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Family Plays

William Shakespeare's

As You Like It

One-act comedy
adapted by I.E. Clark



William Shakespeare's

As You Like It

"Everyone, critics and audience alike, was smitten by the production. Thanks." (Houston Shakespeare Society, Houston, Texas)

"Shakespeare with a sprinkle of your 'Stage Magic' should certainly be a winner." (Livingston, Texas)

Comedy. Adapted by I.E. Clark from William Shakespeare's play. *Cast: 6 to 8m., 4 to 5w.* A one-act glimpse into the Forest of Arden finds teenagers of Shakespeare's play much like those of today—interested in the opposite sex. Rosalind disguises herself as a boy in her scheme to win Orlando's love. But they are just one of several pairs of odd couples that make this play fun. There's Audrey, the shepherdess, and Touchstone, the jester. And Silvius, the lovesick teenager, and Phebe, the whipped cream in his banana split. There's Celia, the city girl, and Oliver, who hates lions. As the characters try to untangle the web they have woven, the excitement in the forest keeps the audience laughing. *An excellent contest play for college and high school. Simple ext. set. Costumes simpler than those usually required for a Shakespearean play. A director's script is available from the publisher of this play that contains drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 35 to 40 minutes. Code: AH9.*

Family Plays

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(AS YOU LIKE IT)

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AS YOU LIKE IT

The one-act version of *AS YOU LIKE IT* presented on the following pages was adapted and directed by I. E. Clark for the Schulenburg Theatre Festival in 1967. The original cast was as follows:

Prologue

- *FATHER Gerry Owen
- *DAUGHTER Carol Canuteson

The Play

- *DUKE SENIOR, *a banished nobleman* Ronnie Herzik
- JAQUES, *a courtier* Jack Walker
- SILVIUS, *a young shepherd* Sheldon Lippman
- *CORIN, *an old shepherd* Ronnie Herzik
- TOUCHSTONE, *a jester* Alan Herzik
- ROSALIND, *disguised as Ganymede* Lynanne Fitch
- CELIA, *disguised as Aliena* Susie LaBrose
- ORLANDO Lloyd Holz
- AUDREY, *a working shepherdess* Jeanette Strobel
- *PHEBE, *a romantic shepherdess* Carol Canuteson
- *OLIVER, *Orlando's older brother* Gerry Owen

Scene: The Forest of Arden

A good many years ago

*These parts were double-cast in the Schulenburg production, as indicated by the names of the players, to conform to the UIL contest limitation of 10 cast members.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

Shakespeare's genius is that he has something to say to all generations and all types of people. *AS YOU LIKE IT* has particular appeal to the young people of the latter years of the twentieth century.

Rosalind, Celia, and Orlando are young people seeking their own way in the world. With or without parental help (or interference), they know that it is up to them to solve the problems which confront them.

AS YOU LIKE IT is a comedy, of course, and much of the fun stems from Rosalind's method of solving some of her problems—her disguise. Dressed as a boy and calling herself Ganymede, Rosalind romps through the Forest of Arden. But the disguise has one major flaw—it is difficult to flirt with Orlando and win his attention when he thinks she is a man! In reading the play, one must constantly keep in mind the humorous picture of Orlando being wooed by what he thinks to be another male. This situation makes many of the lines hilarious.

Shakespeare also depicts another twentieth century phenomenon—the city dweller versus the rural native. In our day when our nation is becoming more and more urbanized, the conflict between the city and the rural areas grows in intensity. In *AS YOU LIKE IT* we find a strange fascination between Touchstone, the highly sophisticated and completely urbanized court jester, and Audrey, the naive and totally rustic shepherdess. That these two completely different people could fall in love gives hope to our civilization.

Some of Shakespeare's best satire will be lost on modern audiences. At the close of the sixteenth century, when this play was written, the pastoral romance was the favorite type of story, and the pastoral romance set the style in dress, speech, and courtship. The romanticized fictional shepherdess spent her day looking beautiful and desirable, and the fictionalized shepherd spent his day chasing her. He never seemed to tend his sheep, for all day long he wrote poems, sang songs, sighed sighs, and pined for his lady-love. In this play Silvius and Phebe represent this idyllic dream, and Shakespeare draws many laughs from the chase—and from the contrast with realistic working shepherds.

The opening scene of this condensed version of *AS YOU LIKE IT* points up the modernity of Shakespeare's genius by comparing Rosalind to a twentieth century teenager. We believe the comparison will help audiences understand what Shakespeare was talking about in this "sweetest, tenderest, happiest" of all his plays.

(Note to companies with small budgets: It's worth pointing out that, since this adaptation sets the entire play in the Forest of Arden, where most of the clothes are rustic, the costumes for this play are much simpler than those in other Shakespearean plays.)

SHAKESPEARE'S

As You Like It

Adapted by I. E. Clark

[FATHER strolls onto apron from Left, reading a large book with a title prominently announcing that it is a volume of Shakespeare's plays. His DAUGHTER breezes by from Right, on her way out. Without looking up, he calls out:]

FATHER. On your way to town, Mike, would you stop at...

DAUGHTER. I'm not Mike, Daddy; I'm Betty.

[FATHER looks at her boyish clothes. He turns to Audience for sympathy.]

FATHER. It's hard to tell sometimes. I've just been reading about another girl who dressed like a boy. [Holds up book.]

DAUGHTER. [Reads title, turns up her nose] Shakespeare—nyeah!

FATHER. Her name was Rosalind. Her father, the Duke—banished by a rival ruler—had fled to the Forest of Arden....

DAUGHTER. Wouldn't you know!

FATHER. There's a boy in the story, too.

DAUGHTER. Probably with some drippy name like...Borneo.

FATHER. No. Orlando. He was a football player.

DAUGHTER. Really! [Then she realizes the anachronism] Football! In Shakespeare's time?

FATHER. Well, he was quite an athlete.

[The vision of a handsome Elizabethan athlete, ORLANDO, appears behind DAUGHTER.]

FATHER. Rosalind and Orlando had just fallen in love [the vision of ROSALIND appears and looks lovingly at Orlando; she hangs a medallion around his neck] when Orlando's selfish brother, Oliver, plotted to kill Orlando. So Orlando fled to the Forest of Arden, too. [The vision of ORLANDO departs, waving sadly to ROSALIND; then ROSALIND, too, turns and leaves.] Rosalind's heart was broken, and she and her cousin Celia decided to run away. I'll bet you can't guess where they ran.

DAUGHTER and FATHER [in unison]. To the Forest of Arden.

FATHER. Rosalind disguised herself as a young country boy named Ganymede [a vision of ROSALIND in her Ganymede costume—minus

As You Like It

hat—appears behind DAUGHTER], and Celia pretended to be Gany-mede's sister, Aliena [*vision of CELIA runs into view with "Gany-mede's" hat and puts it on ROSALIND's head. The two girls look at each other's rustic costumes, laugh, and run off*]. For further protection they persuaded the court jester, Touchstone, to accompany them. [*Vision of TOUCHSTONE appears. He does a jester-like caper and runs after the girls.*]

DAUGHTER. Did they find Orlando?

FATHER. Well, one day...but I'm getting ahead of the story. When Orlando reached the forest, the banished Duke and a courtier named Jaques were strolling through the trees...[*his voice fades as he and DAUGHTER walk off the apron together. We assume that the story which we are about to see acted out before us is the mental picture which DAUGHTER receives as her FATHER relates the wonderful tale called AS YOU LIKE IT.*]

[*CURTAIN rises revealing an open area in the Forest of Arden. DUKE SENIOR and JAQUES are standing at UR, conversing in tones we cannot hear. SILVIUS is sitting on the ground at UL strumming a lute. From the distance we hear the happy sound of singers:*]

SONG [*see Production Script for music*]:

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.

[*As the song fades away, DUKE's words become audible:*]

DUKE. 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?
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.

[*His speech is interrupted by the entrance of ORLANDO at UL, so absorbed in his thoughts that he does not see the others. DUKE and JAQUES step behind a tree and SYLVIUS runs off L. ORLANDO hangs a sheet of parchment on Left tree.*]

ORLANDO. Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love;
O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books,
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character...
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she. [*Exit.*]

DUKE. [*Coming out from behind tree and speaking to JAQUES, who follows him*]

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy.
 This wide and universal theatre
 Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
 Wherein we play in. [*He pauses at DL to listen as JAQUES begins speaking; then exits.*]

JAQUES. [*Nodding in agreement*]

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 his nurse's arms....
 Then the whining school boy, with his sachel
 And shining morning face, creeping like a snail
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like a furnace, with a 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,
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,
 With 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 shrunk shank; 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 and mere oblivion,
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing. [*Exit*]

[*TOUCHSTONE enters, followed by Corin*]

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. Wast ever in court, shepherd?

COR. No, truly.

TOUCH. Then thou art damned.

CORIN. Nay, I hope—

As You Like It

TOUCH. Truly, thou art damned, like an ill-roasted egg all on one side.

CORIN. For not being at court? Your reason.

TOUCH. 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 have good manners at 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.

TOUCH. Instance, briefly; come, instance.

CORIN. Why, we are still handling our ewes; and their fells, you know, are greasy.

TOUCH. Why, do not your courtier's hands sweat? And is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man? Shallow, shallow. A better instance, I say; come.

CORIN. Besides, our hands are hard.

TOUCH. Your lips will feel them the sooner.

CORIN. You have too courtly a wit for me. I'll rest.

TOUCH. Wilt thou rest damned? God help thee, shallow man!

CORIN. Sir, I am a true laborer. I earn what I eat, get what I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness...*[he turns to face TOUCHSTONE and sees ROSALIND off]* Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress' brother.

[ROSALIND enters reading a poem. She doesn't know who wrote the poem or what it's all about, but she is obviously enjoying the rhythm since she reads in a sing-song voice.]

ROSALIND. From the east to Western Ind

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 black to...*[she pauses in astonishment—should it rhyme with "lined"?* She decides it should] Rosalind.

Let no face be kept in mind

But the fair of...*[pause, shrug, it rhymes]* Rosalind.

TOUCHSTONE. *[Making a face at the awful poetry]* I'll rhyme you so eight years together.

ROS. *[Defending the poem, which, after all, is about her]* Out, fool!

TOUCH. For a taste...: *[thinking of a rhyme]*
If a hart do lack a hind,

Let him seek out Rosalind.
 Winter garments must be lined,
 So must slender Rosalind.
 Sweetest nut hath sourest rind,
 Such a nut...is Rosalind!

ROS. Peace, you dull fool! [*They both laugh. ROSALIND sees CELIA approaching*] Here comes my sister, reading; stand aside. [*CELIA enters reading from a parchment similar to the one ROSALIND holds in her hand.*]

CELIA. Tongues I'll hang on every tree,
 That shall civil sayings show;
 But upon the fairest boughs,
 Or at every sentence end,
 Will I a Rosalinda write...

[*She looks up and greets her sister:*] How, now. [*CORIN and TOUCHSTONE have come up behind her to read the rest of the poem; and now, as she drops her hand, they crowd against her in a determined effort to see what it says; she is annoyed*] Back, friends! [*Her expression indicates that CORIN does not emit the currently fashionable odor*] Shepherd, go off a little! [*To TOUCHSTONE*] Go with him, sirrah.

TOUCH. Come, shepherd, let us make an honourable retreat; though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage. [*Exeunt*]

CELIA. Didst thou hear these verses?

ROS. O, yes, I heard them all...and more, too.

CELIA. Trow you who hath done this?...

ROS. Is it a man?

CELIA. [*Nodding girlishly*] And a chain that you once wore about his neck! [*Laughs at ROSALIND's blush*] Change you colour?

ROS. [*Holding her cheeks to hide the blush*] Dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition? I prithee, tell me who is it quickly, and speak apace. [*CELIA is laughing, making no indication of revealing her secret.*] I prithee, take the cork out of thy mouth that I may drink thy tidings... Is he of God's making? What manner of man?

CELIA. It is young Orlando.

ROS. Orlando?

CELIA. Orlando.

ROS. Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.

CELIA. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn...

ROS. It may well be called Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.