

*Enter Duke Senior, Amiens, and two or three Lords*

**Duke** 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 not 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 everything.

**Amiens** I would not change it. Happy is your Grace,  
 That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
 Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

**Duke** 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 gor'd.

*co-mates* companions  
*old custom* established traditions  
*painted pomp* false ceremony of the court  
*peril* serious and immediate danger  
*envious* jealous

*churlish* rude, uncivil

*flattery* praise  
*feelingly* with feeling or emotion  
*adversity* difficult or unpleasant situation  
*toad*

*exempt from public haunt* isolated, secluded  
*tongues* language  
*brooks* small streams  
*sermons* talk on a religious or moral subject (usu given in church on Sundays)

*venison* meat from a deer  
*irks* irritate, annoy  
*native burghers* local citizens  
*desert city* distant village, remote place  
*confines* boundaries  
*forked heads* arrows  
*haunches* piece of meat consisting of an animal's back leg and part of the back near the tail

**First Lord**

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

**Duke**

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

**First Lord**

O, yes, into a thousand similes.  
 First, for his weeping into the needless stream:  
 'Poor deer,' quoth he 'thou mak'st a testament  
 As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more

*melancholy* gloomy, dejected  
*usurp* to take control of  
 a position of power  
*along* in full span

*sequestered* separate

*languish* grow weak

*leathern* coat skin

*coursed* flew down

*much markèd of* carefully watched by

*augmenting* add to

*similes* comparisons

*sum of more* plenty (of tears)

To that which had too much.' Then, being there alone,  
 Left and abandoned 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** And did you leave him in this contemplation?

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

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

**First Lord** I'll bring you to him straight. *Exeunt*

*velvet friend* Eurasian deer

*the flux* continuous change, instability  
*company* people  
*careless* thoughtless  
*pasture* land covered with grass  
*sweep* move swiftly and smoothly

*invectively* critically, forcefully

*usurpers* sb. who takes position of power  
 illegally

*native* natural

*cope* meet, talk to  
*matter* good sense



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