

Imaginative Ways to Approach the Text

AS YOU LIKE IT – Brother Against Brother: Staging a Fight

Overview

The students will examine the opening scene looking for staging clues and tone and then perform the scene.

Grade Level	Subject Area	Curriculum Expectations and Learning Outcome			Time Needed	Space	Materials
7-12	English, Drama	Develop and explain interpretations of the Shakespearean text, using evidence from the text and visual cues to support their interpretations;	Use appropriate decoding strategies to understand unfamiliar words/ideas and stage the scene;	Analyse the text, motivation, speech, and actions of characters to build roles.	1-2 class Periods	Desks in groups, then open spaces for exploring the text	Attached handouts of Activities

As You Like It – Act I, scene 1 (excerpt)

Activity:

Orlando's father has died and in his will he instructed his oldest son, Oliver, to educate Orlando. However, Oliver has instead denied Orlando his status, an education and treats him worse than the animals. When Orlando and his servant, Adam, meet Oliver, he demands his share of the will.

Working in groups of three, examine the text for staging clues and tone and then decide who will play Adam, Orlando and Oliver.

THINGS TO CONSIDER!

- ◇ Why do the brothers call each other 'sir'?
What tone of voice are they using?
- ◇ Why does Orlando repeat Oliver's words?
What effect does it have on his brother?
- ◇ How do the brothers show that they are sons of a gentleman?

ADAM

Yonder comes my master, your brother.

ORLANDO

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

*stand aside
abuse me violently/scold me*

Enter OLIVER

OLIVER

Now, sir, what make you here?

*Oliver says 'what are you doing?' but
Orlando misunderstands it to mean 'fashion' or 'create something'*

ORLANDO

Nothing: I am not taught to make anything.

OLIVER

What mar you then, sir?

spoil, ruin

ORLANDO

Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.

OLIVER

Marry¹, sir, be better employed, and be naught awhile².

1. by the Virgin Mary 2. clear off

ORLANDO

Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them?
What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury?

*scraps
wastefully lavish
poverty*

OLIVER

Know you where your are, sir?

ORLANDO

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

garden

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

*acknowledges the claims/ is aware of
because of our noble breeding
know me as a brother
social custom says you are superior
custom/surrender of privilege
nobility/kinship/anger*

you, albeit, I confess, your coming before me is
nearer to his reverence.

makes you his legitimate heir

OLIVER

What, boy!

an insult to provoke Orlando

ORLANDO

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

Immature/inexperienced

OLIVER

Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

a pronoun used to speak to people of lower status – an insult

ORLANDO

I am no villein; 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 villeins.
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 hast railed on thyself.

*serf; lowest status person (pun on villain)
French for "of the woods", English pronounce
it as 'de Boys'*

insulted

ADAM

Sweet masters, be patient: for your father's
remembrance¹, be at accord².

calm down

1. memory 2. peace

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.

accomplishments, manners

*activities/acquired skills
share, bequest
will*

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.

father's bequest/your wish

ORLANDO

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

vex

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