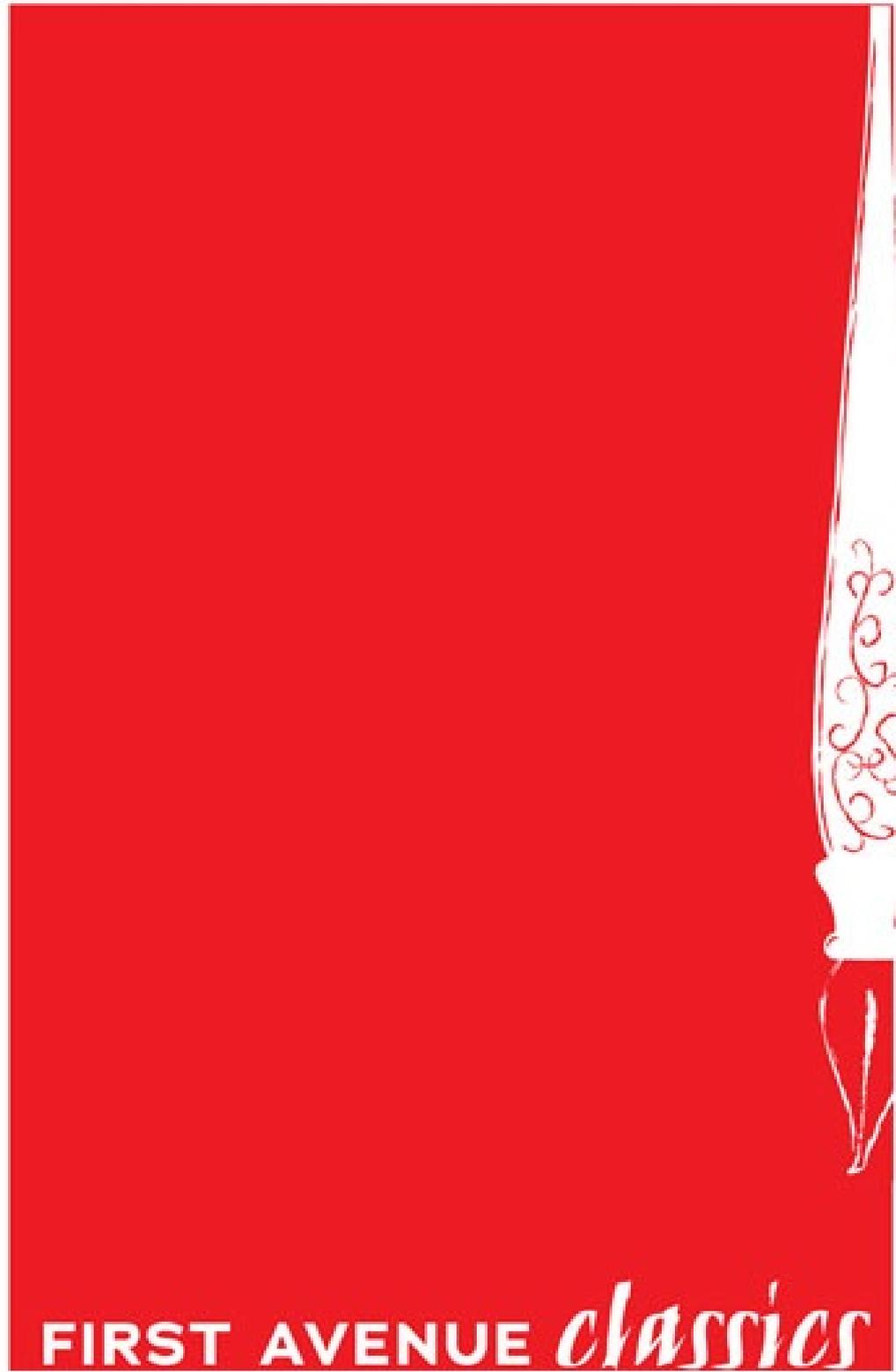


SHAKESPEARE



FIRST AVENUE *classics*

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by William Shakespeare

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Rosalind, Orlando, and other members of the royal court escape their problems by running away to the forest. A tale of tangled love plots, this unabridged version of the pastoral comedy by English playwright William Shakespeare was first published in 1623; the text is in the public domain. This First Avenue Classics™ version has placed the text into a new design to make this book appealing and easier to read in both digital and paperback formats. The eBook contains a hyperlinked Table of Contents for navigation. The First Avenue Classics™ version is unabridged and has been proofed for formatting errors. Errors and alternate spellings found in the original book have not been changed.

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EPILOGUE

persons represented

DUKE, living in exile

FREDERICK, Brother to the Duke, and Usurper of his Dominions

AMIENS, Lord attending on the Duke in his Banishment

JAQUES, Lord attending on the Duke in his Banishment

LE BEAU, a Courtier attending upon Frederick

CHARLES, his Wrestler

OLIVER, Son of Sir Rowland de Bois

JAQUES, Son of Sir Rowland de Bois

ORLANDO, Son of Sir Rowland de Bois

ADAM, Servant to Oliver

DENNIS, Servant to Oliver

TOUCHSTONE, a Clown

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT, a Vicar

CORIN, Shepherd

SILVIUS, Shepherd

WILLIAM, a Country Fellow, in love with Audrey

A person representing HYMEN

ROSALIND, Daughter to the banished Duke

CELIA, Daughter to Frederick

PHEBE, a Shepherdess

AUDREY, a Country Wench

Lords belonging to the two Dukes; Pages, Foresters, and other Attendants.

The scene lies first near Oliver's house; afterwards partly in the Usurper's court and partly in the Forest of Arden.

ACT 1

act 1, scene 1. an ORCHARD near OLIVER'S house

[Enter Orlando and Adam.]

ORLANDO

As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion,—bequeathed me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and, as thou say'st, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well: and there begins my sadness. My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit: for my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept: for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders dearly hired; but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for the which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me, his countenance seems to take from me: he lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude; I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

ADAM

Yonder comes my master, your brother.

ORLANDO

Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me up.

[Adam retires.]

[Enter Oliver.]

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? What prodigal portion have I spent that I should come to such penury?

OLIVER

Know you where you are, sir?

ORLANDO

O, sir, very well: here in your orchard.

OLIVER

Know you before whom, sir?

ORLANDO

Ay, 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. The courtesy of nations allows you my better in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away my blood, were there twenty brothers betwixt us: I have as much of my father in me as you, albeit; I confess, your coming before me is nearer to his reverence.

OLIVER

What, boy!

ORLANDO

Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

OLIVER

Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

ORLANDO

I am no villain: I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois: 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: thou has railed on thyself.

ADAM

[Coming forward] Sweet masters, be patient; for your father's remembrance, be at accord.

OLIVER

Let me go, I say.

ORLANDO

I will not, till I please: you shall hear me. My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities: the spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore, allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

OLIVER

And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in; I will not long be troubled with you: you shall have some part of your will: I pray you leave me.

ORLANDO

I no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

OLIVER

Get you with him, you old dog.

ADAM

Is “old dog” my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service.—God be with my old master! he would not have spoke such a word.

[Exeunt Orlando and Adam.]

OLIVER

Is it even so? begin you to grow upon me? I will physic your rankness, and yet give no thousand crowns neither. Holla, Dennis!

[Enter Dennis.]

DENNIS

Calls your worship?

OLIVER

Was not Charles, the duke’s wrestler, here to speak with me?

DENNIS

So please you, he is here at the door and importunes access to you.

OLIVER

Call him in.

[Exit Dennis.]

—'Twill be a good way; and to-morrow the wrestling is.

[Enter Charles.]

CHARLES

Good morrow to your worship.

OLIVER

Good Monsieur Charles!—what's the new news at the new court?

CHARLES

There's no news at the court, sir, but the old news; that is, the old duke is banished by his younger brother the new duke; and three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile with him, whose lands and revenues enrich the new duke; therefore he gives them good leave to wander.

OLIVER

Can you tell if Rosalind, the duke's daughter, be banished with her father?

CHARLES

O, no; for the duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her,—being ever from their cradles bred together,—that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her. She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his own daughter; and never two ladies loved as they do.

OLIVER

Where will the old duke live?

CHARLES

They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England: they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.

OLIVER

What, you wrestle to-morrow before the new duke?

CHARLES

Marry, do I, sir; and I came to acquaint you with a matter. I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother, Orlando, hath a disposition to come in disguis'd against me to try a fall. To-morrow, sir, I wrestle for my credit; and he that escapes me without some broken limb shall acquit him well. Your brother is but young and tender; and, for your love, I would be loath to foil him, as I must, for my own honour, if he come in: therefore, out of my love to you, I came hither to acquaint you withal; that either you might stay him from his intendment, or brook such disgrace well as he shall run into; in that it is

thing of his own search, and altogether against my will.

OLIVER

Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein, and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it; but he is resolute. I'll tell thee, Charles, it is the stubbornest young fellow of France; full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man's good parts, a secret and villainous contriver against me his natural brother: therefore use thy discretion: I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his finger. And thou wert best look to't; for if thou dost him any slight disgrace, or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will practise against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device, and never leave thee till he hath ta'en thy life by some indirect means or other: for, I assure thee, and almost with tears I speak it, there is not one so young and so villainous this day living. I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale and wonder.

CHARLES

I am heartily glad I came hither to you. If he come to-morrow I'll give him his payment. If ever he go alone again I'll never wrestle for prize more: and so, God keep your worship!

[Exit.]

OLIVER

Farewell, good Charles.—Now will I stir this gamester: I hope I shall see an end of him: for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle; never schooled and yet learned; full w noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised: but it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all: nothing remains but that I kindle the boy thither, which now I'll go about.

[Exit.]

act 1, scene 2.
a Lawn before the duke's palace

[Enter Rosalind and Celia.]

CELIA

I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

ROSALIND

Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

CELIA

Herein I see thou lov'st me not with the full weight that I love thee; if my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine; so wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee.

ROSALIND

Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

CELIA

You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have; and, truly, when he dies thou shalt be his heir: for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection: by mine honour, I will; and when I break that oath, let me turn monster; therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

ROSALIND

From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports: let me see; what think you of falling in love?

CELIA

Marry, I pr'ythee, do, to make sport withal: but love no man in good earnest, nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honour come off again.

ROSALIND

What shall be our sport, then?

CELIA

Let us sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed equally.

ROSALIND

I would we could do so; for her benefits are mightily misplaced: and the bountiful blind woman doth most mistake in her gifts to women.

CELIA

'Tis true; for those that she makes fair she scarce makes honest; and those that she makes honest she makes very ill-favouredly.

ROSALIND

Nay; now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's: Fortune reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of Nature.

CELIA

No; when Nature hath made a fair creature, may she not by Fortune fall into the fire?—Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the argument?

[Enter Touchstone.]

ROSALIND

Indeed, there is Fortune too hard for Nature, when Fortune makes Nature's natural the cutter-off of Nature's wit.

CELIA

Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither, but Nature's, who perceiveth our natural wits too dull to reason of such goddesses, and hath sent this natural for our whetstone: for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits.—How now, wit? whither wander you?

TOUCHSTONE

Mistress, you must come away to your father.

CELIA

Were you made the messenger?

TOUCHSTONE

No, by mine honour; but I was bid to come for you.

ROSALIND

Where learned you that oath, fool?

TOUCHSTONE

Of a certain knight that swore by his honour they were good pancakes, and swore by his honour the mustard was naught: now, I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good: and yet was not the knight forsworn.

CELIA

How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

ROSALIND

Ay, marry; now unmuzzle your wisdom.

TOUCHSTONE

Stand you both forth now: stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

CELIA

By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

TOUCHSTONE

By my knavery, if I had it, then I were: but if you swear by that that is not, you are not forsworn: no more was this knight, swearing by his honour, for he never had any; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancakes or that mustard.

CELIA

Pr'ythee, who is't that thou mean'st?

TOUCHSTONE

One that old Frederick, your father, loves.

CELIA

My father's love is enough to honour him enough: speak no more of him: you'll be whipp'd for taxation one of these days.

TOUCHSTONE

The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.

CELIA

By my troth, thou sayest true: for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show. Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

ROSALIND

With his mouth full of news.

CELIA

Which he will put on us as pigeons feed their young.

ROSALIND

Then shall we be news-crammed.

CELIA

All the better; we shall be the more marketable.

[Enter Le Beau.]

Bon jour, Monsieur Le Beau. What's the news?

LE BEAU

Fair princess, you have lost much good sport.

CELIA

Sport! of what colour?

LE BEAU

What colour, madam? How shall I answer you?

ROSALIND

As wit and fortune will.

TOUCHSTONE

Or as the destinies decrees.

CELIA

Well said: that was laid on with a trowel.

TOUCHSTONE

Nay, if I keep not my rank,—

ROSALIND

Thou lovest thy old smell.

LE BEAU

You amaze me, ladies; I would have told you of good wrestling, which you have lost the sight of.

ROSALIND

Yet tell us the manner of the wrestling.

LE BEAU

I will tell you the beginning, and, if it please your ladyships, you may see the end; for the best is yet to do; and here, where you are, they are coming to perform it.

CELIA

Well,—the beginning, that is dead and buried.

LE BEAU

There comes an old man and his three sons,—

CELIA

I could match this beginning with an old tale.

LE BEAU

Three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence, with bills on their necks,—

ROSALIND

“Be it known unto all men by these presents,”—

LE BEAU

The eldest of the three wrestled with Charles, the duke's wrestler; which Charles in a moment threw him, and broke three of his ribs, that there is little hope of life in him: so he served the second, and so the third. Yonder they lie; the poor old man, their father, making such pitiful dole over them that all the beholders take his part with weeping.

ROSALIND

Alas!

TOUCHSTONE

But what is the sport, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?

LE BEAU

Why, this that I speak of.

TOUCHSTONE

Thus men may grow wiser every day! It is the first time that ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies.

CELIA

Or I, I promise thee.

ROSALIND

But is there any else longs to see this broken music in his sides? is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking?— Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?

LE BEAU

You must, if you stay here: for here is the place appointed for the wrestling, and they are ready to perform it.

CELIA

Yonder, sure, they are coming: let us now stay and see it.

[Flourish. Enter Duke Frederick, Lords, Orlando, Charles, and Attendants.]

DUKE FREDERICK

Come on; since the youth will not be entreated, his own peril on his forwardness.

ROSALIND

Is yonder the man?

LE BEAU

Even he, madam.

CELIA

Alas, he is too young: yet he looks successfully.

DUKE FREDERICK

How now, daughter and cousin? are you crept hither to see the wrestling?

ROSALIND

Ay, my liege; so please you give us leave.

DUKE FREDERICK

You will take little delight in it, I can tell you, there is such odds in the men. In pity of the challenger's youth I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated. Speak to him, ladies; see if you can move him.

CELIA

Call him hither, good Monsieur Le Beau.

DUKE FREDERICK

Do so; I'll not be by.

[Duke Frederick goes apart.]

LE BEAU

Monsieur the challenger, the princesses call for you.

ORLANDO

I attend them with all respect and duty.

ROSALIND

Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?

ORLANDO

No, fair princess; he is the general challenger: I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.

CELIA

Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength: if you saw yourself with your eyes, or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety and give over this attempt.

ROSALIND

Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be misprised: we will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

ORLANDO

I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts: wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein if I be foiled there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so: I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me: the world no

injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.

ROSALIND

The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

CELIA

And mine to eke out hers.

ROSALIND

Fare you well. Pray heaven, I be deceived in you!

CELIA

Your heart's desires be with you.

CHARLES

Come, where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?

ORLANDO

Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more modest working.

DUKE FREDERICK

You shall try but one fall.

CHARLES

No; I warrant your grace, you shall not entreat him to a second, that have so mightily persuaded him from a first.

ORLANDO

You mean to mock me after; you should not have mocked me before; but come your ways.

ROSALIND

Now, Hercules be thy speed, young man!

CELIA

I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg.

[Charles and Orlando wrestle.]

ROSALIND

O excellent young man!

CELIA

If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down.

[Charles is thrown. Shout.]

DUKE FREDERICK

No more, no more.

ORLANDO

Yes, I beseech your grace; I am not yet well breathed.

DUKE FREDERICK

How dost thou, Charles?

LE BEAU

He cannot speak, my lord.

DUKE FREDERICK

Bear him away.

[Charles is borne out.]

What is thy name, young man?

ORLANDO

Orlando, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois.

DUKE FREDERICK

I would thou hadst been son to some man else.

The world esteem'd thy father honourable,

But I did find him still mine enemy:

Thou shouldst have better pleas'd me with this deed

Hadst thou descended from another house.

But fare thee well; thou art a gallant youth;

I would thou hadst told me of another father.

[Exeunt Duke Frederick, Train, and LeBeau.]

CELIA

Were I my father, coz, would I do this?

ORLANDO

I am more proud to be Sir Rowland's son,

His youngest son;—and would not change that calling

To be adopted heir to Frederick.

ROSALIND

My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul,

And all the world was of my father's mind:

Had I before known this young man his son,

I should have given him tears unto entreaties

Ere he should thus have ventur'd.

CELIA

Gentle cousin,

Let us go thank him, and encourage him:
My father's rough and envious disposition
Sticks me at heart.—Sir, you have well deserv'd:
If you do keep your promises in love
But justly, as you have exceeded promise,
Your mistress shall be happy.

ROSALIND

Gentleman,

[Giving him a chain from her neck.]

Wear this for me; one out of suits with fortune,
That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.—
Shall we go, coz?

CELIA

Ay.—Fare you well, fair gentleman.

ORLANDO

Can I not say, I thank you? My better parts
Are all thrown down; and that which here stands up
Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.

ROSALIND

He calls us back: my pride fell with my fortunes:
I'll ask him what he would.—Did you call, sir?—
Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown
More than your enemies.

CELIA

Will you go, coz?

ROSALIND

Have with you.—Fare you well.

[Exeunt Rosalind and Celia.]

ORLANDO

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
I cannot speak to her, yet she urg'd conference.
O poor Orlando! thou art overthrown:
Or Charles, or something weaker, masters thee.

[Re-enter LeBeau.]

LE BEAU

Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you
To leave this place. Albeit you have deserv'd
High commendation, true applause, and love,
Yet such is now the duke's condition,
That he misconstrues all that you have done.
The Duke is humorous; what he is, indeed,
More suits you to conceive than I to speak of.

ORLANDO

I thank you, sir: and pray you tell me this;
Which of the two was daughter of the duke
That here was at the wrestling?

LE BEAU

Neither his daughter, if we judge by manners;
But yet, indeed, the smaller is his daughter:
The other is daughter to the banish'd duke,
And here detain'd by her usurping uncle,
To keep his daughter company; whose loves
Are dearer than the natural bond of sisters.
But I can tell you that of late this duke
Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece,
Grounded upon no other argument
But that the people praise her for her virtues
And pity her for her good father's sake;
And, on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady
Will suddenly break forth.—Sir, fare you well!
Hereafter, in a better world than this,
I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.

ORLANDO

I rest much bounden to you: fare you well!

[Exit Le Beau.]

Thus must I from the smoke into the smother;
From tyrant duke unto a tyrant brother:—
But heavenly Rosalind!

[Exit.]