

Audition Pieces from As You Like It

Act I, scene 1

OLIVER Now, sir, what make you here?

ORLANDO Nothing: I am not taught to make anything.

OLIVER What mar you then, sir?

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?

OLIVER Know you where you are, sir?

ORLANDO O, sir, very well.

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. I have as much of my father in me as you.

OLIVER Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

ORLANDO I am no villain. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; he was my father, and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains. 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.

Act I, scene 3

- CELIA** Why, cousin, why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy, not a word?
- ROSALIND** Not one to throw at a dog.
- CELIA** No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs; throw some of them at me. Come, lame me with reasons.
- ROSALIND** Then there were two cousins laid up, when the one should be lamed with reasons and the other mad without any.
- CELIA** But is all this for your father?
- ROSALIND** No, some of it is for my child's father.
- CELIA** Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.
- ROSALIND** O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself!
- CELIA** O, a good wish upon you! You will try in time, in despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest. Is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?
- ROSALIND** The duke my father loved his father dearly.
- CELIA** Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase, I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando.
- ROSALIND** No, faith, hate him not, for my sake.
- CELIA** Why should I not? Doth he not deserve well?
- ROSALIND** Let me love him for that, and do you love him because I do.

Act II, scene 1

DUKE SENIOR

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
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 counsellors
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 haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything.
I would not change it.

Act III, scene 2

- CORIN** And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?
- TOUCHSTONE** Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life, but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, 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 humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?
- CORIN** No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means, and content is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun.
- TOUCHSTONE** Such a one is a natural philosopher. Wast ever in court, shepherd?
- CORIN** No, truly.
- TOUCHSTONE** Then thou art damned.
- CORIN** Nay, I hope.
- TOUCHSTONE** Truly, thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.
- CORIN** For not being at court? Your reason.
- TOUCHSTONE** 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. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.
- CORIN** Not a whit, Touchstone. 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.

Act III, scene 2

JAQUES I thank you for your company; but, good faith, I had as lief have been myself alone.

ORLANDO And so had I; but yet, for fashion sake, I thank you too for your society.

JAQUES God be wi' you: let's meet as little as we can.

ORLANDO I do desire we may be better strangers.

JAQUES I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love songs in their barks.

ORLANDO I pray you, mar no more of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly.

JAQUES Rosalind is your love's name?

ORLANDO Yes, just.

JAQUES I do not like her name.

ORLANDO There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.

JAQUES What stature is she of?

ORLANDO Just as high as my heart.

JAQUES You are full of pretty answers.

ORLANDO Not so; but I answer you right.

JAQUES You have a nimble wit. Will you sit down with me? And we two will rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.

ORLANDO I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

JAQUES The worst fault you have is to be in love.

ORLANDO 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.

JAQUES By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

ORLANDO He is drowned in the brook. Look but in, and you shall see him.

JAQUES There I shall see mine own figure.

ORLANDO Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.

JAQUES I'll tarry no longer with you.

ORLANDO I am glad of your departure: adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.

JAQUES Farewell, good Signior Love.

Act III, scene 5

PHOEBE

Think not I love him, though I ask for him;
'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.
It is a pretty youth. Not very pretty.
But, sure, 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 mix'd in his cheek. 'Twas just the difference
Between the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him
In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him; but, for my part,
I love him not nor hate him not. And yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:
For what had he to do to chide at me?
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black:
And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me.
I marvel why I answer'd 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?

Act V, scene 2

ROSALIND O, my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!

ORLANDO It is my arm.

ROSALIND I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.
ORLANDO Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady.

ROSALIND Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to swoon when he showed me your handkerchief?

ORLANDO Ay, and greater wonders than that.

ROSALIND O, I know where you are, 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, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage.

ORLANDO They shall be married tomorrow, and I will bid the duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I tomorrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

ROSALIND Why then, tomorrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

ORLANDO I can live no longer by thinking.