

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,  
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods  
More free from peril than the envious court?  
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,  
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang  
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,  
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,  
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say  
'This is no flattery: these are counsellors  
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'  
Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life exempt from public haunt  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.  
I would not change it.

## **AMIENS**

Happy is your grace,  
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?  
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,  
Being native burghers of this desert city,  
Should in their own confines with forked heads  
Have their round haunches gored.

## **AMIENS**

Indeed, my lord,  
The melancholy Jaques grieves at that,  
And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp  
Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.  
To-day my Lord of Amiens and myself  
Did steal behind him as he lay along  
Under an oak whose antique root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:  
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,

That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,  
Did come to languish, and indeed, my lord,  
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears.

#### **DUKE SENIOR**

But what said Jaques?  
Did he not moralize this spectacle?

#### **AMIENS**

O, yes, into a thousand similes.  
First, for his weeping into the needless stream;  
'Poor deer,' quoth he, 'thou makest a testament  
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more  
To that which had too much:' then, being there alone,  
Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends,  
'Tis right:' quoth he; 'thus misery doth part  
The flux of company:' anon a careless herd,  
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him  
And never stays to greet him; 'Ay' quoth Jaques,  
'Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;  
'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look  
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?'  
Thus most invectively he pierceth through  
The body of the country, city, court,  
Yea, and of this our life, swearing that we  
Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse,  
To fright the animals and to kill them up  
In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

#### **DUKE SENIOR**

And did you leave him in this contemplation?

#### **AMIENS**

We did, my lord, weeping and commenting  
Upon the sobbing deer.

**DUKE SENIOR**

Show me the place:  
I love to cope him in these sullen fits,  
For then he's full of matter.

**AMIENS**

I'll bring you to him straight.