

As You Like It

Act 1 Scene 1

The orchard of Oliver’s house

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM

ORLANDO As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed
me by will but poor a thousand crowns and, as thou say’st, charged
my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well: and there begins my
sadness. My brother Jacques he keeps at school, and report speaks
goldenly of his profit. For my part, he keeps me rustically at home 5
or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept – for call
you that ‘keeping’ for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from
the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better for, besides that they
are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manège, and to that
end riders dearly hired. But I, his brother, gain nothing under him 10
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, mines my gentility with my 15
education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me, 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.

Enter OLIVER

ADAM Yonder comes my master, your brother. 20
ORLANDO Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me
up.
[Adam withdraws]
OLIVER Now sir, what make you here?
ORLANDO Nothing: I am not taught to make anything.
OLIVER What mar you then, sir? 25



Oliver is angered by Orlando's protest at being kept in poverty. He threatens to strike Orlando, but Orlando seizes Oliver and demands his share of the will. Oliver seems to consent.

1 Brother against brother (in threes)

- a** Take parts as Orlando, Oliver and Adam, and rehearse lines 20–67 to experiment with how you would portray these characters on stage. Explore the points below to refine your ideas about the performance, and make notes in your Director's Journal on the most successful elements.
- **Language** Discuss why you think Orlando often echoes his brother's words. For example, the brothers call each other 'sir', but in what tones of voice and with what gestures? Locate each instance of Orlando's repetitions and decide how he might say them, and what he might mean by them. Try out a few different ways of speaking the lines to see what works best.
 - **Status** Orlando appeals to his brother as a gentleman to treat him also as a gentleman. How would you show the difference in their status at this point? Think about the positions and postures of the actors.
 - **Violence** Orlando is the younger brother, but he proves he is better at fighting than Oliver. Work out how you would stage the fight in a way that reveals the personality of each brother. The stage directions at lines 41, 42 and 59 suggest that Oliver begins the physical violence – but does he? Read the script without considering the stage directions, then discuss this point. Remember that the stage directions were not written by Shakespeare, but were inserted by the editors of later editions of the play.
- b** Write an **aside** for Adam at each question mark in lines 20–67, to allow him to voice his opinion on the conversation from his hiding place. Perform the scene again, with Adam speaking these asides aloud.



Marry by the Virgin Mary

be naught awhile clear off!

husks scraps

prodigal wastefully lavish

penury poverty

knows acknowledges

in ... blood because of our noble breeding

so know me know me as a brother

The courtesy of nations social custom

allows you my better says you are superior

blood rank or spirit

is nearer to his reverence makes you his legitimate heir

boy (an insult to provoke Orlando)

thou (this pronoun was used to speak to people of lower status, so it is a calculated insult here)

villein serf, lowest-status person (pun on 'villain')

railed on insulted

be patient calm down

accord peace

qualities

accomplishments, manners

exercises acquired skills

allottery share, bequest

testament will



- ORLANDO Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.
- OLIVER Marry, sir, be better employed, and be naught awhile.
- ORLANDO Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them? What prodigal portion have I spent that I should come to such penury? 30
- OLIVER Know you where you are, sir?
- ORLANDO O, sir, very well: here in your orchard.
- OLIVER Know you before whom, sir?
- ORLANDO 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 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. 40
- OLIVER [*Raising his hand*] What, boy!
- ORLANDO [*Seizing his brother*] Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.
- OLIVER Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?
- ORLANDO I am no villain: I am the youngest son of Sir Roland de Boys; he was my father, and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villeins. Wert thou not my brother, 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. 45
- ADAM [*Coming forward*] Sweet masters, be patient, for your father's remembrance, be at accord. 50
- OLIVER Let me go, I say.
- ORLANDO 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 allottery my father left me by testament: with that I will go buy my fortunes. 55
- [*He releases Oliver*]
- OLIVER And what wilt thou do? Beg when that is spent? 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. 60



Oliver resolves to get rid of Orlando. Charles tells of Duke Senior's banishment, Rosalind and Celia's great friendship, and of many courtiers joining Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden.

Characters

Oliver's soliloquies (in pairs)

Oliver shows the unpleasant side of his nature, calling the loyal servant Adam 'old dog'. He then has two short **soliloquies**, at lines 68–9 and line 75. The stage convention is that in a soliloquy a character speaks the truth, showing their true personality and intentions.

- Experiment with different ways of speaking the soliloquies. Use tone, gesture and dramatic pauses to convey Oliver's character and motivations. Decide how to deliver each soliloquy and share your interpretations with the rest of the class.

1 Setting the scene for the play (in small groups)

Charles's news helps to establish the play's context, relationships and themes. But how does the news relayed by Charles link to the story so far, and to the history of Oliver and Orlando?

- Use the list of characters on page 1 to help you draw a character web. Devise symbols or a colour code to show the status of characters you have met so far and the relationships between them. You could also include sketches of the characters and additional notes about their apparent temperaments and motivations. As you become familiar with more of the play's characters, add to your character web so that it serves as a useful 'who's who' of *As You Like It*.

Write about it

Who, what, where, when, why?

Write a newspaper article about the Duke's banishment, using the details of Charles's account in lines 79–95. Embellish the article with features such as eye-witness accounts, quotes from the characters involved and language that is suitable for either a tabloid or a broadsheet newspaper.

grow upon me

become troublesome to me

physic your rankness cure your fast-growing insolence

Holla come here

importunes begs

way (way of killing Orlando)

morrow morning

old Duke (Duke Senior)

good leave cheerful permission

the Duke's daughter, her cousin

(Celia, who is Duke Frederick's daughter and Rosalind's cousin)

bred brought up

to stay by staying

of by

merry (this term was often used to denote social equality)

fleet the time carelessly pass the time without a care

golden world first age of the world or ideal, carefree existence described in ancient Greek and Latin texts



ORLANDO I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

OLIVER [To Adam] Get you with him, you old dog.

ADAM Is 'old dog' my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service. God be with my old master: he would not have spoke such a word.

65

Exeunt Orlando [and] Adam

OLIVER Is it even so, begin you to grow upon me? I will physic your rankness, and yet give no thousand crowns neither. – Holla, Denis.

Enter DENIS

DENIS Calls your worship?

70

OLIVER Was not Charles, the Duke's wrestler, here to speak with me?

DENIS So please you, he is here at the door, and importunes access to you.

OLIVER Call him in.

[Exit Denis]

'Twill be a good way, and tomorrow the wrestling is.

75

Enter CHARLES

CHARLES Good morrow to your worship.

OLIVER Good Monsieur Charles, what's the new news at the new court?

CHARLES 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.

80

OLIVER Can you tell if Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, be banished with her father?

85

CHARLES O no; for the Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her 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.

90

OLIVER Where will the old Duke live?

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

95



Charles says he is reluctant to injure Orlando. Oliver falsely describes Orlando's character and intentions, and urges Charles to kill him. Alone on stage, Oliver expresses envy of Orlando's character and reputation.

Characters

Charles: a pompous wrestler? (in pairs)

Charles is Duke Frederick's wrestler. He is very proud of his reputation, and warns of what may happen if Orlando insists on fighting him. He speaks formally, often using long words and unnatural word order where a simpler style would do.

- a Discuss what effect Charles's overblown speaking style might have on a listener. Think about the audience's impression, as well as how the other characters might react.
- b Take turns to read aloud lines 97–107, then construct a verbal or written version of the speech that uses clearer wording and sentence structure. What difference does this make to the message? Why do you think Charles employs such complicated language?

1 A false brother (in pairs)

Oliver's descriptions of Orlando are often descriptions of himself. Psychoanalysts call this 'projection' – that is, attributing your own feelings or characteristics to others. Keep this in mind as you complete the following activities.

- a One person speaks lines 108–23 in character as Oliver, pausing after every short section. In the pause, the other person judges whether or not Oliver is lying by proclaiming aloud 'True' or 'False'. Switch roles and see if there are any points in the speech when you disagree about whether or not he is being truthful.
- b Take turns to read through Oliver's soliloquy at lines 127–34. Together, compile notes on Oliver's character and his behaviour towards Orlando. Write a psychoanalyst's report on Oliver, giving possible reasons why he might hate Orlando so much and why he might project so many of his own feelings and motivations onto his brother.

disposition intention

disguised (it was not becoming for a gentleman to fight with a common wrestler)

fall bout, round of fighting

credit reputation

loath to foil reluctant to defeat

brook endure

thing of his own search plan of his own devising

requite reward

underhand means
secret methods

envious emulator jealous imitator

parts qualities

villainous contriver
wicked plotter

as lief rather

disgrace disfigurement or injury

grace himself on thee gain credit at your expense

practise plot

device trick

anatomise him analyse his faults

go alone walks without aid

stir this gamester
shake this upstart

noble device nobility

altogether misprized
scorned by everyone

kindle the boy (incite Orlando to wrestle)



OLIVER What, you wrestle tomorrow before the new Duke?

CHARLES 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 him 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 brook such disgrace well as he
shall run into, in that it is a thing of his own search and altogether
against my will. 100

OLIVER Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find
I will most kindly requite. 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, it 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 – 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, entrap 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 anatomise him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep,
and thou must look pale and wonder. 110 115 120

CHARLES 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, I'll never wrestle
for prize more – and so God keep your worship. *Exit* 125

OLIVER Farewell, good Charles. – Now will I stir this gamester. I hope
I shall see an end of him, for my soul – yet I know not why – hates
nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle, never schooled and yet
learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved, and
indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own
people who best know him, that I am altogether misprized. But it
shall not be so long this wrestler shall clear all: nothing remains but
that I kindle the boy thither, which now I'll go about. 130

Exit



Celia tries to cheer Rosalind, who thinks with sadness of her banished father. Responding to Celia's affection, Rosalind joins in witty wordplay about love, fortune and nature.

Themes

Fortune and her wheel (in small groups)

Fortune was commonly depicted as a blindfolded goddess who used her wheel to raise people into prosperity and happiness before plunging them down again into misery.

- Look at the wheel of Fortune illustrated below and have a go at drawing and colouring your own. Annotate where Rosalind and Celia are on this wheel of Fortune, and show the direction in which they might each – or both – be heading. Where on the wheel are the other characters?



1 Fortune, Nature and witty repartee

In lines 30–6, Celia says that Fortune bestows either virtue or beauty upon women, and that beautiful women ('fair') are rarely chaste ('honest'). Rosalind challenges her; as she believes that Fortune only affects 'gifts of the world' such as money and power. According to Rosalind, a person's looks, intelligence and moral qualities are 'the lineaments of Nature' – features given by Nature rather than Fortune. The theme of nature's relationship to fortune is central to the play, so keep it in mind as you read on.

- Rewrite lines 25–45 in your own words, to make the wit and wordplay intelligible and amusing to a modern audience. Some of the wordplay involves exploiting certain words' multiple definitions, so check the glossaries on this page and on page 12 to make sure that you have understood all the possible meanings.

thee/you (Celia uses the familiar pronoun 'thou', whereas Rosalind employs the more formal and respectful 'you' to address the daughter of the ruling Duke)

coz cousin

still always

so wouldst thou you would do likewise

righteously tempered properly strengthened

the condition of my estate my situation

perforce by force

render thee again give back to you

make sport withal joke about it

with safety ... off again you can end without shame

sit and mock (Celia proposes a discussion on a set theme)

equally justly

mistake go astray

honest virtuous, chaste

office function

gifts of the world material possessions, power