

AS YOU LIKE IT | FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Shakespeare's language can seem scary, but give it a try! *Go at your own pace, and have fun!*



SHAKESPEARE IN PRISON

DETROIT PUBLIC THEATRE'S
SIGNATURE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

As Rosalind (who is in disguise as a man) hides in the bushes, Phebe (pronounced fee-bee) and Silvius enter. Silvius is desperately in love with Phebe, but she is definitely not into him... and she's really mean about it. Rosalind just can't take it. She pops out and immediately takes Phebe (and Silvius!) to task in this speech...

Keep in mind: *As You Like It* is a comedy!

The Shakespeare

ROSALIND

Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty—
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed—
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it.
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman. 'Tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favor'd children.
'Tis not her glass, but you that flatters her.
But, mistress, know yourself, down on your knees,
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love;
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can, you are not for all markets.
Cry the man mercy, love him, take his offer;
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
So take her to thee, shepherd. Fare you well.

The Translation

ROSALIND

Is your mother a goddess that you would insult a wretched man, and exult over the injury you've caused him, all at the same time? You're not beautiful—really, you're not so pretty that you could go to bed with the lights on—so why must you act so proud and pitiless? Wait a minute, what's going on? Why are you looking at me like that? I don't see anything in you but nature's usual handiwork.—Oh, for God's sake, I think she also wants me to fall in love with her. No, proud woman, don't hope for that. Not even your black eyebrows, your silky black hair, your beady black eyeballs, or your yellowish-white complexion can make me worship you. You foolish shepherd: why are you following her, raining tears and puffing hot air like a foggy south wind? You are a thousand times better than she. It's fools like you who, marrying badly, fill the world with ugly children. It's not her mirror but you who insists she's beautiful. The image of herself that she gets from you is better than her actual features. But mistress, know yourself. Get down on your knees and thank heaven for sending you such a good man. I'm telling you, as a friend, that you should sell while the market's good—you're not going to have many more buyers. Ask this man's forgiveness, love him, and accept his offer. You're already ugly, don't make matters worse by being scornful, too. So take her, shepherd, and God bless you.

Let's break this speech down into what are called beats in acting lingo. A beat is a small unit of text (usually one complete thought) where a character uses a specific tactic to try to achieve their goal (also called an objective). The beat ends when the character either gets what they want (or not) and switches to a new tactic or objective—or both!

As you explore the text, ask these questions. And don't worry about getting it "right."

1. What is Rosalind's overall objective when she begins speaking? Does she get what she wants by the end of the speech? If not, what's her new objective?
2. Where are the beat changes? A good way to mark those is to write a slash at the end of each one. (More on beat changes when you flip the page!)
3. What is the tactic she uses in each beat? You may find more than one possibility!
4. In which beats does she win? When does she lose? When and how does she change it up?

If this seems a little overwhelming, fear not—we'll hash this out a bit on the other side of this page!





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You can respond to these in any way you choose:

Write

ACT IT OUT

Talk about it

Draw

THINK ABOUT IT
... up to you!

Spoiler alert: Whatever Rosalind's tactics are, her approach totally backfires. Phebe immediately develops a huge crush on "Ganymede" (Rosalind's alter ego—remember, she's disguised as a man). This is definitely not what Silvius wants.

To be continued in the next activity pack...

Something we love about Shakespeare is that he leaves SO much room for interpretation! That includes figuring out where the beats change. Look at these lines and write a slash where you think there's a shift:

*Why, what means this? why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!*

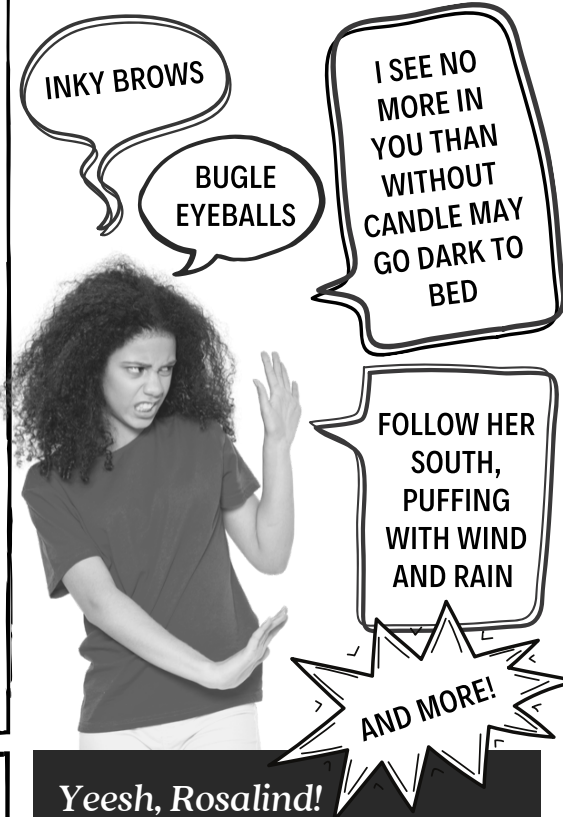
Did you put a slash here?

If you *did*, try saying the speech (or the first part of it, anyway) *without* that beat change (so "I see no more in you..." is part of the same idea as "Why do you look on me?")

If you *didn't*, try saying the speech *with* that beat change. (so "I see no more in you..." is part of a new idea; you've moved on from "Why do you look on me?")

What was different for you when you switched up? Which version felt more natural to you? Which did you like better? Why is that?

Rosalind uses a lot of poetic images in this speech—although they're not sweet, like Romeo's were!



Yeesh, Rosalind!

Pick one or two (or more) images and turn them into your own thing. You can draw them, rap about them, turn them into a poem or a song... whatever makes sense to you!

Rosalind is very... detailed when she describes Phebe's appearance. Do you think she's being accurate, or is she exaggerating? What do you think Phebe actually looks like?

If someone described you this way—to your face!—how do you think you would react?