

CURTAIN OPENS: Orlando enters stage left with a piece of paper.

Orlando: I'll hang my verse on this tree to bear witness to my love. Dear sweet Rosalind, all the trees of the forest will be my book, as I write my thoughts of you on each one. So everyone who passes through these woods will find your virtues everywhere. Run, Run Orlando, carve on every tree poems to her beauty, her kindness and my love!

Orlando exits stage left. Touchstone and Corin enter stage right.

Corin: So Master Touchstone, how do you like this shepherd's life?

Touchstone: Well, it is a good life, if being a shepherd can be considered a good life. It is solitary, which I enjoy, but it is terribly private. I like that it is outdoors, but since it is not at court, it is rather boring. It is a simple life, which suits me, but I do not make much money, so I guess that does not suit me at all. Are you a philosopher, shepherd Corin?

Corin: Only in that I know the more one sickens, the worse he feels. And he that lacks money, means and happiness is without three good friends. That the property of rain is to wet, and fire to burn. That good pasture makes fat sheep. That the great cause of the night is lack of the sun. That a man who isn't intelligent by nature will complain of his lack of good manners, but perhaps he just comes from dull parents!

Touchstone: Ahh, a natural born philosopher!

Corin: Sir, I am truly a simple laborer. I earn that I eat; I get that I wear; I hate no one nor envy his happiness. I am satisfied with my fortune, and my greatest pride is watching my sheep and lambs graze in contentment...Look, here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress's brother.

Rosalind enters stage left, reading from a sheet of paper.

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 Rosalind.
Let no beauty be kept in mind
But the beauty of Rosalind.

Touchstone: Lovely sentiment, but terrible rhyme. I could rhyme much better than that! Let me try:
As far as woman's beauty goes,
There is no one like our Rose-
A-lind.
From his head down to his toes
Is how much he loves his Rose-
A-lind.
He'd wear bows upon his hose
If he could win sweet Rose-

A-lind.
That's as far as my poem goes
In speaking the charms of Rose-
A-lind.

Rosalind: Silly fool! I found this on a tree.

Touchstone: Then the tree yields rotten fruit!

Celia enters stage right with a piece of paper.

Celia: Listen to this poem I found on a tree.
Why should this a desert be?
For it is unpeopled? No.
I'll hang my poems on every tree
So my love for Rosalind may show.
May no one stop me or try to hinder
Me in my effort of her to write.
Of my love for my sweet Rosalind-a
Throughout each day into the night.

Rosalind: Oh please, must we continue to listen to these tedious verses.

Touchstone: I agree. Corin, let's be off.

Celia: What are you saying? Did you listen to these lovely words?

Rosalind: Well, it is rather difficult to hear the sentiment for the weighty poetry.

Celia: Rosalind, these poems are only trees throughout the forest, and they all have your name.
Don't you wonder who wrote them for you?

Rosalind: I was working through my wonder when you arrived. Did you see who it was?

Celia: It is a young man that wears a chain that you once wore, around his neck. Are you blushing?

Rosalind: Are you sure? Can it be?

Celia: O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all whooping! It's Orlando, who tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart in the same instant!

Rosalind: Really cousin, it's him?

Celia: It's him. I saw him hanging his poems on a tree and followed him ever so cautiously. I saw him sitting under a tree, writing more poems!

Rosalind: Oh my! What did he do when you saw him? What did he say? Why is he here? Did he ask about me? Where is he staying? How did he say goodbye? And when will you see him again? Answer me quickly.

Celia: Well...