, bring his *brother* to me; I’ll make *him* find him!”

“Do this immediately—and let search and inquisition not quail to *bring back* these foolish runaways!”

Orlando, traveling on foot, tonight finally completes his journey from the palace. Passing Sir Oliver’s stately mansion, he goes to the back, headed for his small cabin—and spots someone just outside, in the dark. “*Who’s there?*”

“What, my young master?” asks the reedy voice of old Adam, who has been waiting. “Oh, my gentle master! O my sweet master! O you memory of old Sir Rowland!” moans the frail graybeard. “Why, what *make* you here?” he chides, worried. “Why are you *virtuous?*—wherefore people do *love* you! You are gentle, strong and valiant—why would you be so *reckless* as to overcome the bonny prizier of the *ill-humoured duke?*”

“Your praise is come all too swiftly home *before* you! Know you not, master, that to some kind of men their *graces* serve them but as *enemies?* No less do *yours*: your virtues, gentle master, are sanctified and holy *traitors* to you!”

“Oh, what a world is this, when what is *comely* poisons him that bears it!” he groans.

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Oh, unhappy youth, come not within these doors!” warns Adam. “Beneath yon roof the *enemy* of all your graces lives! Your *brother*... no, no brother; yet the *son*... yet *not* the son; I will not call *him* son of him I was about to call his *father!*—hath *heard* your praises!”

“And this night he means to *burn* the lodging where you use to lie—and *you within it!* If he fail in that, he will have other means to cut you off!—I overheard him in his practises!

“This is no fit place,” he says, sadly shaking his white-haired head, “this house is but a *butchery! Abhor it, fear it!—do not enter it!*”

“Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?”

“No *matter* whither, so you come not *here!*”

“What?—wouldst thou have me go and *beg* my food? Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce a *thievish* living on the common road? That I must do, or know not *what* to do; yet that I will *not* do, do how I can! I will rather subject me to the malice of distempered blood in a bloody brother!”

“*But do not so!*” says Adam, urgently grasping Orlando’s sleeve. “I have *five hundred crowns*—the thrifty hire I saved under your father, which I did store to be my foster-nurse when service should in my old limbs lie lame, and unregarded age in corners be thrown.

“*Take that, and may He that doth the sparrow feed—yea, providently caters for the raven!*—be comfort to my age. Here is the gold; and all this I *give* you!” He hands Orlando a worn-leather pouch of coins. “Let me be your *servant!* Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty; for in my youth I never did supply hot and rebellious liquors to my blood, ne’er did with unbashful forehead woo the means of weakness and debility. Therefore my age is as a winter frosty but *kindly*.

“Let me go *with* you! I’ll do the service of a younger man in all your business and necessities!”

Orlando is deeply moved. “Oh, good old man, how *well* in thee appears the loyal service of the *antique* world, when service sweated for *duty*, not for meed! Thou art not for the fashion of *these* times, where none will sweat but for *promotion*—and *having* that, do choke their service off, even with the having! It is not so with thee.

“But, poor old man, thou prunest 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, and ere we have thy youthful wages spent, we’ll light upon *some* settled, low contentment.” He considers heading north to the timeless woodlands that abound with berries, edible plants and roots, and game birds and animals.

Adam urges him to depart—and now. “Master, go on; and I will follow thee to the last gasp with truth and loyalty!” He looks toward the rear of the mansion, and the servants’ quarters—his home for more than six decades.

“From seventeen years till now almost fourscore, *here* livèd I; but now I live here no more.” Still, he smiles. ““At seventeen years, many their fortunes seek; but at *fourscore*, it is too late—*by a week!*”

“Yet Fortune cannot recompense me better than to die well, and not my master’s debtor.”

Oh, *Jupiter*, how *weary* are my spirits!” gasps Rosalind, stopping to rest. In disguise as the boyish gentleman Ganymede, she seats herself on the dry trunk of a huge fallen tree.

“I’d care not for my *spirits*,” moans Touchstone, “if my *legs* were not weary!”

Rosalind’s swollen feet ache. “I could find it in my heart to disgrace my man’s apparel, and to cry like a woman! But, as *doublet-and-hose* ought to show itself courageous to *petticoat*, I must comfort the weaker vessel. Therefore *courage*, good Aliena!”

Celia, her silken gown exchanged, during travel, for Aliena’s fine linen, is also exhausted. “I pray you, bear with me; I cannot go further!”

Says Touchstone, “For my part, I had rather bear *with* you than *bear* you! Yet I should bear no *cross* if I did bear you, for I think you have no money in your purse!” Many of the realm’s coins are embossed with crosses; the jest is lame, though, as the ladies have brought a considerable amount of gold with them from the palace.

Rosalind looks around at the lush woods, the rough rocks and dry, fallen leaves of many seasons past. “Well, this is the Forest of Arden...”

“Aye, now am *I* in Arden,” says the jester sourly, “the *more* fool I! When I was at home I was in a better place! But travelers must be content.”

“Aye, *be* so, good Touchstone,” says Rosalind. She sees someone walking along a path in the grassy field nearby, beside the wood. “Look you who comes here—a young man and an old, in solemn talk...”

From behind green brush and low tree-limbs’ fluttering leaves, they observe, silently.

A shepherd, now within their hearing, pauses to sit on a rock; his younger companion, a gentleman, crouches beside him. As they watch the grazing flock, the graybeard shakes his head. “That is the way to make her scorn you still!” he warns.

“Oh, Corin, I would that thou knew’st how I do *love* her!” says suffering Silvius.

“I partly guess, for *I* have loved ere now.”

“No, Corin—being old, thou canst *not* guess, though in thy youth thou wast as true a lover as ever sighed upon a midnight pillow! But if thy love *were* even *like* to mine—and surely, I think, man did *never* love so!—how many actions most ridiculous hast *thou* been drawn into by thy fantasy?”

The old man gazes at the sheep for a moment, chuckling. “Into a *thousand* that I have *forgotten!*” He remembers even more.

“Ah, then didst thou ne’er love so *heartily!* If thou remember’st *not* even the *slightest* folly that love did make thee run into, thou hast not *loved!*”

“Or if thou hast not sat as *I* do now, wearying thy hearer in thy mistress’ praise, thou hast not loved!

“Or if thou hast not broken from company abruptly—as my passion now makes *me!*—thou hast not *loved!* *O Phoebe, Phoebe, Phoebe!*” He jumps to his feet and dashes away to be nearer his beloved.

- “*Alas*, poor shepherd, searching in thy wound! I have by hard adventure found my *own!*” murmurs Rosalind, thinking of the young man she had just met, only to leave behind.

- “And I mine. I remember when *I* was in love,” says Touchstone—dryly. “For to become a knight for *Jane Smile*, I broke my sword upon a *stone*, and bid it ‘*Take that!*’

- “And I remember the kissing of her *batlet*,”—a wooden laundry implement, “and the *cow’s dugs* that her pretty, chapped hands had milked!

- “And I remember the wooing of a *peascod*, in stead of *her*—from whom I took two cods and, giving them to her again, and said, with weeping *tears*, ‘Wear these for my sake!’

- The two ladies exchange amused glances at the wry reminiscence.

- “We that are *true* lovers *run* into strange capers,” he says. “But as all is mortal in *nature*, so all nature *in love* is mortal in *folly!*”

- “Thou speakest wiser than thou art ’ware of,” says Rosalind, feeling quite forlorn.

- “Aye, I shall ne’er beware of mine own wit till I *break my shins* against it.”

- “*Jove, Jove*,” moans Rosalind, “that shepherd’s passion is much upon *my* fashion!”

- “And mine,” says Touchstone, “but it grows something *stale* with *me*.” Stale is a term for prostitute.

- Celia feels a different desire. “I pray you—*one* of you question yond man if he for gold will give us any *food!* I faint almost to death!”

“*Holla!* You—*clown!*” calls Touchstone to the rustic.

“*Peace, Fool!*” says Rosalind, wincing at the slight; “he’s not *thy* kinsman!”

By the meadow, Corin looks up. “Who calls?”

“Your *bettors*, sir,” says the erudite jester, as they approach the old man.

Corin only nods. “Else are they very wretched.”

Rosalind frowns at the fool. “*Peace*, I say!” Monsieur Ganymede smiles at Corin. “Good even to you, friend!”

“And to you, gentle sir; and to you all.”

“I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold can in this remote place buy accommodations, bring us where we may rest ourselves, and feed,” says Rosalind. She points to Celia. “Here’s a young maid with travel much oppressèd, and faint for succor!”

“Fair sir, I pity her, and wish, for *her* sake more than for mine own, my fortunes were more able to relieve her!” says kindly Corin. “But I am shepherd to another man, and do not shear the fleeces that I graze. My master is of churlish disposition, and little reckons to find the way to heaven by doing deeds of *hospitality!*”

“Besides, his cottage, his flocks and bounds of feed are now *for sale*; and at our sheepcote now, by reason of his absence, is nothing that you *would* feed on. But what there is, come and see. In *my* voice, most welcome shall you be!”

“Who is he that shall *buy* this flock and pasture?” asks M. Ganymede.

“The young swain that you saw here but erewhile, who little cares about buying anything.” Silvius is a gentleman of means.

“I pray thee, if it stand with honesty,”—would not be improper, says Ganymede, an apple-cheeked lad, “buy *thou* the cottage, pasture and the flock, and thou shalt have money to pay for it from *us!*”

“And we will mend thy *wages*,” adds Celia. “I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it!”

Corin considers. “Assuredly the thing is to be sold. . . . Go with me; if you like, upon report, the soil, the profit, and this kind of life, I *will* your very faithful feeder be—and buy it with your gold right suddenly!”

Thus, thanks to the magical powers of money, two gentle ladies of Frederick’s court become shepherd and shepherdess, and will dwell in a cottage beside the wild wood.

Chapter Five Hospitality, Mercy

Lord Amiens is an accomplished singer, and his mellow baritone provides entertainment and encouragement for the willing woodsmen in the Forest of Arden. This afternoon, the noble renegades hearken as he plucks the strings of his lute, and sings:

*“Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to hie with me,
And return his merry note
Unto the sweet bird’s throat:
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather!”*

“More, more, I prithee, *more!*” cries a listener.

“It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jacques,” cautions Amiens, starting to put the instrument into its case.

“I *thank* it!” says Jacques. “*More*, I prithee, *more!* I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks *eggs!* More, I prithee, *more!*”

“My voice is ragged,” protests Amiens. “I know I cannot please you.”

“I do not desire you to *please* me!—I do desire you to *sing!* Come, *more*; another stanza—call ’em you *stanzas?*”

“What you will, Monsieur Jacques.”

“Nay, I care not about their names; they *owe* me nothing.” Again he pleads: “Will you sing?” Amiens acquiesces modestly. “More at your request than to please myself.”

“Well, then, if ever I thank *any* man I’ll thank *you*; but that which they call a ‘*compliment*’ is what the encounter of *two dogs* apes!”—mutual sniffing. “And when a man thanks me *heartily*, methinks I have given him a *penny*, and he renders me the *beggarly* thanks.

“Come, *sing!*—and you that will *not*,” he calls to the assembly, “hold your tongues!”

Lord Amiens lifts his lute. “Well, I’ll tender the song. Sirs; cover the while,” he says, asking the nearby gentlemen to set out their repast of fruit, cheese, bread and wine. “The duke will drink under this tree. The musician tells Jacques, “He hath been all this day *looking* for you!”

“And I have been all this day *avoiding* him!” says the eccentric. “He is too contentious for my company!” An impulsive intellect, he finds any structuring philosophy futile. “I think of as many matters as he, but, I give heaven thanks, I make no *boast* of them! Come, *warble!* Come!”

Amiens obliges:

“*Whoever doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i’ the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleasèd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather!*”

“I’ll give you a verse to those notes that *I* made yesterday,” says Jacques, “in a respite from thine invention.”

“Then I’ll *sing* it,” Amiens offers.

“Thus it goes,” says Jacques. He speaks the lyric:

“*If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease,
A stubborn will to please—
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame!—
Here shall he see
Fools gross as he!
An if ye will, come to me!*”

“What’s that ‘*ducdame*’?” asks Amiens; *Duke damn me!* is not in his tablature.

Replies Jacques dryly, “’Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle.” Imperiously aloof, he yawns, “I’ll go sleep, if I can. If I cannot, I’ll rail against all the first-born of Egypt.”

Says the hungry, green-clad nobleman, “And *I’ll* go seek the duke. His *banquet* is prepared!”

Dear master, I can go no further,” moans old Adam, sinking wearily to the dry and matted leaves of dull brown and gray beneath a massive oak, deep within the forest. “Oh, I die for *food!* Here lie I down and measure out my grave. Farewell, kind master!”

Orlando kneels beside him. “Why, *how now*, Adam! No greater heart in thee? Live yet a little, comfort a little, *cheer* thyself a little!

“If this uncouth forest yield anything untamed, I will either be *food* for it or *bring it* as food to *thee!*” He smiles. “Thine *imagination* is nearer death than thy powers. For *my* sake, be comforted!—hold Death a while at the arm’s end!

“I will be here with thee *presently!* If I bring thee not something to eat, I will give thee leave to die—but if thou diest *before* I come, thou art a mocker of my labour!”

As he leans back against the rough, dark bole, a groan escapes Adam; but he smiles bravely.

Orlando pats his thin shoulder. “Well *said!* Lookest thou cheerily, and I’ll be with thee quickly!” He glances around the dim, dense woods, and studies the rocky hillside near by. “Yet

thou liest in the bleak air. Come, I will bear thee to some shelter—and thou shalt not die for lack of a dinner if there live anything in this waste!

“*Cheerily*, good Adam!”

But as he helps the man duck into a cave, through its narrow opening beneath an overhang of dark, jagged rock, his eyes are glistening with tears.

Exhausted and hungry after days and nights of walking, always wary of pursuit, he thinks mainly of the devoted servant; for his sake, Orlando is very concerned.

Sunshine dapples the long, rough tables, well laden with fresh food and amply provided with excellent wine. The rightful Duke of Ardennes, with Lord Amiens and others, all accoutered as oddly elegant outlaws, prepares for refreshment.

The duke still wants to hear Jacques’s own account of his encounter with the stricken deer. “I think he be transformèd into a *beast*, for I can nowhere find him like a man!”

“My lord, he is but even now gone hence,” says a nobleman. “Here was he, hearing a song *merrily!*”

The duke laughs. “If *he*, compacted of *quarrels*, grow musical, we shall shortly have discord in the *spheres!*”—the layered universe itself. “Go, seek him! Tell him I would speak with him.”

“He saves my labour by his own approach,” says the lord, pointing, as the iconoclast arrives in the glade.

“Why, *how now*, monsieur!” calls the duke. “What a time is *this*, that your poor friends must *woo* your company!” He stares, surprised. “*What?—you look merry!*”

“A *fool*, a *fool!* I met a *fool* i’ the forest—a *motley fool!*”

“As I do live by *food*—oh, *miserable* word!—I met a *fool* who laid him down and basked him in the sun, then *railed* on *Lady Fortune*—in good *terms!*—in good, *set terms!* And but a *motley fool!*” cries Jacques in amazement. “‘Good morrow, Fool,’ quoth I. ‘*No*, sir,’ quoth he, ‘call me not *fool* till heaven hath sent my fortune.’” Proverbially, the foolish get what they deserve.

“And then he drew a dial from his poke, and, looking on it with a lack-lustre eye, says very wisely, ‘It is ten o’clock.

“‘Thus we may see,’ quoth he, ‘how the world wags: ’tis but an hour ago it was *nine*, yet after *one hour more* ’twill be *eleven!* And so from hour to hour we ripen and *ripen!*’” Jacques’s grin implies one of the term’s meanings: *grow lustful*. “‘And then, from hour to hour, we *rut!*’—*mate* like male deer—‘and *rot!* And *thereby* hangs a *tale!*’” He laughs at Touchstone’s play on *tail*.

“When I did hear the motley fool thus moralize the times, my lungs began to crow like *chanticleer*’s, that fools should be so deeply *contemplative!* And I did *laugh sans intermission!*—an hour by his *dial!*”

“Oh, *noble* fool!—a *worthy* fool!” Cries the new acolyte, “*Motley*’s the *only* wear!”

The duke has found much in the forest, but never a jester with a jingling cap. “What fool is this?”

“Oh, a *worthy* fool!—one that hath been a *courtier*, and says, ‘If *ladies* be but young and fair—they have the gift of *knowing it!*’ And in his brain, which is as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage, he hath crammed strange places with *observation*, the which he vents in mangled forms!

“Oh, that *I* were a fool! I am ambitious for a motley coat!”

“Thou shalt *have* one!” says the magnanimous duke.

“It is my only *suit*,” jests Jacques—playing on *request* and *clothing*, “—provided that you weed”—another word for apparel—“your better judgments of all opinion that grows rank in them that I am *wise!*”

“I must have *liberty* withal!—as large a charter as the *wind*, to blow on whom I please—for so *fools* have!

“And they that are most galled by my folly, they *most* must laugh! And *why*, sir, must they do so? The way is plain as to the parish church: he that a fool doth very wisely *hit*, although he

smarts, doth very *foolishly* if he seem *senseless* to the bob. For if he laugh *not*, the ‘wise’ man’s folly is *anatomized*, even by the squandering glances of a fool!

“Invest me in my *motley*; give me leave to speak my mind, and I will cleanse the foul body of the infected *world*, through and through!

“If they will patiently *receive* my medicine.”

The duke laughs. “*Fie on thee!*—I can tell what thou *wouldst* do!”

Jacques frowns. “What, for example, would I do but *good*?”

“Most *mischievous foul sin*, in *chiding* sin! For thou *thyself* hast been a *libertine*, as sensual as the brutish *sting itself*!”—*penis*. “And all the *embossèd sores, un-needed evils* that thou with license of free foot hast caught thou *wouldst* disgorge onto the *general world*!”

Counters Jacques, “Well, who cries out against *pride* that does not therein tax *any* private party? Doth it not flow as hugely as the *sea*, till the very *means* do ebb?”—rivers dry up. “What woman in the city do I *name* when I say, ‘The city woman bears the cost of princes on unworthy shoulders’?”—dresses with pretension. “Who can come in and say that I mean *her*, when such a one as she *is her every neighbour*?

“Or who is he of basest function that, thinking I mean him, says *his* frippery is derided by me, yet therein *suits* his folly to the mettle of my speech!”—and by saying the criticism fits, *confirms* it. “*There* then, *how* then, *what* then?—let me *see* wherein my tongue hath wronged him! If it do him *right*, then he hath wronged *himself*; if he be innocent, why then my taxing flies like a wild-goose—*unclaimèd* by *any* man!”

Having concluded his defense of slandering generally, Jacques looks toward the path. “But who comes *here*?”

Orlando, haggard from his long travel and a morning of futile foraging, stands before the foresters with his sword drawn. He gestures toward the tables covered with food. “*Forbear*, and eat no more!”

“Why, I have eaten *none* yet!” protests Jacques—adopting a fool’s saucy style.

Orlando is weak with hunger, and worried about Adam. “Nor *shalt* not, till *necessity* be served!”

Jacques regards the audacious youth. “Of what kind should *this* cock come of?”

The duke frowns at Orlando. “Art thou thus boldened, man, by thy *distress*?—or else a rude *despiser of good manners*, that in civility thou seem’st so empty!”

“You touched my vein at first: the *bare, thorny point* of distress hath ta’en from me the show of smooth civility. Yet am I inland bred, and know some nurture,” Orlando tells him. “But *forbear*, I say! He dies that touches any of this fruit till I and my affairs are *answerèd*!”

Jacques shrugs. “If you will not be answered with *reasons*”—a tired jest, playing on the similar pronunciation of *raisins*, “I must die.”

But the duke calmly opens his hands in a peaceful manner. “What would you have? Your *gentleness* shall force more than your force move us to gentleness....”

Orlando nods. “I almost die for food,” he says quietly. “Then let me have it.”

“Sit down and feed,” says the duke kindly, “and welcome to our table.”

Orlando lowers his blade. “Speak you so gently?” Exhausted, he closes his eyes for a moment. “Pardon me, I pray you. I thought that *all* things had been savage here; and therefore put I on the countenance of stern commandment.”

He addresses the noblemen forthrightly: “But whate’er you are, that in this wilderness inaccessible, under the shade of melancholy boughs, lose in neglect the creeping hours of time, if ever you have looked on *better* days; if ever been where bells have knelled to *church*; if ever sat at any *goodman’s* feast”—commoner’s humble meal, “if ever from your eyelids wiped a *tear*, and known what ’tis to pity and be pitied, let gentleness my strong enforcement be.

“In the which hope, I blush, and hide my sword.” He sheathes the weapon.

“True it *is* that we have seen better days,” says the duke solemnly, “and have with holy bell been knellèd to church, and sat at good men’s feasts, and wiped our eyes of drops that sacred pity hath engendered.

“And therefore sit you down in gentleness, and take upon command what *help* we have, that to your wanting may be ministered.”

“Then but forbear your food a little while,” pleads Orlando, “whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn, and give it food. There is an old, poor man who after me hath many a weary step limpèd in pure love. Till he, weak, oppressèd with two evils, age and hunger, be first sufficèd, I will not touch a bit.”

The duke smiles. “Go find him out, and we will nothing waste till you return.”

“I thank ye—and be *blest* for your good comfort!” He goes to bring Adam from the dank shelter.

The duke turns to his men. “Thou seest we are not all alone unfortunate: this wide and universal theatre presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play.”

Jacques, eager to perform, perceives a cue. “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.

“At first the infant, mewling and puking in a nurse’s arms.

“And then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel and shining, morning face, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school.

“And then the lover, sighing like a furnace with woeful ballad, made to his mistress’ *eyebrow*.

“Then a soldier, full of strange oaths, and bearded like the ’pard—jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble *reputation* even in the *cannon’s* mouth!

“And then the justice, and a fair, round belly with good capon linèd, eyes severe and beard of formal cut—full of wise saws *and* modern instances; and so he plays his part.

“The sixth age shifts into the lean and slippered pantaloon, with spectacles on nose and pouch on side, his youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide for his shrunken shanks—and his big, manly voice turning again toward childish treble—pipes and whistles in his sound!

“Last scene of all, that ends this strange, eventful history, is second childishness; then mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste—sans everything.”

Returning to the clearing, Orlando carries the resurrected Adam.

“Welcome!” cries the duke. “Set down your venerable burthen, and let him feed!”

“I thank you most for *him*,” says Orlando, helping the man to sit at a table.

“So had you need,” says Adam, weakly. “I scarce can speak to thank you for myself,” he tells his host.

“Welcome!” the duke tells him. “Fall to! I will not trouble you as yet, to question you about your fortunes.”

He turns to Lord Amiens. “Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.” As the two visitors eat—politely but eagerly—the duke confers quietly with Orlando.

The woodsmen take their seats to enjoy the noon meal. Lord Amiens’ lute provides a melody cheerful, yet poignant, as he sings a bittersweet song:

“Blow, blow, thou winter wind;

Thou art not so unkind

As man’s ingratitude!

Thy tooth is not so keen,

Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly—

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly!

Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot!
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not!
Heigh-ho! Sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly!
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly!
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

—

Sitting beside Orlando as he finishes eating, the duke rests a hand on his shoulder. “If that you were the good Sir Rowland’s son, as you have whispered faithfully you are—and as mine eye doth his effigies witness most truly limned and living in your face—be truly *welcome* hither! I am the duke that loved your father! The residue of your fortune, go to my cave and tell me.

He invites Adam into his comfortable, torch-lit dwelling. “Good old man, thou art right welcome, as thy master is.”

As they rise, he nods to Orlando. “Support him by the arm.

“Give me your hand,” the duke tells Adam, “and let me all your fortunes understand!”

Duke Frederick, in the palace at Ardenne, is exasperated with Oliver. “*Not seen him since?* But sir, sir, that *cannot be!* Were I not the better part made *mercy,*” he says, perceiving no irony, “I should not seek an *absent* argument for my revenge, with *thou present!*”

“But *look to it!*—*find out* thy brother, wheresoe’er he is!—seek him with *candle!*”—even at night. “*Bring him,* dead or living, within this twelvemonth, or return thou no more to seek a living in our territory!

“Thy lands and all things that thou dost call thine worth *seizure* do we seize into our hands, till thou canst acquit thee by thy *brother’s* mouth of what we think against thee!”

Oliver De Bois, appalled, protests: “Oh, that Your Highness knew my heart in this! I never loved my brother in my life!”

“More *villain* thou,” mutters the duke. “Well, *push him out of doors!*” he orders his court attendants, angrily, “and let my officers make assessment of such a nature upon his house and lands!

“Do this expediently, and *turn him going!*”

Chapter Six Encomia

Orlando’s feverish fantasy overwhelms him, and his youthful passion demands *some* expression—so he fastens poems to trees. He has anointed leaves of paper with ink, each proclaiming the merits of his fair lady. They flutter in the shade, stirred by the gentle breezes beneath the spreading green boughs of Arden.

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love! he thinks, as he posts the last one—last only because he has run out of paper. He gazes at the waxing moon. *And thou, thrice-crownèd queen of night, survey with thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above, thy huntress’ name that my full life doth sway!*

O Rosalind! These trees shall be my books, and in their barks my thoughts I'll character, so that every eye which in this forest looks shall see thy virtue witnessed every where! He draws his knife, now a novice's nib.

Run, run, Orlando!—carve on every tree the fair, the chaste and ineffable she!

The sheep, now Mistress Aliena's, graze quietly. Wiry Corin, hands folded around his long oaken crook as he leans against it, queries the fool.

"And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?"

The veteran of palace comforts is divided. "Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a *shepherd's* life, it is *nought!* In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is *private*,"—lacking the perquisites of office, "it is a very *vile* life!

"Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is *not in the court*, it is *tedious!* As is it a spare life, look you, it fits my mood well; but as there is *no more plenty* in it, it goes much against my *stomach!*

"Hast any *philosophy* in thee, shepherd?"

Corin eyes the placid flock. "No more than I know that the more one sickens, the worse at ease he is; and that he who wants money, means, and contentment is without three good friends."

He considers further, nibbling at a long blade of grass. "That the property of rain is to wet, and of fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun." He strokes his beard, watching the jester. "That he who hath no wit earned by nature nor by art may argue good breeding. *Or*, he comes of a very dull kindred."

"Such a one is a *natural* philosopher," says Touchstone. "Wast ever in court, shepherd?"

"No, truly."

"Then thou art damnèd."

"*Nay*, I hope!"

"Truly, thou art damned like an egg ill-roasted, all on one side!"

"For not being at court? Your reasoning?"

Touchstone syllogizes: "Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good *manners*; if thou never sawest *good* manners, then thy manners must be *wicked*; and wickedness is *sin*—and sin is *damnation!*" His head wags gravely, jangling the bells on his fool's cap. "Thou art in a perilous state, shepherd!"

"Not a *whit*, Touchstone," laughs Corin. "Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the *country* as the behavior of the country is most mockable at the *court!* You told me you salute not at the court, but you *kiss your hands*; that courtesy would be *uncleanly*, if courtiers were shepherds."

"Instance"—explanation, "briefly; come, *instance!*"

"Why, we are ever handling our ewes, and their pelts, you know, are greasy."

"Well, do not your courtier's hands *sweat*? And is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man?" Touchstone's cap jingles again. "Shallow, *shallow!* A better instance, I say! Come!"

"Besides, our hands are hard—"

"Your lips will feel them the *sooner*. Shallow *again!* A more sounder instance; come."

"—and they are often tarrèd over, from the surgery on our sheep! Would you have us kiss tar?"—used to close wounds. "The *courtier's* hands are *perfumed*, with civet."

Touchstone laughs. "Most shallow man *indeed!* Thou worm's-meat, in respect of a *good* piece of flesh, *perpend*, and learn from the *wise*: civet is of a baser birth than *tar!*—the very uncleanly *flux* of a *cat!* Mend the instance, shepherd!"

Corin smiles, knowing that the jester will never be gainsaid. "You have too *courtly* a wit for me! I'll rest."

But Touchstone craves exercise for his cleverness. "Wilt thou rest *damnèd*? God help thee, shallow man! God make *incision* in thee!—thou art *raw!*"—like meat to be scored for broiling.

Corin regards him calmly. “Sir, I am a true laborer: I earn what I eat, hunt for what I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man’s happiness—glad of other men’s good, content with my harm. And the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze, and my lambs suckle.”

The fool is silent—moved, briefly, in spite of himself, by the old man’s peaceful sagacity. Touchstone recovers by resorting to a favorite satiric vein: concupiscence. “That is *another* simple sin in you!—to bring the ewes and the rams together, and to offer to get your living by the *copulation of cattle!*—to be *bawd* to a *bell-wether*, and to betray a she-lamb of a twelvemonth to a *crooked-pated, cuckoldly old ram*, out of all reasonable *match!*”

“If thou beest not damned for *that*, the Devil will have himself no shepherds!” He spreads his hand, eyebrows rising in mock sympathy. “I cannot see else how thou shouldst ’scape!”

But Corin, ever comforted by the rod and the staff, only laughs, unscathed. He looks toward the woods. “Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress’s brother.”

Rosalind—now looking ruddy and robust as that gentleman, thanks to the field’s sunshine—walks slowly toward the two men, staring down intently at several scraps of paper.

Deepening her voice, she reads aloud:

“*From the East to western Inde,
No jewel is like Rosalind!
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind!
All the pictures fairest lined
Are but dark to Rosalind!
Let no fair be kept in mind
But the fair of Rosalind!*”

Touchstone is wincing, genuinely pained by the doggerel. “*I’ll rhyme you so eight years together!*—dinners and suppers, and sleeping-hours excepted. It is a right *butter-woman’s* prank at market!”—*call to customers.*

“*Out, fool!*” says Rosalind, puzzled but flattered by the verse.

The jester cannot resist meeting—lewdly—his own challenge: “For a taste—

“*If a hart do lack a hind,
Let him seek out Rosalind!
If the cat will after kind,
So, be sure, will Rosalind!
Winter garments must be lined;
So must slender Rosalind!
They that reap must sheaf and bind—
Then to cart with Rosalind!
Sweetest nut hath sourest rind;
Such a nut is Rosalind!
He that sweetest rose will find
Must find Love’s prick in Rosalind!*”

Piqued, she flushes—and hopes that Corin won’t notice it.

Touchstone examines a few of the poems. “This is the very *false gallop* of verses! Why do you infest yourself with them?”

“*Peace*, you dull fool! I found them on a tree—”

“Truly, the tree yields bad fruit!”

Ganymede grins. “I’ll graft it with *you*, and then I shall graft it with a *medlar*”—a fruit soft enough to be eaten only when nearly spoiled. “Then it will be the *earliest* fruit i’ the *country!* For you’ll be rotten”—a play on *rutting*—“ere you be *half ripe!*—and that’s the true virtue of the *meddler!*”

He nods, amused by the apt retort. “You have said,” he laughs. “But whether *wisely* or no, let the *forest* judge!”

Rosalind spots Celia. “Peace! Here comes my sister—reading.” She wants the lady’s opinion. “Stand aside,” Ganymede tells the men.

Celia joins them, bringing another of Orlando’s rhymes; Aliena reads aloud:

“*Why should this a desert be?
Because it is unpeopled?
No!—tongues I’ll hang on every tree,
That shall civil sayings show:
Some, how briefly the life of man
Runs his erring pilgrimage—
That the stretching of a span
Buckles in his sum of age;
Some, on violated vows
’Twixt the souls of friend and friend.
But upon the fairest boughs,
Ere every sentence end,
Will I Rosalinda write,
Teaching all that read to know
The quintessence of every sprite
Heaven would in little show!
Therefore Heaven Nature chargèd,
That one body should be filled
With all graces wide-enlargèd!
Nature presently distilled
Helen’s cheek, but not her heart,
Cleopatra’s majesty,
Atalanta’s better part,
Sad Lucretia’s modesty—
Thus Rosalind of many parts
By heavenly synod was devised,
Of many faces, eyes, and hearts,
To have the touches dearest prized!
Heaven would that she these gifts should have—
And I to live and die her slave!”*”

“O most gentle *Jupiter!*” cries Rosalind looking skyward, “what tedious *homily* of love have you wearied your parishioners withal!—and never cried, ‘Have *patience*, good people!’”

“How now?” Celia is concerned that Ganymede’s strong response could compromise Rosalind’s disguise. “Back, friends, Shepherd, go off a little; go with him, sirrah,” the lady tells Touchstone.

He affects indignation over *sirrah*. “Come, shepherd,” he says haughtily, “let us make an honourable retreat; though not with *bag* and *baggage*,”—a taunt tossed at the brother and sister, “yet with scrip and scribbling!” He strides into the open field, sorting through the poems with disgust. Corin follows, and soon urges the bleating sheep on to new pasturage.

“Didst thou *hear* those verses?” asks Celia.

“Oh, yes, I heard them all—and *more*, too: for some of them had in them more *feet* than the verses would bear!”—too busy a poetic meter.

“That’s no matter;: the feet might bear the verses *away*.”

“But the feet were *lame*,” Rosalind stresses, “and could not bear *themselves*, let alone the verse, and therefore stood lamely *in* the verse.”

“But didst thou hear without wondering *how* thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees?”

“I was *seven* of the *nine days of wonder!*”—amazed, “before you came. For look, here, what I found on a pine tree!” She pulls the poem from a pocket.

After a moment, Celia looks up from the paper—with a knowing smile. “Trow you who hath done this?”

“Is it a man?”

“With a *chain* about his neck that *you* once wore! Change you colour?”

“I prithee, who?”

“Oh, Lord, *Lord*, it *is* a hard matter for friends to *meet!*”—share understanding. Celia laughs. “Even *mountains* may be removed with *earthquakes*, and so *encounter!*”

“Nay, but who *is* it?”

Celia shakes her head, smiling. “Is it *possible?*”

“Nay, I prithee now with most petitionary *vehemence*, tell me *who it is!*”

Celia doubles over with laughter. “Oh, wonderful, wonderful, and most *wonderfully* wonderful! And yet again *wonderful*—and after *that*, out of all *whooping!*”

Rosalind tries, red-faced, to argue over Celia’s laughter: “Look at my *complexion!* Dost thou think, because I am caparisoned like a *man*, I have the doublet-and-hose in my *disposition?* One *inch* more of delay is a *South Sea* of *discovery!* I prithee, tell me who it *is*—*quickly*, and speak *apace!*”

But Celia can’t stop laughing.

“I would thou couldst *stammer,*” says Rosalind, “so that thou mightst pour this concealed man out of thy mouth as *wine* comes out of a narrow-mouthed *bottle*—either *none at all* or *too much at once!* I prithee, take the *cork* out of thy mouth, that I may drink thy *tidings!*”

“So you may put a *man* in your *belly!*” laughs her cousin.

“Is he of God’s making? What *manner* of man? Is his head worth a hat, or his chin worth a beard?”

“Nay, he hath but a little *beard!*”

“Well, *God* will send *more*, if the man will be thankful—but let *me* wait for the *growth* of his beard, if thou deny me now the knowledge of his *chin!*”

“It is young *Orlando!*—who tripped up the wrestler’s heels and your *heart*, both in an instant!”

“Nay, but the devil take *mocking!*” cries Rosalind. “*Speak!*—*serious* brow, and *true*, maid!”

“I’ faith, coz, ’tis *he!*”

“*Orlando?*”

“Orlando.”

Rosalind had forsaken hope of finding a suitor in the country—and now she learns Orlando is here! But suddenly her eyes widen: “*Alas* the day! What shall I *do*, in my *doublet and hose?*”

“What *did* he when thou sawest him? What *said* he? How *looked* he? Wherein *went* he? What makes he *here?* Did he ask for *me?* Where remains he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou see him again? *Answer me in one word!*”

Celia laughs heartily. “You must borrow me *Gargantua*’s mouth first!—’tis a word too great for any mouth of *this* age’s size! To say aye and no to *these* particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.”

“But doth he know that I am in this forest? And in *man*’s appare!” she groans. “Looks he as fresh as he did the day he wrestled?”

“It is as easy to count *atomies* as to resolve the proportions of a *lover!*” says Celia. “But take a *taste* of my finding him, and *relish* it with good observance: I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn—”

“It may well be called *Jove*’s tree, when it drops forth such fruit!” sighs Rosalind.

“Give me *audience*, good madam.”

“Proceed.”
 “There lay he, stretched along, like a wounded knight—”
 “Though it be *pity* to see such a sight,” Rosalind interrupts, “it well *becomes* that ground!”
 “Cry ‘*hold*’ to thy *tongue*, I prithee; it curvets unseasonably!” Celia pauses to remember. “He was furnished like a *hunter*—”
 “*Oh, ominous!* He comes to kill my *hart!*” cries the taller lady, touching at her heart.
 Celia, hands on hips, frowns comically. “I would sing my song without a *burden!*”—refrain.
 “Thou bringest me *out of tune!*”
 Rosalind protests: “Do you not know I am a *woman?*—when I think, I must *speak!* Sweet, say on!”
 “You bring me out—” But now Celia is startled: “*Soft!* Comes *he* not here?”
 “’*Tis he!*” gasps Rosalind. “*Slink by*, and note him!”
 They are quickly hidden behind some luxuriant bushes.

Chapter Seven Curatives

The gentlemen are finding each other noisome: Orlando, who savors the precious kind of pain in a chivalrous kind of love; and the novice fool, who prizes being prickly.
 “I *thank* you for your company,” sniffs Jacques, “but i’ good faith I had as lief have been by myself, *alone.*”
 “And so had *I*. But yet for *fashion*’s sake I thank *you*, too, for your society,” Orlando retorts.
 “*God* be wi’ you. Let’s meet as little as we can.”
 “I do desire we may be better *strangers.*”
 “I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks.”
 “I pray you, mar no more of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly!”
 “*Rosalind* is your love’s name?”
 “Yes, just.”
 “I do not like her name.”
 “There was no thought of pleasing *you* when she was christened.”
 “What stature is she of?” asks Jacques.
 “Just as high as my heart!”
 “You are *full* of pretty answers! Have you not been acquainted with *goldsmiths*’ wives, and conned them out of *rings?*”—learned trite, engraved epigrams.
 Orlando replies in kind: “Not so; I but answer your right-painted *cloth,*”—wall-hangings with homely maxims, “from whence you have studied your *questions!*”
 “You have a *nimble* wit; I think ’twas made of *Atalanta*’s heels!”—for it is *soon gone*. But the iconoclast is not eager to depart; alone, a fool has only himself to taunt. “Will you sit down with me?—and we two will rail against our mistress the *world*, and all our misery!”
 “I will chide no breather in the world but *myself*, against whom I know most faults,” says Orlando.
 “The *worst* fault you have is to be *in love,*” argues Jacques.
 “’Tis a fault I will not exchange for *your* best *virtue,*” says Orlando, starting to go. “I am weary of you.”
 “By my troth, I was *seeking* for a fool when I found you,” says Jacques sourly; he had in fact been looking for Touchstone.
 “He is drownèd in the brook; but look in and you shall see him.”
 Jacques scoffs. “There I shall see mine own figure.”
 “Which I take to be either a *fool* or a *cipher!*”—a nothing.

“I’ll tarry no longer with you,” snaps Jacques. “Farewell, good *Signior Love!*” He walks away, into the woods.

“I am glad of your *departure*,” says Orlando, reversing a customary greeting. “*Adieu*, good *Monsieur Melancholy!*”

Still hidden, Rosalind whispers mischievously to Celia: “I will speak to him like a saucy lackey, and under that habit play the knave with him!” She steps forward, coming up behind Signior Love. “Do you *hear*, forester?”

“Very well,” replies Orlando, turning to see a young gentleman, followed by a young gentlewoman. “What would you?”

“I pray you, what is’t o’clock?” asks the man.

“You should ask me what time o’ *day*; there’s no clock in the forest.”

“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!”

Orlando finds talking about love disturbing but delightful; he would provoke more of it. “And why not the ‘*swift*’ foot of Time! Had not that been as proper?”

“By no means, sir! Time travels in divers paces with divers persons.” Ganymede raises an eyebrow. “I’ll *tell* you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal—and who he stands *still* withal.”

“I prithee, whom doth he *trot* withal?”

“Marry, he trots *hard* with a young maid between the contract of her *marriage* and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se’nnight, Time’s pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven *years!*”

“Who *ambles* Time withal?”

“With a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout: for the one sleeps easily because he *cannot study*, and the other lives merrily because he *feels no pain!*—the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful *learning*, the other knowing no burden of heavy, tedious *penury*. These Time ambles withal.”

Orlando enjoys this respite from heartache. “Whom doth he gallop withal?”

“With a thief to the gallows—for though he go as slowly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there!”

“Who stays it *still* withal?”

“With lawyers in the vacation, for they *sleep* between term and term, and then they perceive not how Time moves.”

Orlando smiles at the pleasant notion of idle, harmless barristers. “Where dwell you, pretty youth?”

“With this shepherdess, my sister; here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.”

“Are you native of this place?”

Rosalind nods. “As the *cony*”—rabbit—“that you see dwell where he is kindled.”

“Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling....”

Ganymede seems flattered. “I have been told so by many! But, indeed, an old, religious *uncle* of mine taught me to speak, one who was in his youth an inland man—one that knew courtship *too* well; for there he *fell in love*. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God I am not a *woman*, to be touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal!”

“Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?”

“There was none *principal*; they were all like one another as half-pence are, every one’s fault seeming monstrous—till its fellow fault came to match it!”

Orlando would welcome anything that might dull his longing. “I prithee, recount some of them!”

“No,” says Ganymede, “I will not cast away my *physic* but on those that are *sick!*”

“There is a man who haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving ‘Rosalind’ on their barks—hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles—*defiling* all, forsooth, with the name of *Rosalind!* If I could meet *that* fancy-monger I would give him some good *counsel*, for he seems to have the *quotidian* of love upon him!”

Orlando spreads his arms. “*I* am he that is so love-shaken! I pray you, tell me your remedy!”

Ganymede, peers at him, skeptical. “There is none of my *uncle’s* marks upon you. He taught me how to know a man *in love*—in which cage of rushes I am sure *you* are not prisoner.”

“What were his marks?”

“A *lean cheek*, which you have not; an eye *blue and sunken*, which you have not; an *unconversable* spirit, which you have not; a beard *neglected*, which you have not—but I pardon you for that, for your stock of beard is simply a *younger brother’s* revenue.

“And your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied—everything about you demonstrating a *careless desolation*. But you are no such man; you are, rather, *point-de-vice*”—scrupulous—“in your accoutrements—more as loving *yourself* than seeming the lover of any other.”

Orlando is taken aback. “Fair youth, I would I could make thee *believe I love!*”

“*Me* believe it?—you may as soon make *her* that you *love* believe it!—which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to *confess* she does! That is one of the points in the which women ever give the lie to their thoughts!

“But, in good sooth, *are* you he that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind is so admirèd?”

“*I swear* to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I *am* that he—that *unfortunate* he!”

“But are you so much in love as your rhymes bespeak?”

“Neither rhyme nor reason can *express* how much!”

Ganymede frowns. “Love is merely a *madness*, I tell you; lovers deserve a *dark house* and a *whip* as well as madmen do! And the reason why they are *not* so punished and curèd is that the lunacy is so *ordinary* that the *whippers* are in love, too!” He casually adds a tempting note: “And yet I profess curing it, by counsel.”

Heartsick Orlando perks up. “*Did* you ever cure any so?”

“Yes, *one*; and in this manner: he was to imagine *me* as his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me.

“At which time I would, seeming but moonish, *aggrieve* the youth: be effeminate, changeable—longing, then lacking—proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles—for every passion *something*, and for *no* passion truly *anything!* As boys and women are for the most part cattle of that colour, I would now *like* him, now *loathe* him; then *entertain* him, then *forswear* him; now *weep* for him, then *spit* at him!

“Thus I drove my suitor from his mad mood of *loving* to a living mood of *madness*—which was to forswear the full stream of the world, and to live in a nook, merely monastic.

“And thus I *cured* him!” Ganymede faces Orlando. “And this way will I take upon me to wash *your* liver as clean as a sound sheep’s heart, so that there shall not be *one spot* of love in’t!”

“I would be *curèd*, youth!”

“I could cure you if you would but call me *Rosalind*, and come every day to my cottage and woo me.”

“Now, by the faith of my love, I *will!* Tell me where it is.” Orlando, despairing of any real relation with the lady, can accept this palliative simulacrum.

“Go with me to it, and I’ll show it you; and along the way you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?”

“*With all my heart*, good youth!”

“Nay, you must call me ‘*Rosalind.*’ Come, Sister, will you go?”

Orlando, following Ganymede and Aliena to their cottage, thinks about “Rosalind”—the ethereal being that lives in his imagination.

Unseen in the flickering shadows of the greenwood, where it faces onto a broad meadow, Jacques lurks among the elms, watching carefully to learn the ways of his courtly and contentious counterpart.

Touchstone, itching in his woolen motley under the summer sun, is trying to accommodate a recurrent wish—*desire*, more precisely—for a woman.

“Come apace, good Audrey! I will fetch up your goats, Audrey,” he says, jostling the unruly animals along, and wrinkling his nose at their pungent stench.

“And *now*, Audrey?—am I *the man* yet? Doth my simple feature content you?”

“Your *features*! Lord warrant us!—*what* features?”

“I am *here*, with thee and thy *goats*, just as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the *Goths*,” says Master Touchstone, who misses the palace mightily.

- Thinks Jacques, listening, *O knowledge ill-inhabited! Worse than Jove in a thatched house!*—a god in a hovel.

Touchstone grumbles, “When a man’s verses cannot be *understood*, nor a man’s good wit seconded by the forward child *understanding*, it strikes the man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room!”—quiescence after sex is termed a *death*. “Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical!”

“I do not know what ‘poetical’ is,” dull Audrey tells him. “Is it *honest* in deed and word?—is it a *true* thing?”

“*No*, truly, for the truest poetry is the most *feigning*! *Lovers* are given to poetry, and of what they *swear* it may be said: by poetry do they *feign*.”

Audrey frowns. “Do you wish, then, that the gods had made *me* poetical?”

“I *do*, truly—for thou swearest to me thou art *honest*; now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign!” Touchstone has long viewed virginal purity as pernicious; and, often in alliance with wine, he has striven to correct it.

“Would you not have me honest?”

“*No*, truly!—unless thou wert hard-favoured”—plain, or worse. “For honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey as sauce to sugar!”

- *A material fool!* thinks Jacques with admiration.

“Well, I am not *fair*,” says Audrey, “and therefore I pray the gods make me honest.”

“Truly,” says Touchstone, admiring her buxom shape. “And to *cast away* honesty upon a foul slut were to put good meat into an unclean dish!”

“I am not a slut,” she notes mildly, “though I thank the gods I am foul.” Allure, she knows, breeds temptation.

“Well, praised be the gods for thy foulness! Sluttishness may come hereafter,” he says, in that hope. “But be it as it may be, I will *marry* thee,” he announces, “and to that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promised to meet me in this piece of the forest, and to *couple* us!”

- Jacques stifles a laugh. *I would fain see this meeting!*

“Well, may the gods give us joy,” says newly betrothed Audrey happily.

“*Amen!*” says Touchstone. He glances around at the scrub, the grass and the goats. *A man might, if he were of a fearful heart, stagger in this attempt; for here we have no temple but the wood, no assembly but horn-beasts. But what, though? Courage!*

Even his dread of cuckolding has been quelled. *While horns are odious, they are necessary. It is said, ‘Many a man knows no end of his goods.’ Right!—many a man has good horns, and knows no end of them! Well, that is the dowry of his wife; ’tis none of his own getting!*

Horns! he thinks glumly. *Even so. Poor men alone? No, no!—the noblest deer hath them as huge as the young buck.*

Is the single man therefore blessed? No!—as a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honourable than the bare brow of a bachelor! And by

as much as a fence is better than no stall, by so much is a horn more precious than wanting! Touchstone, sick of doing without, is resigned, and now consigned, to marriage as the cynic views it. “Here comes Sir Oliver.”

The stout country clergyman, shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, clamps a heavy black Bible to his side.

“Sir Oliver Martext, you are well met!” cries the fool. “Will you dispatch us”—the term echoes *execute*—“here under this tree,” he asks dryly, “or shall we go with you to your chapel?”

“Is there none here to give the woman?” asks the cleric.

“I will not take her as gift of any man!”

“Truly, she must be given,” says the good vicar, “or the marriage is not lawful.”

So Jacques comes forward, as if just arriving. “Proceed, *proceed!* I’ll give her!”

“Good *even*, good Master What-ye-call’t!” cries Touchstone.. “How *do* you, sir? You are very well met! God ’ield you for your fast company!—I am very glad to see you!”

“Even a toy in hand here, sir?” asks Jacques, smiling at Audrey and removing his plumed hat.

“Nay, pray be covered,” says Touchstone, as if the courtesy were for him.

Jacques, who avoids closeness of any sort, feels compelled to challenge the jester’s decision. “Will you be *married*, Motley?”

Touchstone shrugs. “As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his *desires*; and as pigeons peck, so *wedlock* would be *nibbling*.”

Jacques detests ceremony—and so he takes it very seriously. “But will *you*, being a man of your breeding, be married under a *bush*, like a *beggar*?”

“Get you to *church*, and have a good priest who can tell you what marriage *is!* *This* fellow will but join you together as they join *wainscot!*—then one of you will prove a shrunken panel, and, like green timber, warp, *warp!*”

The clown is considering. *I am of the mind but that I were better to be married by him than by another; for he is not likely to marry me well, and not being well married will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife....*

“Go thou with me,” Jacques tells him, “and let me *counsel* thee!”

Touchstone acquiesces. “Come, sweet Audrey,” he says. “We must be married, or we must live in bawdry.” She thinks he’s reaffirming commitment; he thinks either way would be fine.

“Farewell, good Master Oliver,” the fool tells the minister. “Not ‘*O sweet Oliver, O brave Oliver, leave me not behind thee!*’”—as in a ballad popular with young women, “but ‘*Wind away, begone, I say, I will not to wedding with thee!*’”

Jacques leads the couple, as they drive the goats, in a rank, dusty and disorderly procession.

Sir Oliver Martext is left unperturbed. *Tis no matter*, he thinks. *Ne’er a fantastical knave of them all shall flout me out of my calling!*

The pastor proceeds with dignity back to his own, somewhat less lecherous, flock.

Chapter Eight Plaints, Pleas, Pluck

Aliena finds bold Ganymede sitting, sullen, under a drooping willow beside their cottage close to the forest’s edge.

“Never *talk* to me,” moans Rosalind. “I will *weep!*”

“*Do*, I prithee.” Celia looks around, to see if they’re being observed. “But yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a *man....*”

“But have I not *cause* to weep?” demands disguised Rosalind. She is soon to meet with the man she loves—for the purpose of persuading him not to love her.

“As good cause as one would *desire!*—therefore weep!”

“This very *hair* is of a *dissembling* colour!”

“Somewhat *browner* than Judas’s.”—which was red. She tries to ease her friend’s suffering: “It may be that *his* kisses are Judas’s own children.”—betrayers.

Rosalind protests, “I’ faith, *his* hair is of a *good* colour!”

“An *excellent* colour! Your chestnut was ever the *only* colour,” says Celia wryly.

“And his *kissing* is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread!”—Communion.

“He hath bought a pair of *cast* lips of *Diana*”—a plaster relic of the virginal moon goddess.

“A nun of *Winter*’s sisterhood kisses not more religiously—the very *ice* of chastity is in them!”

“And why did he swear he would come this morning, but comes *not*?” wails Rosalind.

“Aye!—certainly, there is no truth *in* him!”

“Do you think so?”

“I think he is not a *pick-purse* nor a *horse-stealer*—but as for his verity in *love*, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or a worm-eaten nut!”

“Not *true* in love?”

“Yes—when he is *in*,” says Celia, “but I think he is not in.”

“You have heard him *swear* downright he *was*!”

Celia shrugs. “‘*Was*’ is not ‘*is*.’ Besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a *tapster*: they are both the confirmers of false reckonings.

“He attends here in the forest on the duke—your *father*,” she points out.

Rosalind smiles. “I *met* the duke yesterday, and had much question with him. He asked me of what parentage I was. I told him, *of as good as he!*—so he laughed and let me go!”

Still, she will not be denied a lover’s rightful portion of woe: “But what talk we of fathers, when there is such a man as *Orlando!*”

Celia is annoyed by the swain’s tardiness. “Oh, *that’s a brave* man! He writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths—and *breaks* them bravely!—quite traversely, athwart the heart of his lover, like a puisny *tilter*”—cowardly joustier—“that *spurs* his horse but breaks its *stride*—yet like a *noble* goes!

“But all’s brave that youth mounts and *folly* guides.” She hears steady footsteps from behind the cottage. “Who comes here?”

Corin rounds the corner. “Mistress and master, you have oft inquired after the shepherd that complained of love, whom you saw sitting by me on the turf, praising the proud, disdainful shepherdess that was his mistress....”

Aliena nods. “Well, and what of him?”

Corin grins. “If you will see a *pageant* truly played between the pale complexion of *true love* and the red glow of *scorn* and proud *disdain*, go hence a little! And I shall conduct you, if you will mark it.”

Rosalind is eager. “Oh, come, let us remove! The sight of lovers *feedeth* those in love!

“Bring us to this sight,” Ganymede urges the shepherd, “and you shall say I’ll prove a busy actor in their play!”

Silvius hurries into the sunshine from a dim and quiet dell to plead with a shepherd girl who is gazing out over the bright, buzzing meadow stretching wide before her.

“Sweet Phoebe, do not *scorn* me!—do *not*, Phoebe! Say that you love me not, but say not so in *bitterness!* The common *executioner*, whose heart the accustomed sight of death makes hard, falls not the axe upon the humbled neck but first begs *pardon!* Will you sterner be than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?”

As he moves toward Phoebe, Rosalind, Celia and Corin, concealed by the shaded forest’s green brush, listen.

“I would not be thine executioner,” Phoebe insists. “I fly thee because I would *not* injure thee.”

But, as he knows, she must tend the flock and cannot flee; her angry look now betrays a change of heart—and not the one he wants.

“Thou tell’st me there is *murder* in mine eye,” she complains. “’Tis *pretty*, surely, and very *probable*, that eyes—which are the frail’st and softest things, who shut their coward gates on atomies!—should be called *tyrants, butchers, murderers!*”

She glares. “Now I *do* frown on thee with, all my heart!—and if mine eyes *can* wound, now let them *kill* thee! Now counterfeit to *swoon!*—why, now *fall down!* Or if thou *canst not*—oh, for shame, for *shame!*—*lie* not, saying mine eyes are murderers!”

She steps closer. “Now *show the wound* mine eye hath made in thee! Scratch thee with but a *pin* and there remains some scar of it; lean upon but a *rush*, the cicatrice and capable impressure thy palm some moment keeps. But know: mine *eyes*, which I have *darted* at thee, *hurt thee not!* *No!* I am sure there is no force in eyes that *can* do hurt!”

Silvius regards her sorrowfully. “Oh, dear Phoebe, if ever—and that *ever* may be near!—*you* meet in some fresh cheek the power of *fancy*, then shall you know the *wounds invisible* that love’s keen arrows make!”

“But *till* that time, come not thou near me! And *when* that time comes, afflict me with thy mocks, pity me not. Until that time, I *shall not pity thee!*”

Striding out of the woods, Rosalind—or, rather, the masculine spirit of Ganymede—rejects her rejection. “And *why*, I pray you? Who might be *your* mother, that you *insult* and *exult*, all at once, over the *wretched?*”

“What?—though you have *no beauty*—as, by my faith, I see no more in *you* than without candle may go *dark* to bed—must you therefore be *proud* and *pitiless?*”

Phoebe flushes—but she is staring, responding with fascination to the manly affronts.

Ganymede sees it. “Why, what means *this?*” he asks. “Why do you look on *me?* I see no more in you than in the ordinary run of nature’s sale-work. . . .”

“’*Od’s my little life!*—I think she means to tangle *my* eyes, too!” he tells Aliena. He wags a finger before Phoebe. “*No*, ’faith, proud mistress, hope not after it! ’Tis not your inky *brows*, your black-silk *hair*, your bead-like *eyeballs*, nor your cheek of cream, that can entame *my* spirits to your worship!”

Ganymede turns to Silvius. “*You*, foolish shepherd!—wherefore do you *follow* her like a foggy souther, puffing with wind and rain? You are a thousand times a properer *man* than she a *woman*; ’tis such *fools* as *you* that makes the world full of *ill-favourèd children!* ’Tis not her mirror but *you* that flatters her—and out of you she sees herself more proper than any of her *lineaments* can show her!”

Ganymede addresses the captivated Phoebe strongly and confidently. “But, mistress, *know* yourself! *Down on your knees* and *fasting*, thank *heaven* for a good man’s love! For I must tell you, friendly in your ear: *sell when you can!*—you are not for all markets. Cry ‘*Mercy!*’ to the man!—love him—*take* his offer! Foul is *most* foul in being a *scoffer!*”

“So take her to thee, shepherd.” Rosalind turns to go. “Fare you well.”

Now Phoebe speaks. “Sweet youth, I pray you, chide a *year* altogether!—I had rather hear *you* chide than *this* man woo!”

Ganymede is annoyed. “He’s fallen in love with your *foulness*,” he tells her, “and *she’s* all in love with my *anger!*” he tells Silvius. “If it be *so*, as fast as she answers *thee* with frowning looks, I’ll sauce *her* with bitter *words!*”

“Why look you so upon me?” he asks Phoebe, further peeved.

“For no *ill* will I bear you!” says the shepherdess coyly.

“I pray you, do not fall in love with *me*,” warns Rosalind, “for I am falser than vows made in *wine!* Besides, I like you not,” she says haughtily. Ganymede tells the other man, who may need further advice, “If you will know my house, ’tis at the tuft of olive trees here hard by.

“Will you go, Sister? Shepherd, ply her *hard!* Come, Sister.

“Shepherdess, look on him better, and be not *proud!* Though *all the world* could thee see, none could be *so abusèd* in sight as he!

“Come, to our flock,” Ganymede commands, leading the way back. Within the woods, his sister giggles and Corin chuckles; the “pageant” has proven more lively than they expected.

Phoebe’s sheep wander away slowly as she stands, contemplative, remembering a line—
“Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?”—from a play by the late Christopher Marlowe. *Dead shepherd, now I find thy saying of might!*

“Sweet Phoebe—”

“*Hm?* What say’st thou, Silvius?”

“Sweet Phoebe, *pity* me!”

“Well, I *am* sorry for thee, gentle Silvius,” she now tells him.

“Wherever *sorrow* is, *relief* would be!” he says, hopefully. “If you do sorrow at my grief in love, by *giving* love, your sorrow and my grief were *both* exterminated!”

“Thou hast my love,” she says casually. “Is not that neighbourly?”

“I would have *you!*”

“Why, that were *covetousness*,”—greed, “Silvius.” She thinks for a moment. “The time was that I hated thee, and it is not yet that I bear thee love; but since that thou canst *talk* of love so well, thy company, which erst was irksome to me, I will endure.

“And I’ll *employ* thee, too; but do not look for further recompense than thine own gladness that thou art employed.”

The pathetic beggar grovels: “So holy and so perfect is my love, and I in such a poverty of grace, that I shall think it a most *plenteous* crop to glean the broken stalks after the man who the *main* harvest reaps! Loose now and then a scattered *smile*, and that I’ll live upon!”

Phoebe contains her contempt—with difficulty. She studies her dirty fingernails. “Know’st thou the youth that spoke to me erewhile?”

“Not very well, but I have met him oft; and he hath bought the cottage and the bounds that the old Carlot once was master of.”

“Think not I love him, though I ask about him,” she says. “’Tis but a peevish *boy*—yet he talks well. But what care I for *words*? Yet words do well when he that speaks them pleases those that hear.”

She paces, considering. “He is a pretty youth; not *very* pretty. Certainly he’s proud; and yet his pride becomes him—he’ll make a proper man! The best thing in him is his complexion—and faster than his tongue did make offence, his eye did heal it up!

“He is not very tall; yet for his *years* he’s tall. His leg is but so-so—and yet ’tis *well*. There was a pretty redness in his lip—a little riper and more lusty red than that mixed in his cheek; ’twas just the difference between the constant red and mingled damask....”

Phoebe starts on her scheme. “There be *some* women, Silvius, had they markèd him in parcels as I did, would have gone near to falling in love with him; but, for *my* part, I love him not, nor hate him not,” she claims.

“And yet I have more cause to *hate* him than to love him,” she tells Silvius shrewdly. “For what had he to do to *chide* at me? He said mine eyes were black and my hair black—and, now I am rememberèd, *scorned* at me! I marvel why I *answered* not again!

“But that’s all one; omittance is no quittance! I’ll write to him a very *taunting* letter—and thou shalt bear it! Wilt thou, Silvius?”

“Phoebe, with all my heart!”

“I’ll write it straight; the matter’s in my head and in my heart. I will be *bitter* with him, and surpassingly short!

“Go with me, Silvius!”

Chapter Nine Instruction on Matrimony

Ganymede and Aliena, meandering not far from the duke's cordial cavern in the Forest of Arden, encounter Jacques this morning. "I prithee, pretty youth," says he, "let me be better acquainted with thee."

Rosalind has already heard about him. "They say you are a melancholy fellow." Jacques prefers that to sanguine, phlegmatic or choleric, the others of four humours postulated in antiquity.

"I *am* so; I do love it better than *laughing*."

Ganymede is forward with his opinion: "Those that are in extremity of *either* are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure—worse than drunkards!"

"Why, 'tis *good* to be grave and say nothing!" argues Jacques—who has never been known to say *nothing*.

"Why then 'tis good to be a *post*!"

Jacques is voluble about his presumed diffidence: "I have neither the *scholar's* melancholy, which is emulation, nor the *musician's*, which is fantastical, nor the *courtier's*, which is proud, nor the *soldier's*, which is ambitious, nor the *lawyer's*, which is politic, nor the *lady's*, which is careful, nor the *lover's*, which is *all* these!

"But it is a melancholy of *mine own*, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects and, indeed, from the contemplation of my sundry travels—my rumination upon which often wraps me in a most miserable sadness."

"A *traveler*? By my faith, you have *great reason* to be sad!" Ganymede tells him. "I fear you have *sold* your own lands to see *other* men's! To have *seen* much, and thus to *have* nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor *hands*!"

Jacques frowns. "Yet I have gained by *experience*—"

"And your experience makes you *sad*! I had rather have a *fool* to make me *merry* than experience to make me *sad*—and have to *travel* for it, too!"

The usually sanguine Orlando greets Ganymede, addressing the youth, as he agreed, by a woman's name: "Good day and happiness, dear *Rosalind*!" He sweeps off his plumed hat with an elegant flourish and bows.

The two gentlemen's earlier exchanges, quite mannered, have irked blunt Jacques. "Nay, then, God be wi' you, if you'll talk in *blank verse*!" He goes his own way, leaving the lovers to persist in their respective impostures.

Rosalind is still annoyed with Orlando, so Ganymede's attention follows the vanishing Jacques. "Farewell, Monsieur *Traveler*! Look that you *lisp*, and wear *strange* suits; disable all the benefits of your *own* country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost *hide God* for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a *gondola*!"

"Why, how now, Orlando?—where have you *been* all this while? *You*, a *lover*? An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more!"

"My fair *Rosalind*, I come within an hour of my promise," Orlando points out, to the man who is serving as her surrogate.

"Break an *hour's* promise in *love*? He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break not a *part* of a *thousandth part* of a minute in the affairs of *love*—it may be said of *him* that Cupid hath clapped him o' the shoulder, and I'll warrant *him* heart-whole!"

"*Pardon* me, dear *Rosalind*!"

"Nay, an you again be so tardy, come no more in my sight! I had as lief be wooed by a snail!"

"By a *snail*?"

"*Aye*, by a snail!—for though he comes slowly, he carries his *house* on his head!—a better jointure, I think, than *you* make a woman! Besides, he brings his *destiny* with him."

“What’s that?”

“Why, *horns!*—which such as *you* are fain to be beholding to your *wives* for. But *he* comes armèd in his fortune,”—already wearing it, “and so forestalls the slandering of his wife!”

But Orlando takes fidelity very seriously. “*Virtue* is no horn-maker—and my Rosalind is *virtuous!*”

“And *I* am your Rosalind,” says Ganymede.

“It pleases him to *call* you so, but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than *you*,” Aliena interjects dryly.

Ganymede wants to proceed with the regimen of remedy. “Come, woo me, *woo* me; for now I am in a *holiday* humour, and likely enough to consent! What would you say to me now, an I *were* your very, very Rosalind?”

Orlando smiles happily. “I would *kiss* before I spoke!”

“Nay, you were to better *speak* first; then, when you were *graveled* for lack of *matter*, you might take occasion to kiss,” Ganymede advises. “Very good *orators*, when they are out,”—of things to say, “will spit; but for *lovers* lacking matter, God warrant us, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.”

“How if the kiss be denied?”

“Then she puts you to *entreaty*—and there begins *new* matter!”

Orlando is hardly afraid of having nothing to say. “Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?”

Ganymede’s earthy Rosalind plays on the word *out* as *not in* in the most satisfying way. “Marry, that should *you* be, if *I* were your mistress!” she cries in mock indignation, “or I should think my honesty”—morality—“ranker than my wit!”

But this suitor, whose thinking is innocent, is puzzled. *Should be out*. “What, of my suit?”

“Not out of your *apparel*—and yet out of your suit!”—denied sex.

Orlando, who would be suing for *love*, is crestfallen.

Ganymede pouts. “Am not I your *Rosalind?*”

“I take some joy to *say* you are, because I would be talking to her. . . .”

Ganymede’s *Rosalind* turns fickle: “Well, in *her* person I say I will not *have* you!”

Orlando replies sadly. “Then in mine own person I die.”

“*No*, ’faith, die by *attorney!*” demands Ganymede. “The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not *any* man who died in his *own* person, *videlicet*, for a *love-cause!*”

“Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he *could* to die *before*—and he is one of the *patterns* of love!”

“Leander, he would have lived *many* a fair year, though Hero”—his lady—“had turned *nun*, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went forth but to wash him in the Hellespont, and, being taken with a *cramp*, was drownèd. But the foolish coroners of that age found it was over Hero of Sestos!”

“But those are all *lies!* Men *have* died from time to time, and worms have eaten them—but not for *love!*”

“I would not have my *right* Rosalind be of this mind,” says Orlando, “for, I protest, *her* frown might kill me!”

Ganymede denies lethality in female faces: “By this hand, it will not kill a *fly!*” The lady realizes that her reply echoes one of Phoebe’s. “But come; now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition—and ask me what you will, I will grant it.”

His eyes meet hers. “Then love me, Rosalind.”

She blinks—and *blushes*. But Ganymede adopts a roguish stance. “*Yes*, ’faith, *will I*—Fridays and Saturdays and all!”

“And wilt thou have me?”

“*Aye*—and *twenty* such!”

Orlando is startled. "What sayest thou?"
Rosalind raises her eyebrows. "Are you not *good*?"
 "I hope so."
 "Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?" She motions *Aliena* toward them.
 "Come, Sister, you shall be the priest and *marry* us! Give me your hand, Orlando! What do you say, Sister?"
 "Pray thee, *marry* us!" urges Orlando; marriage is an essential part of his fantasy.
Aliena is seemingly facing two men. "I cannot say the words!"
 Ganymede, pretending not to understand, teases: "You must begin, 'Will you, Orlando—'"
Aliena laughs. "Go *to!* Will you, Orlando, have to wife this *Rosalind*?"
 "I *will!*"
 "Aye, but *when?*" asks Ganymede's *Rosalind*.
 "Why, *now!*—as fast as she can marry us!"
 "Then you must say, 'I *take* thee, *Rosalind*, for wife.'" *Rosalind* says, "I take thee, *Rosalind*, for *wife!*"
 "I might ask you for your *commission*," the bride quibbles. "But *I* do take thee, Orlando, for my *husband!*" She says with a knowing look, "There's a *girl* goes before the priest; but certainly a *woman's* thought runs before her actions!"
 "So do all thoughts," says the childlike Orlando. "They are wingèd."
 Ganymede challenges: "Now tell me how long you would *have* her after you have possessed her."
 "For ever and a day."
 "Say '*a day*' without the 'ever,'" insists Ganymede. "No, *no*, Orlando!—men are April when they *woo*, *December* when they wed!"
 "Maids are May when they are *maids*—but the sky changes when they are wives! I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey! I will weep over *nothing*, like Diana in the fountain—and I will do that when you are disposed to be *merry*; I will laugh like a hyena—but *that* when thou art inclined to *sleep!*"
 Orlando frowns. "But will *my* *Rosalind* do so?"
 "By my life, *she* will do as *I* do!"
 "Oh, but she is wise—"
 "Or else she could not have the wit to do this! The wiser, the *waywarder*," insists Ganymede. "Make the doors fast against a woman's wit, and it will out at the *casement*; shut *that*, 'twill out at the *key-hole*; stop *that*, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the *chimney!*"
 Orlando laughs. "A man that had a wife with such a wit, *he* might say, '*Wit*, whither *wilt?*'"—*Whither wilt thou go next*, an expression of exasperation.
 Another meaning of *wilt* occurs to Ganymede. "Nay, you might keep *that* check for it till you've met your wife's wit going to your *neighbour's* bed!"
 "And what wit could *Wit* have to excuse *that?*" he demands.
 "Marry, to say she came to seek *you* there!" Ganymede shakes his head. "You shall never take her without her *answer* unless you take her without her *tongue!* Oh, that woman who cannot make her fault her *husband's* occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will raise it like a *fool!*"
 But now Orlando must interrupt their pastime. "For these two hours, *Rosalind*, I will leave thee," he says apologetically.
 "Alas! Dear love, I cannot lack thee two *hours!*"
 "I must attend the duke at dinner," Orlando explains. "By two o'clock I will be with thee again."
 "Aye, go your ways, *go your ways!*" moans *Rosalind* theatrically. "I *knew* what *you* would prove!—my *friends* told me as much, and *I* thought no less! That *flattering* tongue of yours won

me!” Posturing, she brings the back of a wrist to her forehead. “’Tis but one *cast away!*—and so, *come, Death!*”

She fixes him with a stern look. “Two o’clock is your hour?”

“Aye, sweet *Rosalind.*”

Ganymede is a harsh healer: “By my troth—and in good earnest, and so God mend me, and by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous!—if you break *one jot* of your promise, or come *one minute* behind your hour, I will think you the most pathetic break-promise, and the most hollow lover—and the most *unworthy* of her you call Rosalind that may be chosen out of the *gross band of the unfaithful!*”

“Therefore beware my censure, and *keep your promise!*”

“With no less religion than if thou wert *indeed* my Rosalind! So, adieu!”

“Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders; then let Time judge. Adieu,” she says. He strides toward the cave, where he will dine with his woodland host—her father.

As soon as he’s out of earshot, Celia begins a vigorous scolding: “You have simply *misused our sex* in your love-prate! We must have your *doublet* and *hose* plucked up over your head, and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest!”

But Rosalind is in ecstasy—too giddy to hear. “*Oh, coz, coz, coz!*—my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many *fathom* deep I am *in love!* But it cannot be sounded!—my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the Bay of Portugal!”

“Or, rather, *bottomless,*” laughs Celia, “so that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out!”

“*No!*” Rosalind’s love has only grown; she invokes Cupid: “That same wicked bastard of Venus that was begot of *thought*, conceived of *spleen*, and born of *madness!*—that blind, rascally boy that abuses everyone’s eyes because his *own* are out!—let *him* be judge how deep I am *in love!*”

“I’ll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando! I’ll go find a shadow, and sigh till he come!”

Celia bespeaks her own interlude: “And I’ll *sleep.*”

Chapter Ten Woodland Wounds

Once again the old forest has yielded up sustenance for those whom fortune and misfortune have brought together here. Noble lords and gentlemen, now hunters all, gather at the glade in appreciation of fresh venison.

“Which is he that killed the deer?” asks Jacques.

“Sir, it was I!” says a bowman in green and brown; the archer nods to acknowledge the others’ applause, their shouted cheers.

“Let’s present it to the *duke* like a Roman conqueror,” says Jacques. “And it would do well to set the deer’s horns upon his head, as a branch of victory....”

But the hunters only laugh.

“Have you no *song*, forester, for this purpose?” demands Jacques of the lutenist, with ceremonial pomposity, as if he were marshaling the sylvan ceremony.

“Yes, sir!” Lord Amiens soon has his instrument ready for midday revels.

“Sing it!” commands Jacques, with a regal wave. “’Tis no matter how it be in tune, so it make *noise* enough,” he mutters, stalking away and abandoning the familiar ritual.

The gentlemen of the wildwood, led by Amiens, join in a hearty, unruly chorus of fraternal enthusiasm:

“*What shall he have, that killed the deer?*

Its leather skin, and horns to wear!

Then sing him home!—

The rest shall bear his burden!” laugh the men, at the wry implication.

“*Take thou no scorn to wear the horn;
It was a crest ere thou wast born!*”

*Thy father’s father wore it,
And thy father bore it—
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn
Is not a thing to laugh to scorn!*”

How say you *now*? Is it not *past* two o’clock?” a peevish Rosalind asks Celia, as they wait in the woods. “And here’s *much* Orlando!” she says with scornful irony.

They have seen the duke’s followers depart from the green at the cavern’s mouth after the noonday meal. “I warrant you, with pure love and troubled brain, he hath ta’en his *bow* and *arrows*” says Celia, “—and is gone forth to *sleep!*” The gentlewomen keep watching the clearing. “Look who comes here.”

Silvius approaches Ganymede with a tightly folded paper in hand. “My errand is to you, fair youth. My gentle Phoebe bid me give you this.” Rosalind opens the letter and glances over it.

“I know not the contents,” says Silvius, “but, as I guess by the stern brow and waspish action which she did use as she was writing it, it bears an angry tenor! Pardon me,” he says to the young gentleman, “I am but guiltless, as a messenger.”

Ganymede is amazed: “*Patience herself* would be startled by this letter, and play the *swaggerer!* Bear *this*, bear *all!*”

“She says I am not *fair*,”—attractive, “that I *lack manners!* She calls me *proud*—and says that she could not love *me* were man as rare as *phoenix!*”

“’*Od’s my will!*—*her* love is not the hare that I do hunt!—why writes she so to *me?*”

Ganymede’s eyes narrow as his gaze transfixes Silvius. “Well, shepherd, *well?*—this is a letter of *your own* device!”

“*No*, I protest! I know not the contents!” cries the poor swain. “Phoebe *did* write it!”

“Come, come, you are a fool, and turned into the *extremity* of love! I *saw* her hand!—she has a *leathern* hand, a freestone-coloured hand!—I verily did think that her *old gloves* were on, but ’twas her *hands!* She has a *huswife’s* hand! But that’s no matter.

“I say *she* never did invent this letter!—this is a *man’s* invention, and his *hand!*”

“It is *surely hers!*” insists Silvius.

Ganymede glares at the paper. “Well, ’tis a *boisterous* and a *cruel* style!—a style for *challenges!* Why, she *defies* me like *barbarian* to *believer!* Woman’s gentle brain could not drop forth such *giant-rude* invention, such *charcoal* words, blacker in their *effect* than in their *countenance!*”

Ganymede reads further; Silvius and Celia wait for further fulmination.

“Will you *hear* the letter?”

“So *please* you, for I never heard it yet,” says Silvius—adding sadly, “Yet heard *too much* of Phoebe’s cruelty...”

Ganymede is wrathful. “She *Phoebes* me! Mark how the tyrant writes: ‘Art thou a *god* to shepherd turned, that a maiden’s heart hath burned?’ Can a *woman* rail thus?”

Silvius, in jealous pain, asks, “Call you that *railing?*”

Ganymede reads: “‘Why, thy godhead laid apart, *warr’st* thou with a woman’s heart?’ Did you ever *hear* such railing? ‘Whiles the eye of *man* did woo me, *that* could do no vengeance to me...’—meaning *me* a *beast!*”

“‘If the *scorn* of your bright eyne have power to raise such love in mine, *alack*, in me what strange effect would they work in *mild* aspect! Whiles you *chid* me, I did *love*; how then might your *prayers* move!

“He that brings this love to thee little knows this love in me; but by him seal up thy mind”—send a decision—“whether that thy youth and kind will the faithful offer take of me, and all that I can make!—or else by him my love *deny*—and then I’ll study how to die!”

Silvius is crushed. “Call you this *chiding*?” he groans.

Celia touches his arm. “*Alas*, poor shepherd!”

“Do you *pity* him?” cries Ganymede. “*No*, he *deserves* no pity!

“Wilt thou *love* such a woman?” he demands of Silvius. “*What?*—making thee an *instrument*, and playing *false strains* upon thee! *Not to be endured!*”

“Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath made thee a *tame snake*, and say this to her: that if she love *me*, I charge her to love *thee!* If she will not, I will never have her unless *thou entreat for her!*”

“If you be a *true lover*, *hence!*—and *not a word*, for here comes *better* company.”

Silvius, miserable, of course, as is his wont, slips away—but he chews his lip, thinking.

Looking intently at Ganymede and his sister, a gentleman wearing the finely trimmed apparel of a landed squire approaches. “Good morrow, fair ones! Pray you, do you know: where in the purlieu of this forest stands a sheep-cote fenced about with olive trees?”

Celia quickly steps forward and answers, as bright-eyed Aliena: “West of this place, the murmuring stream left on your right hand,”—kept north of you, “brings you to a place down in the neighbour bottom, and to the rank of osiers. But at this hour the house doth keep itself; there’s none within.”

The handsome visitor regards them carefully. “If that an eye may profit by a tongue, then should I know you by description—such garments and such years: ‘The boy is fair, of female favour, and bestows himself like a ripe sister; the woman shorter and browner than her brother.’ Are not you the *owner* of the house I did inquire for?”

Celia nods, smiling warmly. “It is no boast, being *asked*, to say we are.”

“*Orlando* doth commend him to you both; and to that youth he calls his *Rosalind* he sends this bloody bandana. Are you he?”

“I am,” says Ganymede, turning pale. “What must we understand by this?”

“Some of my *shame*,” he says, “if you will know of me what man I am, and how, and why, and where this handkerchief was stained.”

“I pray you, tell it!” cries Celia, staring at the cloth.

The gentleman begins. “When last the young Orlando parted from you, he left a promise to return again within an hour; but pacing through the forest, chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy, *lo* what *befell* him!

“He threw his eye aside, and mark what object did present itself: under an oak whose boughs were mossèd with age, and high top bald with dry antiquity, a *wretched, ragged man*, o’ergrown with hair, lay sleeping on his back. About his neck, a *green and gilded snake* had wreathed itself!—which with its head *nimble in threats* approached the opening of his mouth!

“But suddenly, seeing Orlando, it *unlinked* itself, and with indented glide did slip away into a bush!

“—*Under* which bush’s shade a *lioness*, with udders all drawn dry”—and thus ravenous, after nursing cubs—“lay crouching, head on ground, in catlike watch for when the sleeping man should stir!—for ’tis the royal disposition of that beast to prey on nothing that doth seem as dead.

“This seen, Orlando did approach the man—and found *it was his brother!*—his *elder brother!*”

“Oh, I have heard him speak of *that* same brother,” exclaims Celia, “and he did render him the most *unnatural* that lived amongst men!”

“And well he *might* so do, for well I know he *was* unnatural,” says the stranger sadly.

“But as to *Orlando*,” says Ganymede. “Did he *leave* him there?—*food* to the sucked and hungry *lioness!*”

“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—which quickly fell before him!

“During which, startled from miserable slumber, *I awakened.*”

Celia’s surprise and dismay are apparent on her face. “Are *you* his brother?”

“Was’t *you* he rescued?” asks Ganymede.

“Was’t *you* that did so oft contrive to *kill* him?” demands Celia.

“’*Twas* I—but ’tis *not I*,” says Oliver, earnestly. “I do not shame to tell you what I *was*, since my conversion so sweetly tastes, being the thing I *am.*”

Rosalind feels weak, and Ganymede shows it. “But as for this *bloody ’kerchief?*”

“By and by,” says Oliver, needing to explain fully. “When from the first to last betwixt us two, *tears* our recountments had most kindly bathèd, as to how I came into that lonely place—”

He sees his companions’ impatient looks. “In *brief*, he led me to the gentle duke, who gave me fresh array and hearing, committed me unto my brother’s love. Who led me instantly unto *his* cave, there stripped himself—and there upon his arm the lioness had torn some flesh away, which all this while had *bled!* And now he *fainted*—and cried out, in fainting, upon *Rosalind!*

“Briefly: I recovered him, bound up his wound. And, after some small space, being strong at heart, he sent me *hither*, stranger as I am, to tell his story, that you might *excuse* his broken promise—and to give this ’kerchief, dyed in his blood, unto the shepherd youth that he, in sport, doth call his Rosalind.”

Orlando—*injured and bleeding*—but, thinking of *her*, suffering over a *broken promise!* Rosalind faints.

Aliena kneels beside her: “Why, *how now*, Ganymede? Sweet *Ganymede!*”

Oliver crouches and rubs the young man’s slender hands vigorously. “Many will swoon when they do look on blood,” he tells the sister kindly.

“There is more to it,” Aliena assures him. She touches the young man’s cheek. “*Cousin!*” she says—before remembering. “*Ganymede!*” Rosalind stirs.

“Look,” says Oliver, “he recovers.” They help him to stand.

Ganymede, overwhelmed, is weak. “I would I were at *home*,” he moans.

“We’ll lead you thither,” says Aliena. “I pray you, will you take him by the arm?”

Oliver does so. “Be of good cheer, youth!” he says, steadying the lad who has been accommodating his own brother’s fond fantasy. “You, a *man?*—you lack a man’s *heart*,” he chides—gently, to encourage him, with a challenge to masculine pride.

“I *do* so, I confess it,” says Ganymede. “Oh, sirrah, a body would think this was well *counterfeited*,” he mumbles, as Rosalind straightens up, and squares her shoulders. She laughs—feebly. “I pray you, tell your brother how *well* I counterfeited....”

“This was not counterfeit,” says Oliver, moved by the devotion of Orlando’s young friend. “There is too great testimony in your complexion that it was a passion of earnest!”

“Counterfeit, I assure you,” the youth claims, his voice still weak.

Oliver smiles and brushes dust off the back of Ganymede’s coat. “Well, then, take a good heart, and counterfeit to be a *man!*”

“So I do! But, i’ faith, by right I should have been a *woman!*”

“Come, you look paler and paler!” warns Aliena, as Rosalind’s disguise sags. “Pray you, draw homewards!” She looks at Oliver. “Good sir, go with us,” she urges, smiling.

“That will I,” he says, “for I must bear *answer* back how you excuse my brother, *Rosalind.*”

“I shall devise something,” she/he/she tells Oliver. “But, I pray you, commend my *counterfeiting* to him! Will you go?”

At the deep forest’s border, Touchstone walks along the path beside a bright meadow. “We shall find a time, Audrey,” he tells his affianced. “*Patience*, gentle Audrey.”

Says she, resenting Jacques's meddling comments on her nuptials, "'Faith, the priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman's saying."

"A most *wicked* Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most *vile* Martext!" counters the fool. "But, Audrey, there is a youth here in the forest lays *claim* to you...."

"Aye, I know who 'tis. He hath no interest in me in the world!" she says, disdainfully. "Here comes the man you mean."

William, a plain young country fellow, is ambling toward them on the narrow path.

Touchstone is gleeful; the rustic will serve well as a subject and target for his gibes. "It is meat and drink to me to see a clown! By my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for!—we *shall* be flouting!—we cannot *hold!*"

William arrives. "Good even, Audrey," he says, pulling off his dusty cap.

"God 'ye good even, William."

"And good even to you, sir."

"Good *even*, gentle friend!" says Touchstone, the soul of courtesy. "Cover thy head, cover thy head; nay, prithe, be covered! How *old* are you, friend?"

"Five and twenty, sir."

"A *ripe* age! Is thy name *William*?"

"William, sir."

"A *fair* name! Wast *born* i' the forest here?"

"Aye, sir, I thank God."

"Thank God'—a *good* answer! Art *rich*?"

"Faith, sir, so so."

"So so' is good, very good, very *excellent* good! And yet it is *not*: it is but so-so. Art thou *wise*?"

"Aye, sir, I have a pretty wit."

"Why, thou sayest *well!*" says Touchstone. But he adds, "I do now remember a saying: 'The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.'"

William, his mouth half open, blinks.

Touchstone looks at him and says, speaking slowly, his enunciation very precise, "The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to *eat a grape*, would *open his lips* when he *put it into his mouth*—*meaning*, thereby that *grapes* were made to *eat*, and *lips* to *open*."

He regards William carefully, as Audrey laughs. "You do love this maid?"

"I do, sir."

"Give me your hand," says Touchstone, seizing it. "Art thou learnèd?"

"No, sir."

"Then *learn this from me!* To have is *to have!*—for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the *one* doth *empty* the other!

"Now, all your writers do consent that '*ipse*' is *he*. Now, *you* are *not* '*ipse*'—for *I* am *he!*"

"Which *he*, sir?"

The fool explains, his voice growing louder as he tightens the grip on William's hand. "*He*, sir, that *must marry this woman!*"

"Therefore, *you clown*," says Touchstone forcefully, glaring, "*abandon*—which is, in the vulgar, *leave*—the *society*—which in the boorish is *company*—of this *female*—which in the common is *woman!*"

"Which *together* is: abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou *perishest!*—or, to thy better understanding, *diest!*—or, to wit: *I will kill thee!*—*make thee away!*—translate thy *liberty* into *bondage*, thy *life* into *death!*" he cries. "I will deal in *poison* with thee, or in *bastinado*, or in *steel!* I will not *bandy* with thee in *faction*—I will *o'errun thee with policy*; I will *kill thee a hundred and fifty ways!*"

"Therefore *tremble* and *depart!*" he shouts, thrusting away the sore hand.

Says Audrey, "*Do*, good William."

William seems to understand. “God rest you merry, sir.” He tips his cap to Audrey, and wanders away along the trail. He might find a new love, some day, he thinks.

But before Touchstone can savor triumph over the colorless rival for his goat-herd girl, Corin finds him—with an urgent summons from Ganymede and Aliena. “Our master and mistress *seek* you! Come, away, *away!*”

“*Trip, Audrey, trip, Audrey!*” urges Touchstone, tugging her by the hand. “I attend, I *attend,*” he tells Corin, as they hurry toward the cottage.

Chapter Eleven A Promise of Magic

Orlando asks his brother, as they walk in the Forest of Arden, “Is’t possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her?—that but *seeing*, you should *love* her?—and loving *woo*? And, wooing, she should *grant*? And will you *persever* to enjoy her?”

Oliver stops, and he offers sincere assurance: “Neither call the giddiness of it in question—the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing—nor her sudden consenting—but say with me: *I love Aliena!*—say with *her* that she loves *me!* Consent with *both*, that we may enjoy each other!

“It shall be to your *good*—for my father’s house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland’s will I *estate upon you*, and here live and die a shepherd.” His contented smile makes clear that he harbors no reservation about his new love, nor his new life.

A linen sling across Orlando’s chest supports his left arm, but he shakes Oliver’s right hand heartily. “You *have* my consent! Let your wedding be *tomorrow!* Thither will I invite the duke and all his contented followers!

“Go you and prepare Aliena,” he urges, “for, look you, here comes my *Rosalind!*”

Ganymede greets Oliver as Aliena’s betrothed. “God save you, *brother-in-law!*”

“And *you*, fair *sister-in-law!*” says Monsieur De Bois happily. He bows, and goes to the cottage to confirm the morrow’s wedding ceremony with sprightly little Aliena—giving not a thought to how different she must be from the unseen lady he once thought to woo, Duke Frederick’s daughter.

“Oh, my dear Orlando,” says Ganymede, looking at the taut white cloth, “how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!”

“It is my arm. . . .”

“I thought thy *heart* had been wounded—with the claws of a lion!”

“Wounded it *is!*—but by the *eyes* of a *lady.*”

Ganymede broaches a sensitive subject. “Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to *sworn* when he showed me your kerchief?”

“Aye—and greater wonders than *that!*” He is delighted with Oliver’s surprising epiphany, and his sharing in a love.

Ganymede concurs. “Oh, I know where *you* are! Aye, ’tis true!—there was never anything so *sudden* but the fight of *two rams*—and *Caesar’s* thrasonical brag of ‘I came, saw, and *overcame!*’ For 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!*”

He adds, wryly, in his role as exorcist of love, “No sooner knew the reason but they sought the *remedy!* And by those degrees have they made a pair of stairs to *marriage*, which they will climb incontinent!”—without restraint. The young man offers a worldly-wise grin. “Or else *be* incontinent *before* marriage!

“They are in the very *wrath* of love, and they will *together*—*clubs* cannot part them!”

“They shall be married tomorrow,” proper Orlando assures Ganymede, “and I will bid the duke to the nuptial.” He sighs. “But, oh, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through

another man's eyes! Tomorrow I shall be at the height of *heart-heaviness*, by as much the more as I shall think my brother *happy* in having what *he* wishes for."

"Well then, tomorrow I cannot serve your turn for 'Rosalind,'" Ganymede tells him.

Orlando nods mournfully. "I can live no longer by *thinking*."

"I will no longer weary you, then, with *idle talking*." Ganymede's firm new tone commands attention as he steps forward, speaking gravely. "Know *this* of me—for now I speak to some purpose!

"I know you are a gentleman of good understanding, and I do not speak this so that you should bear a good opinion of my *knowledge*; so much, I say, I know you *have*. Neither do I labour for a greater *esteem* than may, in some little measure, draw belief from you *to do yourself good*, and not to grace *me*."

Ganymede's intense stare captures Orlando's eyes. "*Believe* then, if you please, that *I can do strange things!* I have, since I was three year old, *conversèd with a magician!*—one most profound in his art, and yet not damnable"—his magic being the good kind. "If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your *gesture* cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena, *you shall marry her!*"

Orlando, stunned, starts to speak, but Ganymede raises a leather-gloved hand, demanding silence. "I know into what straits of fortune she is driven!—and it is not impossible for me, if it appear not too soon for you, *to set her before your eyes* tomorrow!—human as she is, and without any danger!"

Orlando stares, much amazed. "Speakest thou in *sober* meanings?"

"*I do*, by my *life!*—which I tender *dearly*, though I say I am a magician. Therefore, put you in your best array! Bid your friends! For if you wish to be married tomorrow, you *shall* be—and to *Rosalind*, if you will!"

As Orlando assimilates that dazzling possibility, Phoebe and Silvius approach the two gentlemen.

Says Ganymede sourly, "Look, here comes a lover of *mine*—and a lover of *hers*."

Phoebe leads the way, and her challenge to Ganymede is strident: "Youth, you have done me much *ungentleness*, to show the letter that I writ to you!"

"I care not if I have!" replies Ganymede harshly. "It is my *study* to seem spiteful and ungentle to you! You are there followed by a faithful shepherd; look upon him, *love* him—he worships you!"

Phoebe seizes Silvius's arm and brusquely pulls him forward. "Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to *love!*"

"It is to be all made of *sighs* and *tears*," he says. He looks down. "And so am *I* for Phoebe."

"And *I* for Ganymede," says Phoebe firmly.

"And *I* for Rosalind!" cries Orlando, immediately catching the spirit.

Says Ganymede, "And *I* for no woman!"

Silvius elucidates further: "It is to be all *made* of faith and *service*; and so am I for Phoebe."

"And *I* for *Ganymede*," says Phoebe.

"And *I* for *Rosalind!*" says Orlando.

"And *I* for *no* woman," says Ganymede.

Silvius expands on the topic: "It is to be all made of *fantasy*, all made of passion, and all made of *wishes*—all adoration, duty, and observance; all humbleness; all patience and *impatience*, all purity, all trial, all observance. And so am I for Phoebe."

"And so am I for *Ganymede*," says she.

"And so am I for *Rosalind*," says Orlando.

"And so am I for *no* woman," says Ganymede.

Phoebe, content with Silvius's performance, glares at Ganymede. "If this be so, why *blame* you me for loving you?"

Silvius pleads with Phoebe: "If this be so, why blame you me for loving *you?*"

“If this be so” moans Orlando, “why blame you *me* for loving *you*?”
 Ganymede frowns. “To whom do *you* speak ‘Why blame you me to love you?’”
 “To her that *is* not here nor *doth* not hear,” sighs Orlando sadly.
 “Pray you, no *more* of this!” cries Ganymede, exasperated. “’Tis like the howling of *Irish* wolves against the moon!”
 “I will help *you*,” he tells Silvius, “if I can.
 “I would love *you*,” he tells Phoebe, “if I *could*.
 Ganymede lifts a hand to halt the others. “*Tomorrow* meet me, *all together*!”
 “I will marry *you* if ever I marry *woman*,” he tells Phoebe, “—and *I’ll be married tomorrow*!”
 “I will satisfy *you*,” he tells Orlando, “if ever I satisfy *man*—and *you* shall be married tomorrow!”
 “I will content *you*,” he tells Silvius, “if what *pleases* you *contents* you—and *you* shall be married tomorrow!”
 “As you love Rosalind, *meet!*” he tells Orlando.
 “As you love Phoebe, *meet!*” he orders Silvius.
 “And as I love no woman, *I’ll meet!*”
 “I have left you commands,” says Ganymede imperiously. “So fare you well.”
 Silvius nods. “I’ll not fail, if I live.”
 “Nor I,” pledges Phoebe.
 Orlando—despite doubts about the wizard’s wonderful promise—is the most hopeful. “*Nor I!*”

Chapter Twelve Songs Sung, Gifts Given

Romance comes, radiantly, into full bloom in the now seemingly charmed forest.
 “Tomorrow is the joyful day, Audrey,” says Touchstone, surprised to feel content—even *happy*. “Tomorrow will we be married.”
 “I do desire it with all my heart,” she replies, “and I hope it is no *dishonest* desire to desire to be a woman of the world!”—by which he infers, correctly, she means a *wife* instead of a *virgin*. “Here comes two of the banishèd duke’s pages.”
 The older boy, thirteen and blond, bows courteously to the fool. “Well met, honest gentleman!”
 “By my troth, well met!” says Touchstone. “Come, sit, *sit!*—and a *song!*”
 “We are for you! Sit i’ the middle,” says the younger boy.
 The elder asks his partner, as the man and woman seat themselves at the center of a long log, “Shall we *clap into ’t roundly*, without hawking or spitting, or saying we are hoarse?—which are the prologues only to a *bad* voice.”
 “I’ faith, i’ faith!” says the other, “and both *in tune* like two gypsies on a horse!”
 They sing:

“*It was a lover and his lass,
 With a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny no,
 That o’er the green corn-field did pass,
 In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding ding!
 Sweet lovers love the spring!*

*Between the acres of the rye,
 With a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny no,
 These pretty country folks would lie,
 In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,*

*When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding ding!
Sweet lovers, love the spring!*

*This carol they began that hour,
With a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny no,
How that a life was but a flower,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding ding!
Sweet lovers, love the spring!*

*And therefore take the present time,
With a hey and a ho and a hey-nonny no,
For love is crownèd with the prime,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding ding!
Sweet lovers, love the spring!”*

The entertainment completed, the fool is free to be he—so sarcasm breaks out. “Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untuneable!”

“You are *deceived*, sir!” The older boy is miffed. “We kept *time*; we lost not our *time*!”

“By my troth, yes,” says Touchstone. “I counted it—as but *time lost* to hear such a foolish song!” he gibes, handing the boy silver coins. “God be wi’ you—and God *mend your voices*!” He ignores the boys’ rude gestures. “Come, Audrey!”

The two stroll, hand in hand, toward the haven of the merry renegades, where their fates are to be joined.

The forest clearing before the Duke of Ardennes’s cavern looks quite festive this warm, sunny morning: all around, the sprightly Lord Amiens and his friends have hung trailing ivy and bright-green sprigs, boughs of elm and maple, and sprays of fragrant fir, along with bluebells from the meadow. Streamers of yellow cloth dangle, fluttered by zephyrs, atop poles, and from ropes strung between the tree limbs arching above.

Near the duke, Oliver and Aliena hold hands, utterly entranced with each other; Lord Amiens again checks the tuning of his lute; Jacques debates whether to bear witness to such vanities as have been promised—and Orlando paces, his heart pounding in eagerness.

“Dost thou *believe*, Orlando, that the boy can do all this that he hath promised?” asks the duke.

“I *sometimes* do believe, and sometimes do not, as those who fear do *hope*, yet *know* they fear!”

The convocation grows: Ganymede arrives, with Phoebe and Silvius in tow.

The young magician now summons together all those afflicted with love. “Patience once more, whiles our compact is urgèd.”

He turns to the duke and bows. “You say that if I bring in your Rosalind, you will bestow her on Orlando here?”

The nobleman has great faith in his capable daughter, wherever she is, and he has come to trust, even admire, Orlando. “That would I, had I *kingdoms* to give with her!” he says—with a pang, missing the lady’s vivacious charm.

“And you say *you* will have her, when I bring her?”

“That would I, were I of *all* kingdoms king!” says Orlando fervently.

Ganymede looks sternly at Phoebe. “You say you’ll marry *me*, if I be willing?”

“That will I, should I die the hour after!”

Ganymede presses: “But if you do *refuse* to marry me, you’ll give yourself to this most faithful shepherd?”

Phoebe can’t imagine such a refusal. “So is the bargain,” she nods.

Ganymede turns to Silvius. "You say that you'll have Phoebe, if *she* will?"

"Though to have her and death were both one thing!" says Silvius.

Ganymede has everyone's attention.

"I have promised to make all this matter even!

"Keep you your word, O duke, to give your daughter; you, yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter!

"Keep your word, Phoebe, that you'll marry me, or else, refusing me, to wed this shepherd; keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her, if she refuse me!

"And from hence I go, to make these doubts all even!" Ganymede bows, his sister curtsies, and together they stride away toward the cottage.

The duke watches, pensively, as they go. "I do remember, in this shepherd boy, some lively touches of my *daughter's* favour...."

"My lord, the first time that ever *I* saw him methought he was a *brother* to your daughter!" Orlando tells him. "But, my good lord, this boy is forest-born, and hath been tutored in the rudiments of many disparate studies by his uncle, whom he reports to be a great *magician*, obscured by the circle of this forest."

Jacques surveys the spectacle of linked lovers. "There is, surely, another *Flood* toward, and these couples are coming to the *ark!*" He is amused to see Touchstone, despite counseling, bringing Audrey. "Here comes a *pair* of very the strange beasts which in *all* tongues are called fools!"

"Salutation and greeting to you all!" cries Touchstone.

Jacques urges the duke, "Good my lord, bid him welcome! *This* is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest! He hath been a *courtier*, he swears!"

"If any man *doubt* that, let him put me to my purgation," says Touchstone. He executes a deep, courtly bow. "I have trod a measure"—danced, "I have flattered a lady, I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy—I have undone three tailors! I have had *four quarrels!*—and like to have fought *one.*"

"And how was that ta'en up?" ask Jacques, eager for the tale.

"Faith, we met, but found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause"—a stage just before combat.

"How *seventh* cause?" Jacques, delighted, looks to the duke. "Good my lord, *like* this fellow!"

The nobleman smiles "I like him very well!"

"God 'ield you, sir, I *desire* the like of you," Touchstone tells him. "I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to *forswear*, according as blood *bends* and marriage *breaks.*"

He pulls Audrey forward. "A poor virgin, sir—an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own! A poor humour of mine, sir, is to take that that no man else will! Rich *honesty*"—fidelity—"dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor *house*—as your pearl in your foul oyster!"

"By my faith," laughs the duke, "he *is* very swift and contentious!"

Says Touchstone, "According to the fool's bolt"—harmless dart, "sir, and such dulcet diseases."

Jacques wants to hear the story of the defunct duel. "But as for the *seventh cause*—how did you *find* the quarrel to be on the seventh cause?"

"Upon a *lie* seven times removèd—Bear your body more *seemly*, Audrey!—as *thus*, sir:

"I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard. He sent me word: if I said his beard was not cut *well*, he was in the mind it *was*. This is called the Retort Courteous.

"If I sent him word again it was not well cut, he would send me word that he cut it to please *himself*. This is called the Quip Modest. If again 'it was not well cut,' he disabled my *judgment*; this is called the Reply Churlish. If again 'it was not well cut,' he would answer I spake *not true*;

this is called the Reproof Valiant. If again 'it was not well cut,' he would say I *lied*; this is called the Countercheck Quarrelsome. And so to the Lie Circumstantial, and the Lie *Direct*."

"And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?" inquires Jacques.

"I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial," Touchstone confesses, "nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct! And so we measured swords"—crossed them, but in empty display—"and parted."

Jacques challenges the luminary: "Can you nominate, in order now, the degrees of the lie?"

"Oh, sir, *we* quarrel in *print*—by the book, as you have books for *good* manners!

"I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All these you may avoid but the Lie Direct—and you may avoid *that*, too, with an *if*."

"I knew of a quarrel that *seven justices* could not untie—but when the parties themselves were met, one of them thought of an *if*—as, '*If* you said so, then I said *so*.' And so they shook hands, and swore to be *brothers*! Your *if* is the only *peacemaker*!—much virtue in *if*!"

Jacques laughs and claps. "Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? He's as good at *anything*—and yet a *fool*!"

The duke delights in the bite of satire. "He uses his *folly* like a stalking horse,"—a stealthy surrogate, "and under the *presentation* of that, he *shoots his wit*!"

Then the soft sound of music—sweet voices of two boys, accompanied by tabor and flutes—floats up to still conversations.

Into the clearing strides Lord Amiens—draped in saffron cloth, crowned with roses set into a circlet of aromatic marjoram leaves, and holding aloft a pine torch—a portly, beaming image of Hymen, the Greek god of marriage.

Following him slowly are two beautiful, elegantly dressed ladies: Rosalind and Celia.

"Then is there *mirth* in heaven," proclaims Hymen, coming forward, "when *earthly* things, made even, *atone* together!"

"Good duke, receive thy *daughter*! Hymen from heaven brought her—yea, brought her hither that thou mightst join her hand with his—she whose heart within his bosom lies."

Rosalind curtsies before her father. "To you I bring myself, for I am yours."

She turns to Orlando. "To *you* I give myself, for I am *yours*!"

"If there be truth in *sight*," says the duke, tears of happiness in his eyes, "you *are* my daughter!"

"If there be truth in sight, you are my *Rosalind*!" says Orlando, taking her hand.

All are delighted but Phoebe—who has recognized her Ganymede. "If sight and shape be true, why then, *my love adieu*!"

"I'll have no *father*, if you be not he," Rosalind says to the duke. "I'll have no *husband*, if you be not he," she tells Orlando, "nor ne'er wed *woman*, if you be not she," she tells Phoebe, not unkindly.

Commands Hymen:

"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!"

He stands before the four couples, arrayed in a semicircle before him.

"You and you, no cross shall part," he tells Rosalind and Orlando.

"You and you are heart in heart," he says to Celia and Oliver.

“You to *his* love must accord, or have a *woman* as your lord,” he advises Phoebe. She nods, and takes the hand of her enthralled gentleman.

Hymen laughs; Touchstone is already kissing an ardent Audrey. “You and you are sure together—as the *winter to foul weather!*”

And so the hearts all are joined, and brought into bliss.

The reigning spirit of marriage then speaks to them all:
“*Whiles a wedlock hymn we sing,
Feed yourselves with questioning,
That reason wonder may diminish,
How thus we meet, and these things finish!*”

Then, as the couples and friends share their stories, Hymen—who exchanges the torch for his lute—and the two boys provide songs for the foresters and guests.

While a sumptuous feast is laid out on the rough-hewn tables, they play some lively music. Amiens sings:

“*Wedding is great Juno’s crown—
A blessèd bond of board and bed!
'Tis Hymen peoples every town;
High wedlock be then honourèd!
Honour, high honour and renown,
To Hymen, god of every town!*”

The duke has found Celia. “Oh, my dear niece, well come art thou to *me!*—even as *daughter* welcome, in no less degree!”

Phoebe, thoroughly chastised, has spoken frankly with the now-more-serious Silvius. “I will not eat my word; now thou art mine.” Her face softens under his adoring gaze. “Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine,” she assures him. He—at last—kisses her.

And now a stranger, a handsome young gentleman in the modest attire of a university student—one from Paris, perhaps—comes before the revelers. He raises a hand and calls for attention.

“Let me have audience for a word or two!” he cries. “I am the second son of old Sir Rowland, that bring these tidings to this fair assembly!

“Duke *Frederick*, hearing how that every day, men of great worth resort to this forest, assembled a mighty *power*—which were *on foot*, under his own conducting, purposely to take his brother here and *put him to the sword!*

“And to the skirts of this wild wood he came—where meeting with an old, religious man, after some question with him, was *converted!*—both from his enterprise and from *the world!* His crown he bequeathèd to his banished *brother!*—and *all their lands restored* to them again that were with him exilèd!

“This to be true, I do engage my life!” says Jacques de Bois, and he bows to the true lord of Ardennes.

“*Welcome*, young man!” cries the duke, mightily pleased. “Thou offer’st *fairly* to thy brothers’ wedding!—to one, his lands withheld; and to the other, the land itself *at large*, a potent *dukedom!*

“First, in this forest, let us do those ends that here were well begun, and well begot!

“And after, every one of this happy number that have endured harsh days and nights with us shall share the good of our returnèd fortune, according to the measure of their states!

“Meantime, forget this new-fall’n *dignity*, and fall into our rustic *revelry!*

“*Play*, music! And you, brides and bridegrooms all, with measures heapèd in *joy*, to the measures *fall!*”

As the melody drifts over them all, many voices clamor to deliver revelations—often to the ringing of laughter. They look forward to the dancing, the dining, the drinking—and a future filled with restored prosperity.

All, that is, but one.

“Sir, by your patience,” says Jacques of Arden to Jacques de Bois. “If I heard you rightly, the duke hath put on a *religious* life, and thrown into neglect the pompous court?”

“He hath,” nods the brother of Oliver and Orlando.

“To *him* will *I*,” says Jacques. “Out of those *convertites* there is much matter to be heard and learned!”

He faces the duke. Affecting a patronizing benevolence, he says, “I bequeath *you* to your *former* honour. Your patience and your virtue well deserve it.”

He tells Orlando warmly, “*You* to a love that your true faith doth merit.”

“You to your land, and love, and great allies!” he says to Oliver.

He smiles at Silvius. “You to a long- and *well* deserved *bed*!”

“And *you*,” he tells Touchstone, grinning, “to *wrangling*!—for thy *loving* voyage is victualled for but two months!” Audrey, he has learned, is already expecting.

“So, to your pleasures!” says Jacques. He turns to go. “I am for other than for dancing measures.”

The duke entreats him, “Stay, Jacques, *stay*!”

Jacques shakes his head. “To see no pastime, I.” He bows. “What you would have I’ll wait to know at your abandoned cave.” And that is where he goes, to read.

“Proceed, *proceed*!” cries the duke. “We will *begin* these rites as we do trust they’ll *end*—in true *delights*!”

The tabors set a lively pace—and with no further prompting, the forester-courtiers and their friends begin a vigorous and most joyful dance.

This ephemeral glimpse of Arden must now dissolve. Rosalind comes forward.

“It is not the fashion to see the *lady* as the Epilogue—but it is no more unhandsome than to see a ‘lord’ as the Prologue! If it be true that *good wine* needs no bush,” as painted on a tavern sign, “’tis true that a good *play* needs no *epilogue*. Yet for good wine they *do use* good bushes, and good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues!

“What a case am *I* in then, that am neither a good *Epilogue*, nor cannot insinuate with you in the behalf of a good *play*?

“I am not furnished like a beggar; therefore to beg will not become me. *My* way is to *conjure* you!—and I’ll begin with the women.

“I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as pleased you!

“And I charge *you*, O men, for the love you bear to women—as I perceive by your simpering, none of you *hates* them!—that between you and the women the *play* may *please*!

“If I *were* a woman,” asserts the youth playing the part of Rosalind on the stage, “I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me—and *breaths* that I defied not!

“And, I am sure, as many as have good beards or good faces or sweet breaths will, for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me *farewell*!”