

## Education Program: Week 1: Family

Written in 1599, this play is about discovery, *As You Like It* follows the journeys of several families, all of whose members are learning what it is to love, amongst each other, and between other families. Family is at the center of this play, with feudal tensions running high. Lord Frederick has usurped the throne from his elder brother Duke Senior, and is now hiding in the forest of Arden. Rosalind, the daughter of Duke Senior, and Celia the Daughter of Duke Frederick, flee to the forest together after their recent banishment from court. *As You Like It*, with disguises, passionate expressions of self, and comedy like no other, has it all!

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### LESSON ON METATHEATRICALS:

In Act 1 Scene 3 Rosalind and Celia plan their escape into the forest. To protect themselves from thieves and generally men, Rosalind proposes they put on disguises, both to protect themselves from marauders as well as any court members searching them out. The threat of death is not only likely but the probability of abuse or assault is also a reasonable thing to protect oneself from in an unknown landscape. As Rosalind says herself, “Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold”. (1.3.106)

Written in 1599, *As You Like It* was one of three plays released by Shakespeare that year, (alongside **Henry V** and **Julius Caesar**). All plays have to do with a contrast between a developing aristocratic social sphere, and “political society”. Throughout the play, the choices these particular characters make to protect themselves alongside their individual pursuits of love serve as metatheatrical devices in the storytelling of this particular show as they are a direct reflection of this growing consciousness of the time. Metatheatrics refers to a play’s ability to self-reflect on itself or refer back to its plot points. Examples of metatheatrical devices are *breaking the fourth wall*, or directly talking to an audience mid-performance. Many styles of theater utilize metatheatrics to engage audiences, either directly or subconsciously.

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## DISCUSS:

- As you read, call out any instances of metatheatrics at work, what are characters *really* saying as performers to an audience?
- As you begin to read the play, who else is related to who? Who is in love with who, and what do they do about it?



As You Like It at Shakespeare's Globe 2023. Photo by Ellie Kurttz

## ACT 1 SCENE 3:

Work through this excerpt from the play.

DUKE FREDERICK

「to Rosalind」

Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste,  
And get you from our court.

ROSALIND

Me, uncle?

DUKE FREDERICK

You, cousin.

Within these ten days if that thou beest found  
So near our public court as twenty miles,  
Thou diest for it.

ROSALIND

I do beseech your Grace,  
Let me the knowledge of my fault bear with me.  
If with myself I hold intelligence  
Or have acquaintance with mine own desires,  
If that I do not dream or be not frantic—  
As I do trust I am not—then, dear uncle,  
Never so much as in a thought unborn  
Did I offend your Highness.

DUKE FREDERICK

Thus do all traitors.  
If their purgation did consist in words,  
They are as innocent as grace itself.  
Let it suffice thee that I trust thee not.

ROSALIND

Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor.  
Tell me whereon the 「likelihood」 depends.

DUKE FREDERICK

Thou art thy father's daughter. There's enough.

ROSALIND

So was I when your Highness took his dukedom.  
So was I when your Highness banished him.  
Treason is not inherited, my lord,  
Or if we did derive it from our friends,  
What's that to me? My father was no traitor.  
Then, good my liege, mistake me not so much  
To think my poverty is treacherous.

CELIA

Dear sovereign, hear me speak.

DUKE FREDERICK

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Ay, Celia, we stayed her for your sake;  
Else had she with her father ranged along.

CELIA

I did not then entreat to have her stay.  
It was your pleasure and your own remorse.  
I was too young that time to value her,  
But now I know her. If she be a traitor,  
Why, so am I. We still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together,  
And, wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans  
Still we went coupled and inseparable.

DUKE FREDERICK

80

She is too subtle for thee, and her smoothness,  
Her very silence, and her patience  
Speak to the people, and they pity her.  
Thou art a fool. She robs thee of thy name,  
And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous  
When she is gone. Then open not thy lips.  
Firm and irrevocable is my doom

Which I have passed upon her. She is banished.

CELIA

Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege.  
I cannot live out of her company.

DUKE FREDERICK

You are a fool.—You, niece, provide yourself.  
If you outstay the time, upon mine honor  
And in the greatness of my word, you die.

*Duke<sup>↑</sup> and Lords<sup>↑</sup> exit.*

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### WRITE:

- **Why does Duke Frederick banish Rosalind and thereby Celia by default? Can you think of the last fight you had with a family member? Would you have banished them or vice versa? Why should you or shouldn't you banish your family members. How are we supposed to feel about their banishment?**
- **Can you think of any community members of yours who have been banished? What preconceived notions/stereotypes of right or wrong did the banishers have about those they banished?**

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### CHARACTERS:

**Orlando:** Orlando is the second son of Sir Rowland De Boys, the late good friend of Duke Senior and younger brother of Oliver's. Orlando feels spiteful towards Oliver as he has not only withheld the "alottery" his father's will gave to him in the event of his passing but has failed to treat him well. To survive court, Orlando does what he can to not only to make some money despite his brother's neglect but to teach himself things he does not know.

**Adam:** An older man, Adam is a servant to Oliver and a friend of Orlando. Having previously been a servant to the late Sir Rowland, Adam is loyal to his sons.

**Oliver:** The oldest son of Sir Rowland De Boys, Oliver as the eldest son has received the contents of his late father's will. Manipulative, conniving, and greedy, Oliver neglects his brother and even goes so far as to convince Charles (the Wrestler) that Orlando is conspiring to kill him.

**Charles:** Charles is a very dangerous wrestler at Duke Frederick's Court. Compassionate as well as deadly, he lets Oliver know his brother wants to wrestle him in an upcoming match and asks him to persuade Orlando out of his love for their family to not fight in the match as he will show no mercy. Under the manipulation of Oliver, he proceeds to fight in the upcoming match.

**Duke Senior:** Duke Senior is the previous ruler of this particular Court and the father of Rosalind, the best friend and cousin to Celia, the daughter of Duke Frederick. After being overthrown by his younger brother, Duke Frederick, he has hidden with his Lords and Jaques in the Forest of Arden, surviving off of deer and amusing themselves all the while hiding out.

**Jaques:** Not to be confused with the eldest son of Sir Rowland De Boys, Jaques, Jaques of Duke Senior's Court is a "melancholy fellow", and a lord of the exiled Duke. Often amidst a mental battle of wits with the Duke or anyone Jaques encounters, this character is most widely known for their endlessly contemplative, pessimistic, and sarcastic nature.

**Duke Frederick:** The cruel younger brother of Duke Senior. After driving his brother from the court, he has taken over. Father to Celia, he is her opposite, unloyal, devious, and ruthless, he commands the court.

**Le Beau:** The French courtier at Duke Frederick's court.

**Rosalind:** Rosalind is the daughter of Duke Senior, the previous Duke of the Court, and a very close friend and cousin of Celia's. Clever, romantic, and optimistic, she flees the court seeking her father Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden. To survive the perils of the forest, she and Celia disguise themselves as siblings, Rosalind taking the guise of a young man and calling herself Ganymede. It is under this pseudonym that she eventually meets Orlando and comedy ensues.

**Celia:** Celia is the sole daughter of Duke Frederick and heir to the Dukedom. Brave, creative, and cunning, as she believes, "that you and I are one", she escapes court with her cousin Rosalind who has been banished by Duke Frederick. It is Celia who comes up with their cover while in the forest, and as her disguise, takes up the name Aliena. Together they venture into the Forest of Arden to seek care under Duke Senior and his new court.

**Touchstone:** Touchstone is a fool... quite literally. Touchstone is this Court's fool, providing courtly comedy to the noblefolk of the court. Convinced or "stolen" by Celia and Rosalind, Touchstone follows the two into the forest providing courtly humor for the two as they traverse this strange land.

**Audrey:** Audrey, a goat keeper, lives in the forest. She is pursued by the Court fool Touchstone..

**Corin:** Corin is a shepherd in the Forest of Arden. As a country folk, Corin is kind, hardworking, and honest, and he has resigned to his humble work in the forest.

**Silvius:** Silvius is a shepherd in the Forest of Arden, in love with Phoebe. Sentimental, longing, and not easily deterred, Silvius has pursued Phoebe for a while despite her dismissals of his presence.

**Phoebe:** Phoebe is a shepherdess in the Forest of Arden endlessly pursued by shepherd Silvius. Phoebe is strong-willed, witty, and knows what she wants. She is a lover at heart.

**Amiens and the First and Second Lords:** Amiens or Lord Amiens is one of three lords who accompany Duke Senior into the Forest of Arden. A musician/singer, Amiens often sings to pass the time or entertain the previous members of the local court (Duke Senior, Jaques, and the First and Second Lords).

**Hymen:** God of Marriage

**William:** A country boy.

**Sir Oliver Martext:** A parish priest.