

As You Like It Literary device

Writer: William Shakespeare | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Figures of Speech

Dramatic Irony:

Dramatic Irony means the audience will understand the event's truth, but the characters will not understand that at the time.

i) Rosalind as Ganymede - Everyone interacts with "Ganymede" while the audience knows it's Rosalind.

ii) Orlando's Poem Writing: The audience knows that it is written by Orlando but characters do not know.

iii) Orlando's Love Practice - Orlando loves Rosalind but speaks to her as Ganymede without knowing

iv) Phoebe's Crush - Falls for Ganymede (unaware it's a woman).

Metaphor: A metaphor is a figure of speech that directly compares two very dissimilar things without the help of as or like.

i) *"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players;"* - The world is compared to a stage, and people to actors, without using "like" or "as".

ii) *"Love is merely a madness..."* - Love is directly called madness, without comparison.

iii) *"Men are April when they woo, December when they wed."* - Men are compared to April (young, lively) and December (cold, dull). It shows change before and after marriage.

Irony: Irony is a figure of speech in which something is said or shown but means the opposite of what is expected.

i) *"Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love."* - She jokes that people die for many reasons, but not for love, which sounds funny because love is usually seen as very serious.

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of two or more words.

i) "*Woo me, woo me*" – the "**w**" sound is repeated.

ii) "*O Phoebe, Phoebe, Phoebe!*" – the "p" sound is repeated.

Paradox: Paradox is a sentence that seems wrong or opposite, but has a hidden truth.

i) "*Sweet are the uses of adversity*" – "Adversity" means problems, which are not sweet, but here it means problems can teach good lessons.

Hyperbole: Hyperbole means saying something in an exaggerated way to show strong feelings.

i) "*I cannot live out of her company*" – She won't really die, but it shows deep love.

Symbols/Symbolism: A symbol is an object that represents a deeper meaning beyond its literal meaning.

i) The Forest of Arden: The forest is a symbol of freedom and simplicity. People escape court problems and find peace here.

ii) Rosalind's Disguise (Ganymede): Rosalind's disguise shows hidden truths and emotions. It helps her test Orlando's love.

iii) Love Poems on Trees: Orlando's poems on trees show his deep love for Rosalind.

iv) The Deer: The hunted deer symbolizes human suffering and exile.

v) The Chain (Necklace): Rosalind gives her chain to Orlando after the wrestling match. It symbolizes her love and admiration.

Literary Terms

Comedy:

Comedy is a type of funny play that usually has a happy ending.

Pastoral Comedy: Pastoral comedy is a type of funny play set in the countryside about the life of rustics like shepherds. It is usually about love and happy endings.

Romantic Comedy: Romantic comedy is a funny play about love and relationships and usually has happy endings.

Subplot: A subplot is a smaller story inside the main story. It is not the main plot, but it is connected to it. **There are two subplots.** One is about Silvius and Phoebe. Silvius loves Phoebe, but she does not love him. The other is about Touchstone and Audrey. Their story is funny and full of jokes. Some scholars also say that Duke Senior and his exiled life in the forest is like another sub-plot. But usually, only the two love stories are called real subplots.

Couples and Triangle Love in the Play

The couples are Rosalind-Orlando, Oliver-Celia, Touchstone-Audrey, and Silvius-Phoebe. The triangle of love happens mainly between:

- i) Silvius loves Phoebe
- ii) Phoebe loves Ganymede (who is actually Rosalind in disguise),
- iii) But Ganymede/Rosalind does not love Phoebe but Orlando.

So, it is Silvius → Phoebe → Ganymede/Rosalind. Another love connection is William → Audrey ⇔ Touchstone.