

AS YOU LIKE IT

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As You Like it by William Shakespeare

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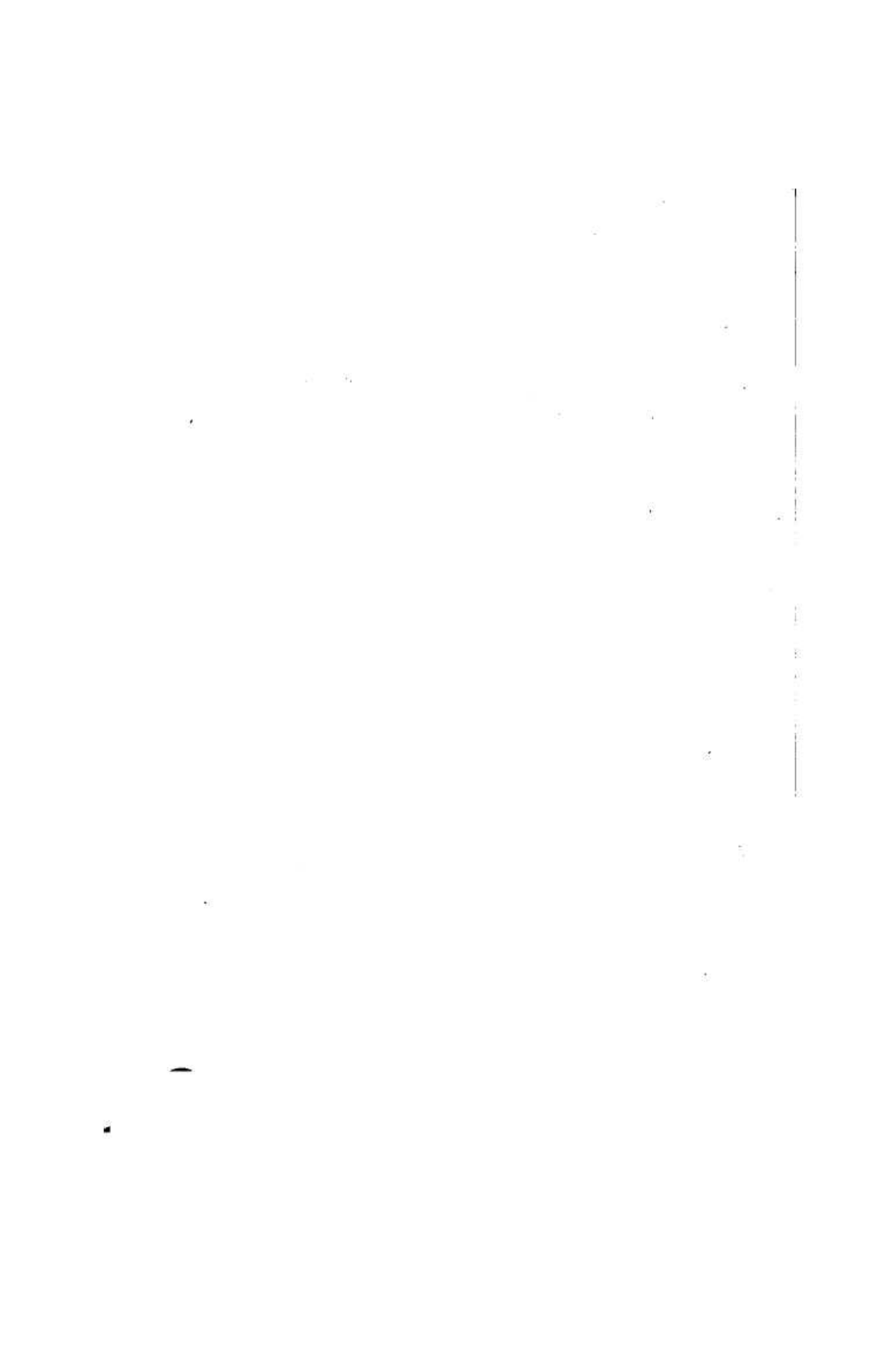
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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AS YOU LIKE IT

THE OLD-SPELLING SHAKESPEARE:
Being the Works of Shakespeare in the
Spelling of the best Quarto and Folio Texts
Edited by F. J. Furnivall and the late
W. G. Boswell-Stone.





Shakespeare, William

AS YOU LIKE IT

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INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

DATE

As You Like It was first entered in the Stationers' Register on August 4, 1600, together with *Much Ado*, *Henry V*, and Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*. To all of them the curious note 'to be stayed' was attached, and it is difficult to understand the reason for this: three of these plays were printed within a few months of this entry, but *As You Like It* made its first appearance in the Folio of 1623. The entry, however, forms a later limit for the composition of *As You Like It*, while an earlier limit is suggested by the fact that it is not mentioned by Meres in his famous enumeration of Shakespeare's works in his *Palladis Tamia* of 1598. There are many passages in the play which have been thought to bear a topical significance: of these the most important is the famous allusion to Marlowe,

'Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might
Whoever loved that loved not at first sight,'

in the fifth scene of the third act.

The second line of this couplet is a quotation from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* which was printed in 1598. This goes to confirm the negative evidence supplied by Meres to fix 1598 as a lower limit. The reference to 'Diana in the fountain' has been thought to have been suggested by the erection of a statue of Diana in West Cheap in 1596: the description, however, is not an accurate one and this allusion cannot be accepted as proved when we consider how very frequently Diana was the figure chosen to ornament fountains in Elizabeth's time. Various editors have seen references to the statute prohibiting the use of

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oaths in plays, and to the penal laws against witchcraft which were drawn up in 1603 and 1605 respectively. These, again, are unsatisfactory, as the passages seem too general to be intended as conveying any distinct reference to particular laws: nor, indeed, would they prove anything as to the later date of the play even if they could be admitted. Nevertheless the *Hero and Leander* quotation, and the omission of mention by Meres together with the entry in the Stationers' Register combine to settle the play's date within well-defined limits.

Turning to internal evidence the same conclusion is arrived at. Leaving aside the songs and the love-rhymes which Orlando indulged in, rhyme is comparatively scarce: double and light endings are by no means unusual: the diction is distinctly that of the second period where thought and expression are balanced. In fact, both the subject and treatment are in some ways akin to *Much Ado about Nothing*, and combined with the similar diction, and the simultaneous entry of the two plays in the Register, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the two plays were written at no great distance of time apart from each other: it is perhaps 'to enquire too curiously' which preceded the other, but either the latter part of 1599 or the beginning of 1600 may be set down as the probable date of composition of *As You Like It*.

THE TEXT

No quarto edition of *As You Like It* exists: as has already been said the issue of one seems to have been contemplated, but the note 'to be stayed'—whatever its reasons may have been—appears to have been effective enough in this instance. The play first appeared in the Folio of 1623, where it is placed between the *Merchant of Venice* and the *Taming of the Shrew*. With practically one exception editors agree in regarding the text as unusually satisfactory in the famous edition of Heminge and Condell: and as this one exception produces nothing of any consequence to support his opinion, the reliability of the Folio version may be admitted. Such inaccuracies as 'Juno's swans,' the confusion between the statures of Rosalind and Celia, must be attributed rather to the author than the printer: while the ambiguity of time is merely an instance of a device which

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Shakespeare has freely availed himself of, namely, that of 'double time.'

SOURCE

The plot of *As You Like It* is taken from Lodge's *Rosalynde*, which as its sub-title 'Euphuus and his golden legacy' indicates, was written at a time when Euphuism was still rampant, and the name of the verbose hero was still a valuable asset. Pastoral sweetness and melodramatic action are blended together in this novel. Rosader, on account of his excellent parts and his large possessions, is hated by his brother Saladyne; the latter persuades him to wrestle at the court, hoping he will be killed. He comes off victor, however, and falls in love with Rosalynde. Returning home to his brother, he is subjected to many indignities, and eventually flies to the forest of Arden. Thither also have gone Rosalynde, disguised as a page, under the name of Ganymede, and Alinda, now known as Aliens, the daughter of the usurper who is in power, both having been banished. Rosader meets Ganymede, and there is much discussion between them on the subject of love. He is persuaded to undergo a mock-marriage with her, and, eventually all is revealed and is consummated in their marriage. Saladyne comes to the forest, exiled by the usurper, falls in love with and marries Aliens, after having been rescued from a lion by his brother and repented. A shepherd, Montanus, is in love with a shepherdess, Phoebe, who disdains him, but falls in love with Ganymede, and finding out the personality of the latter, marries her devoted admirer.

The true king is also in the forest, and happily witnesses the marriage of Rosader and Rosalynde: after which an army of the usurper comes to attack him, but is repulsed by his noble friends, and the king enjoys his own again.

Here then is the outline of all the various stories that combine to form the plot of *As You Like It*.

The characters of Jacques, Touchstone, William and Audrey are Shakespeare's independent creations. There are also several differences between novel and play, of which the following may be mentioned.

- (1) In the play, Orlando is hated by his brother for his excel-