CRUEL TO BE KIND?

inspired by Shakespeare’s
AS YOU LIKE IT by
CHRISTOPHER LIMBER

commissioned for
SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS’
2011-2012 EDUCATION TOUR

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In addition to our popular annual festival production in Forest Park, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis is dedicated to offering inspiring programs that introduce Shakespeare through workshops and performances. This Study Guide supplements the original play *Cruel to be Kind?* It introduces students to Shakespeare and also begins an important discussion about bullying and its effect on education and community.

Last season, more than 22,000 students in area schools and community venues experienced our Education programs! This past summer, we welcomed 63,000 people to our mainstage production in Shakespeare Glen, Forest Park. Through the Festival's many programs, *In the Schools, In the Streets and In the Park*, students of all ages are challenged and engaged while enhancing their ability to read, watch and perform Shakespeare. We appreciate this opportunity to Share the Shakespearience with your students and faculty. Thank you for bringing the Festival to your school!

Christopher Limber
Education Director
Shakespeare Festival St. Louis

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Cruel to be Kind?

William Shakespeare: A Biography

There are two primary sources for information on the Bard: his works, and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in this information and much room for conjecture. We know a man named William Shakespeare was baptized at Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26, 1564, and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 25, 1616. Tradition holds that he was born three days earlier, and that he died on his birthday—April 23—but this is perhaps more romantic myth than fact. Young William was born of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed heiress. William was the third of eight children in the Shakespeare household, three of whom died in childhood. We assume that Shakespeare went to grammar school, since his father was first a member of the Stratford Council and later high bailiff (the equivalent of town mayor). A grammar school education would have meant that Shakespeare was exposed to the rudiments of Latin, rhetoric, logic and literature.

In 1575, John Shakespeare suddenly disappears from Stratford’s political records. Some believe that his removal from office necessitated his son’s quitting school and taking a position as a butcher’s apprentice. Banns (announcements) were published for the marriage of a William Shakespeare to an Ann Whatley in 1582 (there are no records indicating that this arrangement was solemnized, however). On November 27 of the same year a marriage license was granted to 18-year-old William and 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. A daughter, Susanna, was born to the couple six months later. Twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born and baptized three years later, and Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596. We don’t know how the young Shakespeare came to travel to London or how he first came to the stage. One theory holds that young Will was arrested as a poacher (one who hunts illegally on someone else’s property) and escaped to London to avoid prosecution in Stratford; another holds that he left home to work in the city as a school teacher.

However, it is clear that between 1582 and 1592, Shakespeare became involved in the London theatre scene as a principal actor and playwright with one of several repertory companies. By 1594, Shakespeare was listed as a shareholder in one of the most popular acting companies in London: the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He was a member of this company for the rest of his career, which lasted until about 1611. When James I came to the throne in 1603, he issued a royal license to Shakespeare and his fellow players, inviting them to call themselves the King’s Men. In 1608, the King’s Men leased the Blackfriar’s Theatre in London. This theatre, which had artificial lighting and was probably heated, served as their winter playhouse. The famous Globe Theatre was their summer performance space.

In 1616 Shakespeare’s daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, the son of a neighbor in Stratford. Shakespeare revised his will six weeks later; within a month he died. The revised version of his will bequeathed his house and all the goods therein to his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. John Hall, leaving Judith and Thomas only a small sum of money; his wife, who survived him, received the couple’s second best bed.

In the years since Shakespeare’s death, he has risen to the position of “patron saint” of English literature and drama. In the 1800s especially, his plays were so popular that many refused to believe that an actor from Stratford had written them. To this day some believe that Sir Francis Bacon was the real author of the plays; others choose to believe Edward DeVere, the Earl of Oxford, was the author. Still others would prefer to believe Walter Raleigh or Christopher Marlowe penned the lines attributed to Shakespeare. While most people are content to believe that genius can spring up in any social class or rural setting, the gap between the known facts and the myths that surround Shakespeare’s life leaves ample room for speculation.
THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE’S TIME
Shakespeare’s company was the most successful of its day, and his plays filled the theatres. Though most of the audience at a public performance lacked formal education and could not read, the audience of Shakespeare’s day loved to listen to great words. Shakespeare’s audiences used to say “we’re going to go hear a play.”

When we read Shakespeare today we study the editors’ notes which help us appreciate some of the knowledge and expectations the Elizabethan audience brought into the theatre. Such notes may explain images and highlight patterns of rhythm or verbal structures which we might not otherwise “hear” or appreciate like an Elizabethan. They may explain semantic change (changes of meaning) in words or phrases used by Shakespeare to convey important ideas to his audience, to make them laugh and to surprise them with a new word, pun or verbal motif. Since there were no radios, CDs or televisions, the experience of hearing a new play was the major form of entertainment along with live music and sporting events. Since there were no microphones, audiences had to be very attentive, listening to patterns of verse and rhyme. The audience was keenly aware of spoken imagery and listened closely to gather references to time, place and character in the play’s words. All levels of society came to see Shakespeare’s plays, as there weren’t many other forms of entertainment. People could go to a bear-baiting, bull-baiting, public execution or two and the theatre.

The text was not written to be read as literature but as a blueprint for performance. The breaks between Shakespeare’s “scenes” represent changes in time or place, but not of scenery, which was minimal or nonexistent. Basic stage furniture served a variety of purposes; stage properties and costumes were more elaborate and suggestive. Elizabethan playwrights wrote as quickly as possible, selling their plays to a company of actors for a fee and then immediately beginning work on a new piece. In Elizabethan theatres, there were no curtains to fall at the end of the scenes, so the action was continuous. Designation for the acts and scenes were added much later by editors. Since there were no electric lights and it was considered dangerous to walk the streets at night, plays were performed during the day. Shakespeare’s plays were the equivalent of a modern-day television script or movie of the week.

Many of Shakespeare’s plays were not published until several years after his death. Once written, a play belonged to the commissioning theatre. Back then, if a writer was popular and sought by a theatre owner to write, the playwright might negotiate to receive a bonus when and if his play was successful and extended. As eventual co-owner of his company, Shakespeare retained some decision making power about the distribution of his own work. There was a time when Shakespeare’s theatre had to sell the rights to a few of his plays so as not to go bankrupt.
Cruel to be Kind?

THE GLOBE THEATRE was originally constructed in 1599, with Julius Caesar the first recorded performance on September 21. The theatre was located in Bankside on the south side of the Thames, not far from other sites of popular entertainment, such as the Bear-Baiting Gardens. Historically speaking, actors and other theatre professionals were thought by some to be only slightly better than vagabonds or criminals, while the theatre itself was criticized for the potentially seditious message it could send to an audience. As a result, the majority of theatres and less “seemly” entertainments were located outside of the city limits. Performances could be held daily and were indicated by a flag flown outside of the building. The information that has survived from eyewitness accounts, architectural foundations, maps, and other sources suggests that the building was roughly round in shape. Shakespeare’s plays themselves sometimes reference the space in which they were performed:

Can this cockpit hold
The vastly fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
*The Life of King Henry the Fifth, Prologue*

Unlike most of today’s theatres, the Globe was an open-air structure, and performances could be cancelled as a result of inclement weather. The actors wore contemporary Elizabethan clothing as their costumes; the stage itself was a raised, square platform; due to its size, it is generally assumed that scenery was limited. Philip Henslowe, the manager of the Globe’s rival theatre, the Rose, kept a detailed account of his financial transactions and inventories. His diary has proved a useful resource for scholars interested in Elizabethan production practice. There are much fewer references to large set pieces than to costumes and small properties. However, larger items (like the bed in Othello) could be wheeled out from behind an upstage, curtained discovery space. There were two doors on the lower level for the actors’ entrances and exits. The stage was surrounded on three sides by the audience, those who were standing on the ground below the actors and those who were seated on multiple levels under the thatched roof. Where you sat depended on your social status and how much you were willing to pay.
Cruel to be Kind?

GALLERIES: Three levels of seating that wrapped around the walls of the theatre.

Tiring House: An early version of today’s dressing room; a large space located behind the stage where costumes and props could be stored.

Heavens: A roof that covered the stage and was painted to reflect the starry night sky.

Balcony: An upper stage for musicians, or for actual balcony scenes as in Romeo & Juliet.

Discovery Space: A curtained area, upstage center, through which larger set pieces could be revealed.

The Pit: A standing-room-only area in the middle of the building that surrounded the stage; those who stood there during the performance were called “groundlings.”

Hell: A trap door below the stage, used for special effects, staging, and entrances/exits, perhaps for characters like the gravediggers in Hamlet or the weird sisters in Macbeth.
Some town records of Stratford exist that give us important clues about how Shakespeare learned about the stage. During his youth, Shakespeare would occasionally see traveling players (actors) perform in Stratford in addition to village pageants and parades to mark holidays.

In school he and his fellow students studied public speaking and then performed school plays—in Latin and Greek! In this way, he became familiar with the great playwrights of long ago. As a playwright he borrowed a few ideas and plots from his early school days. We know that sometime between 1585 and 1592, William Shakespeare left Stratford-upon-Avon and traveled to London to pursue a career in the theatre as an actor and playwright. He left his wife and children behind, living in the house on Henley Street with his parents and siblings. London was a rough and unhealthy city at that time, and it would have been dangerous to bring his family with him.

How often he returned to visit his family in Stratford is unknown. Today parents may commute by plane across the country. It is approximately 100 miles between London and Stratford and it would have taken Shakespeare five days to travel home on horseback. When Shakespeare arrived in London, he spent several years acting and playing small supporting roles. Perhaps he felt underutilized and since he was creative and ambitious, he started writing plays as well. A longtime member of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, Shakespeare eventually became a shareholder (part owner) and the main playwright for the troupe.

Shakespeare wanted his plays to relate to everyone so everyone would pay admission and attend. A successful play would run an average of 10 performances. Shakespeare wrote for all people and his plays were enjoyed by the rich, the poor and everyone in between. This is one reason William Shakespeare quickly became one of the most famous London playwrights and a co-producer of one of the greatest and well-known theatre companies in London at the time. Entertaining his patrons was of primary importance to Shakespeare because it meant more commissions, continued employment for himself and his theatre company and more chances to experience the fun and fame of being a leading theatre person of his time. Nobody knows how much money Shakespeare made. Every guess is merely conjecture. No records of the Globe or Rose theatres have ever been discovered. His records perhaps went up in smoke, along with prompt books and scripts, when the Globe burned down in 1613.

That being said, Shakespeare did make a lot of money. As a ‘sharer’ in the Globe profits he would have benefited financially from the work of other playwrights. He also bought a building at Blackfriars which he rented out and there are records of him suing several deadbeats for back rent. Once he gathered a steady income, Shakespeare paid off his father’s debts, restoring his honor back in Stratford. Will’s generosity must have meant a great deal to his father.

For his immediate family, Shakespeare bought a fine Stratford house called “New Place.” It was the second largest and one of the nicest houses in Stratford. He also owned large parcels of farmland. (Considering that, Shakespeare was in all probability the richest man in Stratford-upon-Avon next to Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord of the Manor of Stratford.) For the first time, Shakespeare’s family had a home of its own. He retired from the theatre some years later at the age of 52 and went back to Stratford to join his family. New Place does not exist today, but a garden has been planted in Shakespeare’s honor on the grounds where it once stood.
Cruel to be Kind?

Playwright’s notes

Cruel to be Kind? is a new play for young people that uses portions of Shakespeare’s play As You Like It as a source and inspiration. Scenes from As You Like It are used within the story to dramatize bullying behavior and stimulate questions and discussion about the timely and important subject of bullying. Students today relate to Shakespeare as a vital, accessible writer when they recognize that four centuries ago, he was aware of issues that continue to impact our lives in the twenty-first century. Cruel to be Kind? also explores Shakespeare’s artistic process, his work at the new Globe Theatre and his career in London. These elements will inspire audiences to dispel any clichéd notions about Shakespeare being “stuffy” or “unapproachable.” His enlightened understanding of the problem of cruel bullying behavior reminds us how relevant and important Shakespeare’s observations remain. Please refer to our companion Study Guide Bullying: Information & Resources that accompanies our workshop Bullies & Boundaries.

Why a New Play?

Shakespeare plotted most of his plays from other sources basing them on popular stories, novellas and histories of his time. In As You Like It, Shakespeare explored the emotional and familial dynamics of cruelty and injustice. In our play, Shakespeare, the character, uses his playwriting process to help his students (and ours) to understand themselves.

Cruel to be Kind? suggests that life and art are inextricably woven together, continually impacting and informing the artist. The richness of the Bard’s psychological understanding and the depth of emotion in his work shows he was passionately connected to the world around him: with his entrepreneurial and creative partners, with his apprentices as teacher and mentor, and with the Londoners upon whom he depended to be his surrogate family during long stretches away from Stratford Upon Avon. Cruel to be Kind? imaginatively embellishes these relationships. The story of Shakespeare’s two apprentices, Oswaldo and Orlandin, draws inspiration from his characters in As You Like It - and can articulate and enliven the subject of bullying for a contemporary audience.

Cast of Characters

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: The Bard of Avon is thriving at the new Globe at the dawn of his peak years of creativity in 1599.

OSWALDO: (aka “Oz”) apprentice, age 18. Talented, but immature. He has great energy, yet to his own embarrassment displays a lack of finesse. By all progressions of apprenticeship Oz should be ready to join the company and play adult male roles, but he will have to work harder.

ORLANDIN: apprentice, age 16. He’s a gentle, innocent spirit, a bit naïve and wide-eyed; kind, vulnerable and generous — very much like Sylvius, in As You Like It. Just as Sylvius loves Phebe, Orlandin loves Penelope. Hard-working and unaware that he is brilliant on stage.

MRS. BUNDLE: owner of an upscale boarding house in London. To her dismay, Mr. Bundle died recently and left her in charge. To her delight, the house has attracted the Lord Chamberlain’s Men as boarders! She loves the theatre and really loves Will Kempe who boarded at the house and was a special friend.

PENELOPE BUNDLE: (aka “Penny”) daughter of Mrs. Bundle, age 17, and a maid in the household. Very pretty, very outspoken and full of spice. She idolizes Shakespeare and the entire world of the theatre. Unusually ambitious for a young Elizabethan working-class girl, Penny is set on becoming more important, accomplished and happier.

WILLIAM KEMPE: a brilliant comedian. He is a former share-holder and member of Shakespeare’s theatre company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. According to some, he and Shakespeare had a falling out because of his obsessive on-stage clowning and improvisation. He left London early in 1599 never to appear at the new Globe.
In a Prologue, Shakespeare introduces London in 1599. The new Globe Theatre just opened and Shakespeare’s company, The Lord Chamberlain’s Men, are thriving. Two of the company’s apprentices, Orlandin and Oswaldo, are at odds because Oz is a bully.

Oz is also mean to girls and his advances are refused by Penelope, a young kitchen wench and aspiring actress, after he reminds her sharply that women are not allowed on the London stage.

Shakespeare and one of his most popular actors, William Kempe, have a falling out. Kempe, a wonderful comedian, wants to use funny props and have the freedom to improvise. Shakespeare orders him to stay true to his written text. They argue and Kempe leaves London for good, much to the dismay of Shakespeare’s landlady, Mrs. Bundle, who secretly loves him.

In his room at Bundle’s boarding house, Shakespeare works furiously on the first draft of his newest play, As You Like It. Bundle notices Will hasn’t eaten. She’s afraid his play will suffer or he’ll die of overwork and that she’ll be out his rent as well as Shakespeare’s other company members boarding at the house. She’s also worried that the Globe audience will dwindle, missing Kempe almost as much as her.

Oswaldo enters with books to deliver and asks Shakespeare if he has been cast in the new play. The Bard says no because he needs practice. Oz leaves upset. Shakespeare tells Bundle he himself will replace Kempe as the Jester, and she wisely advises him to take a small role. He sadly agrees.

Needing a book Oswaldo forgot, Shakespeare leaves the room, just missing Oswaldo, who is returning with the book. Oz reads the pages on Will’s desk and to see if he’s been cast.

He feels drawn to the character of ‘Oliver’ a bully in As You Like It. He then notices and picks up a small portrait of Hamnet, Shakespeare’s deceased son. He hears Mrs. Bundle in the hall. Startled, he drops the portrait, breaking the frame. Oz puts the frame together not knowing how he will cover up his mistake. When Orlandin enters, Oz gets him to pick up the frame, then blames him when it falls apart again. Orlandin leaves very upset.

Penelope (who has been spying) confronts Oz and they argue. Shakespeare returns, sends Oz back to rehearsal and asks Penny about the fight. Shakespeare learns Oz is a bully and enlists Penny’s help. He also gently but firmly dissuades her from having a crush on him, suggesting she be kinder to Orlandin.

The next morning Orlandin confesses to breaking the frame. Shakespeare reassures him it was Oz and says they all must help him stop being a bully. Oz and Orlandin are called to read scenes from As You Like It.

When Oz plays the scene where Oliver tells of Orlando’s saving him from being killed by a lioness, he’s is moved by the brother’s love. He recalls a time when he was 10 and unjustly accused of tripping a boy on a crutch and publicly punished by his own brother. It is clear to all that his bullying behavior stemmed from this event and he is given a chance to repair his friendships.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Bundle is missing and through a letter (read by her daughter Penny) we learn that she has run off to find Will Kempe. The house is now Penelope’s to run - or sell and move to Paris where she can act. Oz is offered the role of Oliver, and Orlandin will play Rosalind – Penny will advise and though uncharted, the future for all looks promising.
**QUESTIONS FOR BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE**

Teachers may start a discussion by posing the following questions which relate to the kinds of events and relationships students will see in the play:

1. Have you ever been jealous? Of what? What did it make you do?

2. Have you ever been bullied by someone?

3. Have you ever been a bully?

4. Have you ever written or read a story and seen portions of it happen in real life? Before or after?

5. Have you ever had a dream and someone told you it was impossible? What did you do?

6. Have you ever done something wrong and lied to conceal it?

7. Have you ever been blamed for something you didn’t do?

8. Have you ever told the truth and no one would believe you?

9. Have you ever learned something about someone that changed how you felt about them?

(Refer to the study guide *Bullying: Information & Resources* for more specific material on the subject of bullying to use in class discussion.)

**QUESTIONS FOR AFTER THE PERFORMANCE**

Teachers may create a discussion by posing the following post-show questions:

1. Will Oswaldo be able to change?
   a. If so, who and what have motivated him?
   b. If not why do you think he will not be able to change?

2. What past circumstances helped make Oswaldo a bully?

3. Will Orlandin forgive Oswaldo, or do you think he is hiding some resentment?

4. What circumstances might contribute to someone becoming a bully?

5. Why did Penelope change her behavior toward Orlandin from being mean to accepting his affection?

6. What forces help us to make changes in our behavior?

7. Do you think stories and plays have the power to teach us?

8. Can you think of ways to use a story to indirectly influence somebody?

9. Do you think Shakespeare was smart to intercede between Oswaldo and Orlandin?

10. If you are an actor or became one, what character would you want to play in this production? Why?

Questions asked in our follow-up workshop *Bullies and Boundaries* after the performance include:

1. How are bullies created?

2. What motivates a bully to be cruel?

3. How can they be understood or be encountered safely?

4. How can they be influenced to change constructively, compassionately and effectively?
Shakespeare’s actual biographical information is remarkably scarce. Only a small number of church documents, deeds and legal court entries mention him. However, a few European tourists visiting England around 1600 wrote about individual performances at the Globe. These are more telling than any other records that remain. Luckily, a handful of these travel diaries survived! Shakespeare left few words other than his wonderful plays and published poetry. Biographers have spent thousands of hours researching and guessing about his life and personality. His art and creativity are the sources of most of our speculative knowledge about him.

Was Shakespeare consciously withholding his personal history? Did he write something and was it destroyed? Could he have wanted to appear mysterious and leave us fascinated with him but factually clueless? Just as likely, he simply never thought much about it or he didn’t care. Judging from the quality of his plays he was too busy creating great theatre and enjoying life to spend time bragging, or he was too creatively and financially driven to invest in the usual trappings of notoriety and ego. Playwrights and Shakespeare enthusiasts enticed by this modesty and his prolific artistic achievements will ponder this forever, imagining and speculating what his life and process might have been.

As an artist and thinker, Shakespeare appeared driven to understand every aspect of his own life’s experience. His plays richly document a fascination with the world with an obvious knowledge, affection and respect for humanity. Consider the motto he chose and placed on the sign over the new Globe’s door: Totus mundus agit histrionem. Translated from Latin it becomes one of his most famous lines: All the World’s a Stage. His work illuminates life as the ultimate human performance. He translated remarkably accurate observations about the human condition onto the page — and thus onto the grand stage at the new Globe.
The Source: As You Like It

The play Shakespeare is writing during the action of Cruel to be Kind? is As You Like It, a “pastoral comedy.” Ian Johnston of Malaspina University writes a lovely description of this style:

“Early in his career Shakespeare, in response to popular taste, began with New Comedy. His earliest work, especially The Comedy of Errors, patterned itself closely on classical models and stuck to the conventions of the style. But he soon began to move towards the pastoral style, taking the urban characters out of their customary setting and putting them into the countryside, shifting the emphasis from the complexities of a plot (quite bewildering at times in The Comedy of Errors, with its two sets of identical twins) to the exploration of human relationships in love as in As You Like It (the central concern of the pastoral tradition), and relaxing the demands of naturalism appropriate to New Comedy so as to include magical elements. The most famous example of this shift is A Midsummer Night’s Dream, featuring gods, fairies, and all sorts of implausible occurrences.”

In As You Like It, life in the court that was full of competition and cruelty contrasts with the simpler life in the forest, where love abounds. Shakespeare based his play on a 1590 prose romance, Rosalynde: Euphues’ Golden Legacy, by Thomas Lodge. In Shakespeare’s play several of its main characters are bullies, most notably Duke Fredrick and Oliver. Both men feel justified lashing out against family members because of spite, jealousy and the pursuit of power. The play begins in a dark cruel city and later, as in many of Shakespeare’s plays, the action moves to the pastoral country – this time to Arden – a haven where kindness and tolerance seem a way of life. The major difference is that life in the country often allows characters to be more introspective and confront their own nature. It is a perfect play to use in a story about Shakespeare as a mentor helping his apprentices become aware of their bullying behavior. He sends Orlandin (the bullied) to fetch Oswaldo (the bully) and uses rehearsal of a scene in which the two warring brothers are arguing to instruct them.

WILL: Together we’ll read this scene from my play.
ORLANDIN: We will?
WILL: You will. Here are the sides. Study Alone and return together. You Play Orlando, Oz must study Oliver’s Lines. We’ll rehearse. The scene acts out the bullish Conduct Oswaldo’s choosing. Playing the scene Might show him what he’s losing. How we persuade “Cruel to be Kind” … may simply align; He could, now knowing I know he’s a brute, Change. I’ll strongly urge him a gentler course, And hope with our caring, his crimes transform.
ORLANDIN: If we fail, will you send him away?
WILL: Not if we reveal his reasons to stay.

As You Like It was probably written shortly after the opening of the new Globe in 1599. In the country Duke Fredrick and Oliver repent their bullying behavior and transform, setting out on new paths of redemption and forgiveness. All visiting city folk return to the city ready to live a better life. This is a happy ending with only a slight question as to how they will all fare upon their return to their Elizabethan city existence. Cruel to be Kind? offers the bully redemption and a chance to become a kinder friend. Oswaldo is offered both insight and support from his colleagues and friends (if he chooses to accept them). Shakespeare says these words to Oswaldo, which end the play: “Start fresh, we’ll work together… time will tell…”

Rather than Shakespeare’s fanciful resolution inspired by an idyllic country retreat, Cruel to be Kind? offers a realistic ending to remind us that self awareness and the desire to change are only the beginning of any transformative experience. In this way young audiences are invited to imagine what will happen to Orlandin and Oswaldo in the months ahead.
CHARACTERS FROM AS YOU LIKE IT APPEARING IN CRUEL TO BE KIND?

ORLANDO: son of Sir Rowland de Boys, falls in love with Rosalind
OLIVER: bullying brother of Orlando
ADAM: servant to Oliver, sympathetic to Orlando who is treated with cruelty by Oliver
SILVIUS: a shepherd in love with Phebe
PHEBE: a shepherdess who scorns Sylvius

AS YOU LIKE IT: PLOT SUMMARY

The play begins with two pairs of brothers in conflict: Duke Senior and Duke Frederick, and Oliver and Orlando. Duke Frederick has usurped the throne of his older brother and rightful heir, Duke Senior, and has banished him with several companions to live in the Forest of Arden. Two of the Dukes’ lords, Oliver and Orlando, have recently lost their father. Oliver, Orlando’s older brother, has withheld Orlando’s inheritance and treated him like a servant.

Meanwhile, two best friends - Rosalind, Duke Senior’s daughter, and her cousin Celia, the daughter of Duke Frederick - meet Orlando who has arranged to wrestle with the court champion, Charles. Oliver leads Charles to understand he should beat Orlando easily and suggests that if Charles harmed Orlando, Oliver would be pleased. Orlando, however, defeats Charles and wins the heart of Rosalind.

Duke Frederick admires Orlando’s achievement – until he learns Orlando is the son of Sir Rowland, a friend of Frederick’s banished brother. Frederick leaves and Oliver, overheard by Orlando’s elderly servant, Adam, vows to harm Orlando. Warned by Adam, Orlando flees with him to the safety of the Forest of Arden. Frederick returns to banish Rosalind who now reminds him too much of his banished brother. Celia decides to flee her ruthless father and join Rosalind. With their loyal fool Touchstone, they seek the shelter and safety of the forest. Because it is dangerous for young women to travel alone, Rosalind disguises herself as a young man, Ganymede, and Celia chooses to dress as a country maid, calling herself Aliena.

Once in the forest, the travelers, with help from the shepherds Corin and Silvius, purchase a cottage, field and sheep and begin their new life. Elsewhere in Arden, Jaques, one of the lords who attends Duke Senior, indulges his melancholy ways until he chances to meet Touchstone. Duke Senior and his followers meet Orlando who comes to them demanding food. When Duke Senior learns Orlando is the son of his old friend Sir Rowland, he welcomes Orlando and Adam heartily. Meanwhile, Duke Frederick is enraged when he learns that Orlando has run away. He orders Oliver to find Orlando and bring him back to the castle or forfeit his property and be banished himself.

Now safely with Duke Senior, Orlando is left to think about Rosalind. He writes poems about her and hangs them on trees in the forest. Rosalind and Celia (now Ganymede and Aliena) find the verses and realize the author is Orlando. Rosalind resolves to tutor Orlando in the ways of proper love and urges him to pretend “he” (Ganymede) is really his Rosalind in order to practice his wooing.

Love is alive elsewhere in the Forest. Touchstone has found a shepherdess, Audrey, to woo, and Rosalind witnesses the attempts of Silvius to entice another shepherdess, Phebe. Much to Rosalind’s dismay, however, Phebe is attracted to “Ganymede.” When Phebe decides to write a love letter to “him,” she asks Silvius to deliver it. Rosalind receives the letter while she is waiting for Orlando to arrive for a love lesson. It is Oliver who arrives, however, with a tale explaining Orlando’s absence. Orlando had happened on the sleeping Oliver who was being threatened by a lion. Orlando saved Oliver and killed the lion but was wounded in the encounter. At Orlando’s request, Oliver brings a bloody handkerchief as proof. When “Ganymede” swoons at the sight, Oliver realizes it is Rosalind but promises to keep her secret.

The encounter with Orlando and the lion has converted Oliver completely and has reconciled the brothers. Oliver confesses to Orlando that he has fallen in love with “Aliena” and that they will marry the following day. Orlando laments to “Ganymede” that he cannot marry his Rosalind. “Ganymede” declares that, with the help of magic, all will be made right on the wedding day. Then, in the presence of Duke Senior and his lords and other guests, Rosalind reveals herself to Orlando. With much rejoicing, Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, Touchstone and Audrey, Silvius and Phebe all wed. Then, as if by fate, the second son of Sir Rowland appears and declares that Duke Frederick has been converted by an encounter with a religious man and has abdicated to Duke Senior, returning to him and his followers all that had been taken from them.
Cruel to be Kind?

Show Stopper
Activity for Grades 7-12

In Shakespeare’s day, putting on a show was a cumulative effort that required the input of everyone in the company. Imagine you’re putting on a production of this play. In groups of four or five, come up with your own show concept.

First, as a group, decide on a theme for your show. Elizabethan England? Los Angeles in the 1940s? Outer Space? If you need inspiration, research other productions and the decisions they made. This decision will inform the production choices that you make. Be prepared to explain why you made this choice.

There are many design jobs in a production. These include:

  DIRECTOR
  PRODUCER
  SET DESIGNER
  COSTUME DESIGNER
  PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Feel free to assign different roles to each individual, or just work together as a team.

Based on your show concept, design costumes and set, and select your cast – imagine you could have any actors you want! And of course, don’t forget to come up with a poster and playbill. Go to town – as Shakespeare said, “The play’s the thing.”

*Optional teacher note: For inspiration, make it a competition among the groups – look for the most creative, best researched, best teamwork, neatest concept etc.
Cruel to be Kind?

Spotlight on Monologues
Text Work - Grades 5-12

A monologue is a long speech by just one actor. Shakespeare wrote a lot of monologues, many of which are among the most famous in dramatic literature (“To be or not to be…”; “Friends Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears…”; “Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?”). Actors love monologues because in addition to being an important solo part of a play, they can be great performance pieces on their own. Most auditions require that an actor prepare a monologue. Many actors put together monologues from many of Shakespeare’s plays to perform as a One-Person Show! Here are the beginnings of three famous monologues from As You Like It:

(Print-friendly versions of the entire speeches can be found in the Appendix)

OLIVER (1.1)
Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother’s purpose herein and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it, but he is resolute...

ROSA LIND (3.5)
And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,—

PHEBE (3.5)
I would not be thy executioner:
I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.
Thou tell’st me there is murder in mine eye...

SILVIUS (3.5)
Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe;
Say that you love me not, but say not so
In bitterness. The common executioner...

Choose one of the above monologues, or find your own from As You Like It. Your teacher will give you a time frame, which may mean you may have to shorten your monologue. Actors must often “cut” down their monologues for time, as many auditions only give you 1-3 minutes. If you have to cut, first make sure you understand the context of the monologue and the character that you are about to play. This includes:

• To whom you are talking?
• Where are you?
• What has happened before to cause you to speak?
• What is your relationship to the person to or about whom you are speaking?
• What do you want from the person to whom you are speaking?

Even if it is a soliloquy (a monologue spoken alone to the audience) there is a reason Shakespeare is having you speak. Perhaps you are figuring out something very important or you wish to have the audience agree with what you are doing or empathize with your character.

The first essential step to successfully performing Shakespeare is to understand what you’re saying. Look up any unfamiliar words, and if you still have trouble understanding, try paraphrasing the entire monologue in modern English. Now memorize your monologue and practice how you wish to perform it. When you’re ready, take your turn to perform for your class. Break a leg!

*TEACHER’S NOTE: this exercise will require more than one class period. It may make a good assignment: let them find and prepare a monologue, and then set aside a class as performance day. Vary the time limit based on the number of students.
**Cruel to be Kind?**

**Shakespearephone**  
Activity - All ages

Write the following phrases on different pieces of paper:

- “You make amends.”
- “I am very glad on’t”
- “O disloyal thing”
- “But what’s the matter?”
- “Thanks, good sir”
- “What hour is it?”
- “I wish ye sport”
- “Art not afcared?”
- “I stand on fire.”
- “In that he spake too far.”

Have all the students sit in a circle. Explain that you are going to give one of them a phrase, and this person is to repeat the phrase, in a whisper, to the next person. That person repeats it to the next, and so on. To save time, you can just make sure they all know how to play “Telephone”.

Compare the discrepancies between the initial statement and what the last person hears. When they run out of phrases, have them start their own sentences. Note whether the sentence is more or less accurate when it is their words versus Shakespeare’s words.

Point out how easily words can get confused. Ask them to discuss how this might impact dramatic literature and performance, and what might be done to prevent the audience from receiving a telephone message. The impact of volume, pronunciation and understanding are all good acting elements to draw student attention.

Have them try in earnest to get the message correct from the start to the finish. What changes?
**Books on Shakespeare and Teaching Shakespeare:**


**Shakespeare Websites:**

- Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet: [www.shakespeare.palomar.edu](http://www.shakespeare.palomar.edu)
- The Shakespeare Resource Center: [www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net)
- Shakespeare’s Globe Center USA: [www.sgc.umd.edu](http://www.sgc.umd.edu)
- Shakespeare: A Virtual Field Trip: [www.hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/engramja/Svtour.html](http://www.hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/engramja/Svtour.html)
- Life in Elizabethan England: [elizabethan.org/compendium](http://elizabethan.org/compendium)
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: [www.shakespeare.org.uk](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk)

**PHOTO CREDITS:**

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10 (bottom): As You Like It—Lickety-Split! (Josh Rowan, Adam Elkana-Hale)

11 (top, l to r): Antonio Rodriguez, Khnemu Menu-ra

11 (bottom, l to r): Antonio Rodriguez, Jessica Shoemaker

15: Reading Room, Folger Shakespeare Library

**Cruel to be Kind?**

**One More Activity**

Write and let me know your thoughts. YOU are the reason we do what we do, and it’s your responses that help us to provide theatre experiences that are exciting, meaningful and educational. Write care of:

Christopher Limber, Education Director
Shakespeare Festival St. Louis
462 N. Taylor Ave., Ste. 202
St. Louis, MO, 63108
Email: climber@sfstl.com

**FURTHER READING & RESOURCES**

- Shakespeare Lite: library.thinkquest.org/23293
- Shakespeare Magazine: www.shakespearemag.com
- Absolute Shakespeare: absoluteshakespeare.com
- Everything Shakespeare: www.field-of-themes.com/shakespeare/indexmain.html
- Ready to Use Activities for Teaching: www.pearsonschool.com
- Shakespeare Curriculum Resources from The Center for Learning: www.centerforlearning.org/c-41-shakespeare.aspx
OLIVER (1.1)
Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother’s purpose herein and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it, but he is resolute. I’ll tell thee, Charles: it is the stubborneest young fellow of France, full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man’s good parts, a secret and villanous contriver against me his natural brother: therefore use thy discretion; I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his finger. And thou wert best look to’t; for if thou dost him any slight disgrace or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will practice against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device and never leave thee till he hath ta’en thy life by some indirect means or other; for, I assure thee, and almost with tears I speak it, there is not one so young and so villanous this day living. I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep and thou must look pale and wonder.
Cruel to be Kind?

Appendix
For “Spotlight on Monologues” activity

ROSALIND (3.5)
And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,--
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed--
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature’s sale-work. ‘Od’s my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:
‘Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
Like foggy south puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman: ‘tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favour’d children:
‘Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;
And out of you she sees herself more proper
Than any of her lineaments can show her.
But, mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man’s love:
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets:
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
So take her to thee, shepherd: fare you well.
APPENDIX
For “Spotlight on Monologues” activity

PHEBE (3.5)
I would not be thy executioner:
I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.
Thou tell’st me there is murder in mine eye:
‘Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,
That eyes, that are the frail’st and softest things,
Who shut their coward gates on atomies,
Should be call’d tyrants, butchers, murderers!
Now I do frown on thee with all my heart;
And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee:
Now counterfeit to swoon; why now fall down;
Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,
Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers!
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee:
Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains
Some scar of it; lean but upon a rush,
The cicatricie and capable impressure
Thy palm some moment keeps; but now mine eyes,
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,
Nor, I am sure, there is no force in eyes
That can do hurt.
Appendix
For “Spotlight on Monologues” activity

SILVIUS (3.5)
Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe;
Say that you love me not, but say not so
In bitterness. The common executioner,
Whose heart the accustom’d sight of death makes hard,
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck
But first begs pardon: will you sterner be
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?