

CLIFFS NOTES on

SHAKESPEARE'S AS YOU LIKE IT

A NOTE TO THE READER

These Notes present a clear discussion of the action and thought of the work under consideration and a concise interpretation of its artistic merits and its significance.

They are intended as a supplementary aid to serious students, freeing them from interminable and distracting note-taking in class. Students may then listen intelligently to what the instructor is saying, and to the class discussion, making selective notes, secure in the knowledge that they have a basic understanding of the work. The Notes are also helpful in preparing for an examination, eliminating the burden of trying to reread the full text under pressure and sorting through class notes to find that which is of central importance.

THESE NOTES ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TEXT ITSELF OR FOR THE CLASSROOM DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT, AND STUDENTS WHO ATTEMPT TO USE THEM IN THIS WAY ARE DENYING THEMSELVES THE VERY EDUCATION THAT THEY ARE PRESUMABLY GIVING THEIR MOST VITAL YEARS TO ACHIEVE.

These critical evaluations have been prepared by experts who have had many years of experience in teaching the works or who have special knowledge of the texts. They are not, however, incontrovertible. No literary judgments are. There are many interpretations of any great work of literature, and even conflicting views have value for students and teachers, since the aim is not for students to accept unquestionably any one interpretation, but to make their own. The goal of education is not the unquestioning acceptance of any single interpretation, but the development of an individual's critical abilities.

The experience of millions of students over many years has shown that Notes such as these are a valuable educational tool and, properly used, can contribute materially to the great end of literature (to which, by the way, the teaching of literature is itself only a subsidiary)—that is, to the heightening of perception and awareness, the extending of sympathy, and the attainment of maturity by living, in Socrates' famous phrase, "the examined life."

Absalom, Absalom!
 The Aeneid
 Agamemnon
 Alice in Wonderland
 All the King's Men
 All Quiet on the
 Western Front
 All's Well That Ends
 Well & Merry
 Wives of Windsor
 The American
 American Tragedy
 Animal Farm
 Anna Karenina
 Antony and Cleopatra
 Aristotle's Ethics
 Arrowsmith
 As I Lay Dying
 As You Like It
 The Assistant
 Auto. of Ben Franklin
 Auto. of Malcolm X
 Awakening
 Babbitt
 The Bear
 The Bell Jar
 Beowulf
 Billy Budd & Typee
 Black Boy
 Black Like Me
 Bleak House
 Brave New World
 Brothers Karamazov
 Cell of the Wild &
 White Fang
 Candide
 Canterbury Tales
 Catch-22
 Catcher in the Rye
 The Color Purple
 Comedy of Errors,
 Love's Labour's
 Lost & Two
 Gentlemen of
 Verona
 Connecticut Yankee
 Cartesianism & Timon of
 Athens
 The Count of Monte
 Cristo
 Crime and Punishment
 The Crucible
 Cry, the Beloved
 Country
 Cymbeline & Pericles
 Cyrano de Bergerac
 Daisy Miller & Turn of
 the Screw
 David Copperfield
 Death of a Salesman
 The Deerslayer
 Demian
 Diary of Anne Frank
 Divine Comedy—I
 Inferno

D.C.—II. Purgatorio
 D.C.—III. Paradiso
 Doctor Faustus
 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
 Don Juan
 Don Quixote
 Dracula
 Dune & Other Works
 Emerson's Essays
 Emily Dickinson:
 Selected Poems
 Emma
 Ethan Frome
 Euripides' Electra &
 Medea
 The Faerie Queene
 Far from the Madding
 Crowd
 A Farewell to Arms
 Fathers and Sons
 Faust Pt. 1 & Pt. 2
 The Federalist
 For Whom the Bell
 Tolls
 Frankenstein
 The French Lt.'s
 Woman
 Giants in the Earth
 Glass Menagerie &
 Streetcar
 Go Down, Moses
 The Good Earth
 Grapes of Wrath
 Great Expectations
 Great Gatsby
 Gulliver's Travels
 Hamlet
 Hard Times
 Heart of Darkness &
 Secret Sharer
 Henry IV Part 1
 Henry IV Part 2
 Henry V
 Henry VI Parts 1, 2, 3
 Henry VIII
 House of the Seven
 Gables
 Huckleberry Finn
 Ibsen's Plays I, A
 Doll's House &
 Hedda Gabler
 Ibsen's Plays II,
 Ghosts, An Enemy
 of the People &
 The Wild Duck
 The Idiot
 Idylls of the King
 The Iliad
 Invisible Man
 Ivanhoe
 Jane Eyre
 Joseph Andrews
 Jude the Obscure
 Julius Caesar
 The Jungle

Kafka's Short Stories
 Keats & Shelley
 King Lear
 Last of the Mohicans
 Le Morte D'Arthur
 Leaves of Grass
 Les Miserables
 Light in August
 Lord of the Flies
 Lord of the Rings
 Lord Jim
 Lost Horizon
 Lysistrata & Other
 Comedies
 Macbeth
 Madame Bovary
 Main Street
 Manchild in the
 Promised Land
 Mayor of Casterbridge
 Measure for Measure
 Merchant of Venice
 Middlemarch
 Midsummer Night's
 Dream
 Mill on the Floss
 Miss Lonelyhearts &
 Day of the Locust
 Moby Dick
 Moll Flanders
 Mrs. Dalloway
 Much Ado About
 Nothing
 My Antonia
 Mythology
 Native Son
 New Testament
 Nineteen Eighty-four
 No Exit & The Flies
 Notes from
 Underground
 O'Connor's Short
 Stories
 The Odyssey
 Oedipus Trilogy
 Of Human Bondage
 Of Mice and Men
 Old Man and the Sea
 Old Testament
 Oliver Twist
 One Day in the Life of
 Ivan Denisovich
 One Flew Over the
 Cuckoo's Nest
 100 Years of Solitude
 O'Neill's Plays
 Othello
 Our Town
 Ox-Bow Incident
 Paradise Lost
 A Passage to India
 The Pearl
 Pickwick Papers
 Pilgrim's Progress
 The Plague

Plato's Euthyphro,
 Apology, Crito &
 Phaedo
 Plato's The Republic
 Poe's Short Stories
 Portrait of the Artist
 as a Young Man
 Portrait of a Lady
 Power and the Glory
 The Prelude
 Pride and Prejudice
 The Prince
 The Prince and the
 Pauper
 The Red and the
 Black
 Red Badge of Courage
 Red Pony
 Return of the Native
 Richard II
 Richard III
 Rise of Silas Lapham
 Robinson Crusoe
 Romeo and Juliet
 Scarlet Letter
 A Separate Peace
 Shakespeare's
 Sonnets
 Shane
 Shaw's Major Barbara
 & Saint Joan
 Shaw's Man and
 Superman & Caesar
 and Cleopatra
 Shaw's Pygmalion &
 Arms and the Man
 Silas Marner
 Sir Gawain and the
 Green Knight
 Sister Carrie
 Sons and Lovers
 The Sound and the
 Fury
 Steppenwolf &
 Siddhartha
 The Stranger
 The Sun Also Rises
 T. S. Eliot's Major
 Poems and Plays
 Tale of Two Cities
 Taming of the Shrew
 Tartuffe, Misanthrope
 & Bourgeois
 Gentleman
 Tempest
 Tender Is the Night
 Tess of the
 D'Urbervilles
 Titus Andronicus &
 King John
 To Kill a Mockingbird
 Tom Jones
 Tom Sawyer

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AS YOU LIKE IT

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- *Brief Synopsis of the Play*
- *List of Characters*
- *Summaries and Commentaries*
- *Character Analyses*
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- *Questions for Review*
- *Selected Bibliography*

by

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AS YOU LIKE IT NOTES

LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Many books have assembled facts, reasonable suppositions, traditions, and speculations concerning the life and career of William Shakespeare. Taken as a whole, these materials give a rather comprehensive picture of England's foremost dramatic poet. Tradition and sober supposition are not necessarily false because they lack proved bases for their existence. It is important, however, that persons interested in Shakespeare should distinguish between *facts* and *beliefs* about his life.

From one point of view, modern scholars are fortunate to know as much as they do about a man of middle-class origin who left a small English country town and embarked on a professional career in sixteenth-century London. From another point of view, they know surprisingly little about the writer who has continued to influence the English language and its drama and poetry for more than three hundred years. Sparse and scattered as these facts of his life are, they are sufficient to prove that a man from Stratford by the name of William Shakespeare wrote the major portion of the thirty-seven plays which scholars ascribe to him. The concise review which follows will concern itself with some of these records.

No one knows the exact date of William Shakespeare's birth. His baptism occurred on Wednesday, April 26, 1564. His father was John Shakespeare, tanner, glover, dealer in grain, and town official of Stratford; his mother, Mary, was the daughter of Robert Arden, a prosperous gentleman-farmer. The Shakespeares lived on Henley Street.

Under a bond dated November 28, 1582, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway entered into a marriage contract. The baptism of their eldest child, Susanna, took place in Stratford in May, 1583. One year and nine months later their twins, Hamnet and Judith, were christened in the same church. The parents named them for the poet's friends Hamnet and Judith Sadler.

Early in 1596, William Shakespeare, in his father's name, applied to the College of Heralds for a coat of arms. Although positive proof is lacking, there is reason to believe that the Heralds granted this request, for in 1599 Shakespeare again made application for the right to quarter his coat of arms with that of his mother. Entitled to her father's coat of arms, Mary had lost this privilege when she married John Shakespeare before he held the official status of gentleman.

In May of 1597, Shakespeare purchased New Place, the outstanding residential property in Stratford at that time. Since John Shakespeare had suffered financial reverses prior to this date, William must have achieved success for himself.

Court records show that in 1601 or 1602, William Shakespeare began rooming in the household of Christopher Mountjoy in London. Subsequent disputes between Shakespeare's landlord, Mountjoy, and his son-in-law, Stephen Belott, over Stephen's wedding settlement led to a series of legal actions, and in 1612 the court scribe recorded Shakespeare's deposition of testimony relating to the case.

In July, 1605, William Shakespeare paid four hundred and forty pounds for the lease of a large portion of the tithes on certain real estate in and near Stratford. This was an arrangement whereby Shakespeare purchased half the annual tithes, or taxes, on certain agricultural products from sections of land in and near Stratford. In addition to receiving approximately ten percent income on his investment, he almost doubled his capital. This was possibly the most important and successful investment of his lifetime, and it paid a steady income for many years.

Shakespeare is next mentioned when John Combe, a resident of Stratford, died on July 12, 1614. To his friend, Combe bequeathed the sum of five pounds. These records and similar ones are important, not because of their economic significance but because they prove the existence of a William Shakespeare in Stratford and in London during this period.

On March 25, 1616, William Shakespeare revised his last will and testament. He died on April 23 of the same year. His body lies within the chancel and before the altar of the Stratford church. A rather wry inscription is carved upon his tombstone:

Good Friend, for Jesus' sake, forbear
 To dig the dust enclosed here;
 Blest be the man that spares these stones
 And curst be he that moves my bones.

The last direct descendant of William Shakespeare was his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall, who died in 1670.

These are the most outstanding facts about Shakespeare the man, as apart from those about the dramatist and poet. Such pieces of information, scattered from 1564 through 1616, declare the existence of such a person, not as a writer or actor, but as a private citizen. It is illogical to think that anyone would or could have fabricated these details for the purpose of deceiving later generations.

In similar fashion, the evidence establishing William Shakespeare as the foremost playwright of his day is positive and persuasive. Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, in which he attacked Shakespeare, a mere actor, for presuming to write plays in competition with Greene and his fellow playwrights, was entered in the *Stationers' Register* on September 20, 1592. In 1594 Shakespeare acted before Queen Elizabeth, and in 1594 and 1595 his name appeared as one of the shareholders of the Lord Chamberlain's Company. Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598) called Shakespeare "mellifluous and hony-tongued" and compared his comedies and tragedies with those of Plautus and Seneca in excellence.

Shakespeare's continued association with Burbage's company is equally definite. His name appears as one of the owners of the Globe in 1599. On May 19, 1603, he and his fellow actors received a patent from James I designating them as the King's Men and making them Grooms of the Chamber. Late in 1608 or early in 1609, Shakespeare and his colleagues purchased the Blackfriars Theatre and began using it as their winter location when weather made production at the Globe inconvenient.

Other specific allusions to Shakespeare, to his acting and his writing, occur in numerous places. Put together, they form irrefutable testimony that William Shakespeare of Stratford and London was the leader among Elizabethan playwrights.

One of the most impressive of all proofs of Shakespeare's authorship of his plays is the First Folio of 1623, with the dedicatory verse which appeared in it. John Heminge and Henry Condell, members of Shakespeare's own company, stated that they collected and issued the plays as a memorial to their fellow actor. Many contemporary poets contributed eulogies to Shakespeare; one of the best known of these poems is by Ben Jonson, a fellow actor and later, a friendly rival. Jonson also criticized Shakespeare's dramatic work in *Timber: or, Discoveries* (1641).

Certainly there are many things about Shakespeare's genius and career which the most diligent scholars do not know and cannot explain, but the facts which do exist are sufficient to establish Shakespeare's identity as a man and his authorship of the thirty-seven plays which reputable critics acknowledge to be his.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Orlando, the youngest son of the now deceased Sir Roland de Boys, complains to Adam, the old family retainer, that his eldest brother, Oliver, has kept his inheritance from him—that is, Oliver has neglected training Orlando to be a proper gentleman. Oliver arrives on the scene, and a bitter quarrel takes place. Adam parts the fighting brothers, and Oliver coldly promises to give Orlando his due. Learning that Orlando intends to challenge Duke Frederick's champion wrestler, a brute of a man called Charles, Oliver makes plans to have his brother killed in the ring. He convinces the slow-witted Charles that Orlando is plotting against him and that Orlando should be killed.

At the match the next day, Duke Frederick, his daughter Celia, and his niece, Rosalind, watch Charles and Orlando wrestle. Charles has seriously injured his first three opponents, but in the match with Orlando, the young man's great speed and agility defeat the duke's champion. At first, Frederick is very cordial to Orlando, but when he learns the youth's identity, he becomes furious and leaves. The reason for this is that Orlando's dead father, Sir Roland de Boys, had at one time been Frederick's bitter enemy.

After Frederick stalks out, Celia and Rosalind congratulate Orlando, and Rosalind makes it clear that she finds him most attrac-

tive. Orlando returns her feelings, but he is so tongue-tied with embarrassment that he can say nothing.

At the ducal palace, we discover that Celia and her cousin Rosalind are as close as sisters; Rosalind is the daughter of the rightful duke, Duke Senior, whose throne has been usurped by his brother, Frederick. Frederick has banished Duke Senior, along with a band of his faithful followers, to the Forest of Arden to live the life of simple foresters. Until now, it is only the strong bond between Rosalind and Celia that prevents Duke Frederick from sending Rosalind away to share her father's exile. But suddenly, Frederick storms into the palace, accuses Rosalind of plotting against him, and despite Celia's pleas for her cousin, he banishes Rosalind. After her father leaves, Celia decides to go into exile with her cousin, and the girls set out for the Forest of Arden—Rosalind disguised as a young man, "Ganymede," and Celia disguised as a young country lass, "Aliena." Touchstone, Frederick's jester, accompanies them.

Meanwhile, Orlando returns home and is warned by the faithful Adam that Oliver is plotting to kill him. Together, they too decide to set out for the Forest of Arden, hoping that they will find safety there.

When his daughter Celia is missed, Frederick sends his men out to find Orlando. When he is informed of Orlando's flight to the Forest of Arden, Frederick assumes that Orlando is responsible for Celia's disappearance, and in a rage he sends for Oliver and commands him to find Orlando or else forfeit his entire estate to Frederick.

In the forest, Orlando and Adam join Rosalind's exiled father and his men, while Rosalind and Celia, still in disguise, purchase a little cottage and a small herd of sheep and settle down to a peaceful, pastoral existence. One day, however, Rosalind finds that the trees in the forest are all covered with sheets of poetry, dedicated to her. The author of these poems, of course, is Orlando. So, still pretending to be the young man Ganymede, Rosalind meets Orlando, who is in the throes of love-sickness for having apparently lost Rosalind. Ganymede offers to cure Orlando of his love-sickness by pretending to be his lady-love, Rosalind. Orlando, she says, should woo Ganymede as though "he" were Rosalind. In turn, Ganymede will do "his best" to act as moody and capricious as a girl might just do and, eventually, Orlando will weary of all the coy teasing and forget all about love—and Rosalind. Orlando agrees to try the plan.

Rosalind, meanwhile, continues to assume the guise of Ganymede and becomes accidentally involved in yet another complication: Silvius, a young shepherd, falls in love with Phebe, a hard-hearted shepherdess, but Phebe rejects Silvius's attentions and falls in love with the young, good-looking Ganymede.

In the midst of all this confusion, Oliver arrives in the Forest of Arden. He tells Ganymede of a near escape he has just had with death. His brother, Orlando, he says, saved him from being poisoned by a deadly snake as he slept, and later, Orlando killed a lioness which was ready to pounce on Oliver. Oliver then tells Ganymede that he has been sent to this part of the forest to seek out a young man known as Ganymede and tell him that Orlando cannot keep his appointment with him. And there is more news: while saving Oliver's life, Orlando was wounded. Hearing this, Ganymede swoons.

Later, in another part of the forest, Oliver and Celia meet and fall in love at first sight, and the jester, Touchstone, falls in love with a homely, simple-minded young woman named Audrey, who tends a herd of goats. Touchstone chases off Audrey's suitor, a lout named William, and although he realizes that he will never instill in Audrey any understanding of, or love for, such things as poetry, he still feels that he must have her.

Duke Frederick, meanwhile, is alarmed by the daily exodus of so many of the best men of his court to the alliance which is growing in the Forest of Arden; he therefore decides to journey to the forest himself and put a stop to all this business. At the forest's edge, however, he meets an old religious hermit and is miraculously converted.

At this point, Rosalind, still disguised as Ganymede, promises to solve the problems of everyone by magic. Shedding her male attire in private, she suddenly appears as herself, and the play comes to a swift close as she and Orlando, Oliver and Celia, and Silvius and Phebe are married. Rosalind's father, the rightful duke, is joyous at finding his daughter again and is returned to his ducal status. Frederick's conversion is so complete that he renounces the world. At the end of the play, Rosalind comes forward and addresses the audience in a short but charming epilogue. In particular, she talks to all the lovers in the audience and wishes them well.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Orlando de Boys

This young Englishman is noble and pure of heart. His constant concern and care for Adam, the old family servant, immediately makes the audience esteem him. When he learns that his brother Oliver is planning to kill him, he leaves home and goes to the Forest of Arden with old Adam. In the forest, he attaches love poems addressed to Rosalind all over the trees. Finally, he and Rosalind are united and wed.

Oliver de Boys

He is supposed to teach his younger brother Orlando to be a gentleman, but he does not do so; he is a treacherous youth and tries to have Orlando killed. Orlando, however, saves him from being killed by a deadly snake and, later, from a fierce lioness and, finally the two brothers are reconciled. Oliver eventually falls in love with Celia.

Jaques de Boys

Like Oliver and Orlando, he is one of the sons of the late Sir Roland de Boys. He is favored by Oliver over Orlando, and he is sent away to school to learn how to be a proper gentleman. At the end of the play, he appears onstage and announces that the corrupt Duke Frederick has been converted to a life of goodness by an old hermit.

Duke Frederick

The "villain" of this comedy, he banishes his elder brother and eventually he also exiles his brother's daughter, Rosalind, from the ducal palace. Just before the play ends, he is converted by a religious hermit and, henceforward, he chooses to lead a monastic life in the Forest of Arden.

Rosalind

She is the most realistic and sympathetic character in the play. She falls in love with Orlando and shortly thereafter, she is exiled

from the ducal court by Frederick. Accompanied by Celia and Touchstone, she goes to the Forest of Arden disguised as a young man, Ganymede. In the forest, she is wooed by Orlando, who is unaware that she is, in reality, his beloved Rosalind.

Celia

She is Rosalind's cousin and closest friend. When Rosalind is exiled by Celia's father, Celia accompanies Rosalind to the Forest of Arden. Since Celia isn't in love at the time, her practical answers to Rosalind's queries about love help to explore the depth of Rosalind's love for Orlando. Celia goes to the forest disguised as Aliena. Eventually she meets Orlando's brother Oliver and falls in love with him.

Touchstone

The court clown, he accompanies Rosalind and Celia to the Forest of Arden. There he falls in love with Audrey, a country woman. Touchstone is one of Shakespeare's greatest "fools." Yet he is very realistic in his philosophy, and he serves as a norm by which we can view the other characters.

Jaques

He is a man of the world, a free spirit. In his travels, he has affected Continental mannerisms of speech and dress, and he believes that his ideas are terribly profound when actually they are very shallow and very generalized. Jaques is satirized by almost everyone with whom he holds "deep discussions."

Duke Senior

His ducal rights are usurped, and he is banished to the Forest of Arden by his younger brother, Frederick. Ultimately, his lands and his possessions are returned to him.

Adam

He is the de Boys' old family retainer. He is dismissed by the nasty Oliver, and later he relates to Orlando that Oliver plans to

kill Orlando while he sleeps. He accompanies Orlando to the Forest of Arden.

Corin

In contrast to Silvius, Corin is a real shepherd; he is quite knowledgeable about sheep and their care. His lines serve as a contrast to the courtly wit of Touchstone. He also serves as a contrast to the pastoral lovers, Silvius and Phebe.

Audrey

This simple country woman, along with William and Corin, serves as a contrast to the "town" characters. She has trouble expressing her thoughts and cannot fathom the wit of Touchstone, but their love is so rapturous that eventually they are wed.

Silvius

This shepherd represents the romantic lover in the pastoral genre of Elizabethan literature. He loves the shepherdess Phebe, but she constantly rejects him; despite this fact, however, he pines for her throughout the play and constantly threatens suicide if his love remains unrequited. Unlike Corin, he knows absolutely nothing about sheep.

Phebe

As the pastoral girl who is the beloved of Silvius, she is a stock figure of this type of romance—that is, she rejects the advances of Silvius, while he suffers from the woes of love-sickness. Surprisingly, she falls wildly in love with Ganymede (Rosalind in disguise), yet finally she weds Silvius.

William

He is a stock country character who serves as a contrast to the pastoral lovers, Silvius and Phebe, and also as a contrast to the "town characters."

Amiens

A lord attending Duke Senior; he has a light, delightful role and in this role, he sings some of the most beautiful lyrics that Shakespeare ever wrote.

Le Beau

He represents the man-about-town. He speaks well but knows little, and his speech, his dress, and his mannerisms are all satirized in the play.

Charles

A professional wrestler whom Oliver tells to kill—or at least, maim—Orlando. Ironically, Orlando wins the match.

Sir Oliver Martext

This vicar is not too knowledgeable; he almost joins Touchstone and Audrey in wedlock, but Touchstone is dissuaded at the last moment by Jaques.

Hymen

The god of marriage appears in the final scene of the play to lead the masque and to give dignity to the subsequent marriage ceremony.

Dennis

Servant to Oliver de Boys.

SUMMARIES AND COMMENTARIES

ACT I—SCENE 1

Summary

In the orchard of the house of Oliver de Boys, Orlando de Boys complains to Adam, an old family servant, about how he has been