

START

Scene 2: The Marriage

CHORUS

The morning after, as they sat at breakfast—

ORLANDO

he told her his name.

MARMADUKE

Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire.

ORLANDO

Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire. I knew it!

(To the audience)

For there was something romantic and chivalrous, passionate, melancholy, yet determined about him.

(To Marmaduke)

My name is Orlando.

→ ORLANDO ←

MARMADUKE

Orlando. I knew it!

For if one sees a ship in full sail proudly sweeping across the Mediterranean from the South Seas, one says at once, Orlando.

You see, though their acquaintance had been short, they had guessed, as always happens between lovers, everything of any importance about each other in two seconds at the utmost,

ORLANDO

and it now remained only to fill in such unimportant details as what they were called,

MARMADUKE

where they lived,

ORLANDO

and whether or not they were beggars. You're not a beggar, are you Shel?

MARMADUKE

I once had a castle, but it was ruined. So I became a—

ORLANDO

Sailor!

MARMADUKE

Sailor.

MARMADUKE

How did you know?

ORLANDO

I guessed it. And the winds—they went the wrong way suddenly?

MARMADUKE

Yes-yes—the wind went violently the wrong way, so I . . .

MARMADUKE

stopped for the night.

ORLANDO

stopped for the night.

✦ SARAH RUHL ✦

MARMADUKE

Yes! And, I'm due to leave for the South Seas tomorrow.

Pause.

ORLANDO

Tomorrow! Oh, Shel, don't leave me! I'm in love with you!

MARMADUKE

No sooner had the words left her mouth than an awful suspicion rushed into both their minds at once.

MARMADUKE

You're a man, Orlando!

ORLANDO

You're a woman, Shel!

ORLANDO

You think . . . you think I'm a man? Oh, no, I'm very much a woman.

MARMADUKE

And you, for a moment, thought I was a woman? How ridiculous.

But you're so entirely *sympathetic*—and you never take more than ten minutes to dress—how can it be—

ORLANDO

And you have a passion for—peppermints, and you blush so easily. How can it be—

And they talked two hours or more, perhaps about the sea or perhaps *not* about the sea, and really it would profit little to record what they said, for they knew each other so well that they could say anything, which is tantamount to saying nothing.

MARMADUKE

Once I was sailing the South Seas and was caught in a *terrific* gale. Masts were snapped off, sails were torn to ribbons . . .

✦ ORLANDO ✦

ORLANDO

Christ Jesus! How exciting! Then what?

MARMADUKE

The ship sank, and I was left, the only survivor, on a raft holding a biscuit.

ORLANDO

And?

MARMADUKE

I ate the biscuit. It's about all a fellow can do nowadays . . .

Orlando laughs.

MARMADUKE

Are you positive you aren't a man?

ORLANDO

Can it be possible you're not a woman?

MARMADUKE AND ORLANDO

And then they must put it to the proof without more ado.

They kiss passionately.

MARMADUKE

When it was over, Orlando had tears in her eyes—

ORLANDO

Tears of a finer flavor than any she had cried before.
I am a woman.
A real woman at last.

Thank you, Shel, for this rare and unexpected delight.

MARMADUKE

You're welcome, Orlando.

ORLANDO

For each was so surprised at the quickness of the other's sympathy,
and it was to each such a revelation that

MARMADUKE

a woman could be as
tolerant and free-spoken as a man,

ORLANDO

and a man as strange and subtle as a woman.

MARMADUKE

So they would talk.

ORLANDO

And talk.

MARMADUKE

How to cook an omelette—

ORLANDO

Where to buy the best boots in London—

MARMADUKE

Yes—

ORLANDO

Yes.

MARMADUKE

And when Orlando's feet were covered with spotted autumn
leaves . . .

ORLANDO

Bonthrop . . .

MARMADUKE

she would say . . .

ORLANDO

I'm off.

MARMADUKE

When she called him his second name—

ORLANDO

Bonthrop—

MARMADUKE

it should signify that she was in a solitary mood, felt them both as
specks on a desert—

ORLANDO

for people die daily, die at dinner tables or out of doors in the
autumn leaves, and so saying:
Bonthrop . . .

MARMADUKE

she said in effect,

ORLANDO

"I'm dead."

*The sound of the sea.
A terrible stillness.*

MARMADUKE

After some hours of death
usually a bird would shriek:

CHORUS

Shelmerdine!

MARMADUKE

and she would come to life again . . .

→ SARAH RUHL ←

ORLANDO

as though returning from a voyage
on a ship which had heaved and tossed
and finally rides over the crest of a wave . . .

Shelmerdine!

MARMADUKE

What is it, Orlando?

ORLANDO

It's passed now. I'm alive, darling Shel.

ORLANDO AND MARMADUKE

Until one day,
They got married.

The sound of bells.

CHORUS

Bells were rung!
People were summoned!

ORLANDO AND MARMADUKE

The rain poured down on them!

CHORUS

They reached the chapel,
light flew through the painted windows . . .

A PRIEST

Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine and Lady Orlando, kneel down.

They kneel.

The lights go on and off.

The sound of doors banging,

brass pots beating, and an organ sounding.

→ ORLANDO ←

CHORUS

All was confusion!
Now a bird was dashed against a pane,
now there was a clap of thunder!

A clap of thunder.

ORLANDO

(Shouting over the noise) So that no one heard the word Obey—

MARMADUKE

or saw a ring pass from hand to hand.

ORLANDO

(Shouting over the noise) Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine,
Esquire!

MARMADUKE

Orlando!

CHORUS

And the words went dashing and circling
like wild hawks among the towers,
faster and faster they circled,
until they crashed and
fell in a shower of fragments to the ground.

The Twentieth Century had arrived.

END

The sound of tinkling glass.