

# As You Like It

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## SCENE III. The forest.

*Enter ROSALIND and CELIA*

### ROSALIND

How say you now? Is it not past two o'clock? and here much Orlando!

### CELIA

I warrant you, with pure love and troubled brain, he hath ta'en his bow and arrows and is gone forth to sleep. Look, who comes here.

*Enter SILVIUS*

### SILVIUS

My errand is to you, fair youth;  
My gentle Phebe bid me give you this:  
I know not the contents; but, as I guess  
By the stern brow and waspish action  
Which she did use as she was writing of it,  
It bears an angry tenor: pardon me:  
I am but as a guiltless messenger.

### ROSALIND

Patience herself would startle at this letter  
And play the swaggerer; bear this, bear all:  
She says I am not fair, that I lack manners;  
She calls me proud, and 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? Well, shepherd, well,  
This is a letter of your own device.

### SILVIUS

No, I protest, I know not the contents:  
Phebe did write it.

### ROSALIND

Come, come, you are a fool  
And turn'd into the extremity of love.

I saw her hand: she has a leathern hand.  
A freestone-colour'd 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.

**SILVIUS**

Sure, it is hers.

**ROSALIND**

Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style.  
A style for-challengers; why, she defies me,  
Like Turk to Christian: women's gentle brain  
Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention  
Such Ethiopie words, blacker in their effect  
Than in their countenance. Will you hear the letter?

**SILVIUS**

So please you, for I never heard it yet;  
Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.

**ROSALIND**

She Phebes me: mark how the tyrant writes.

*Reads*

Art thou god to shepherd turn'd,  
That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?  
Can a woman rail thus?

**SILVIUS**

Call you this railing?

**ROSALIND**

[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:  
And by him seal up thy mind;  
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**

Call you this chiding?

**CELIA**

Alas, poor shepherd!

**ROSALIND**

Do you pity him? no, he deserves no pity. Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an instrument and play 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 more company.

*Exit SILVIUS*

*Enter OLIVER*

**OLIVER**

Good morrow, fair ones: pray you, if you know,  
Where in the purlieus of this forest stands  
A sheep-cote fenced about with olive trees?

**CELIA**

West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom:  
The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream  
Left on your right hand brings you to the place.  
But at this hour the house doth keep itself;  
There's none within.

**OLIVER**

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 low  
And browner than her brother.' Are not you  
The owner of the house I did inquire for?

**CELIA**

It is no boast, being ask'd, to say we are.

**OLIVER**

Orlando doth commend him to you both,  
And to that youth he calls his Rosalind  
He sends this bloody napkin. Are you he?

**ROSALIND**

I am: what must we understand by this?

**OLIVER**

Some of my shame; if you will know of me  
What man I am, and how, and why, and where  
This handkercher was stain'd.

**CELIA**

I pray you, tell it.

**OLIVER**

When last the young Orlando parted from you  
He left a promise to return again  
Within an hour, and pacing through the forest,  
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,  
Lo, what befell! he threw his eye aside,  
And mark what object did present itself:  
Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd 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,  
Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd  
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,  
Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,  
And with indented glides did slip away  
Into a bush: under which bush's shade  
A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,  
Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,  
When that 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.

**CELIA**

O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;  
And he did render him the most unnatural  
That lived amongst men.

**OLIVER**

And well he might so do,  
For well I know he was unnatural.

**ROSALIND**

But, to Orlando: did he leave him there,  
Food to the suck'd and hungry lioness?

**OLIVER**

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,  
Who quickly fell before him: in which hurtling  
From miserable slumber I awaked.

**CELIA**

Are you his brother?

**ROSALIND**

Wast you he rescued?

**CELIA**

Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?

**OLIVER**

'Twas I; but 'tis not I I do not shame  
To tell you what I was, since my conversion  
So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.

**ROSALIND**

But, for the bloody napkin?

**OLIVER**

By and by.  
When from the first to last betwixt us two

Tears our recountments had most kindly bathed,  
As how I came into that desert place:--  
In brief, he led me to the gentle duke,  
Who gave me fresh array and entertainment,  
Committing me unto my brother's love;  
Who led me instantly unto his cave,  
There stripp'd himself, and here upon his arm  
The lioness had torn some flesh away,  
Which all this while had bled; and now he fainted  
And cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind.  
Brief, I recover'd him, bound up his wound;  
And, after some small space, being strong at heart,  
He sent me hither, stranger as I am,  
To tell this story, that you might excuse  
His broken promise, and to give this napkin  
Dyed in his blood unto the shepherd youth  
That he in sport doth call his Rosalind.

*ROSALIND swoons*

**CELIA**

Why, how now, Ganymede! sweet Ganymede!

**OLIVER**

Many will swoon when they do look on blood.

**CELIA**

There is more in it. Cousin Ganymede!

**OLIVER**

Look, he recovers.

**ROSALIND**

I would I were at home.

**CELIA**

We'll lead you thither.  
I pray you, will you take him by the arm?

**OLIVER**

Be of good cheer, youth: you a man! you lack a  
man's heart.

**ROSALIND**

I do so, I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would

think this was well counterfeited! I pray you, tell  
your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!

**OLIVER**

This was not counterfeit: there is too great  
testimony in your complexion that it was a passion  
of earnest.

**ROSALIND**

Counterfeit, I assure you.

**OLIVER**

Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man.

**ROSALIND**

So I do: but, i' faith, I should have been a woman by right.

**CELIA**

Come, you look paler and paler: pray you, draw  
homewards. Good sir, go with us.

**OLIVER**

That will I, for I must bear answer back  
How you excuse my brother, Rosalind.

**ROSALIND**

I shall devise something: but, I pray you, commend  
my counterfeiting to him. Will you go?

*Exeunt*