

As You Like It

Act V, sc. 4

TOUCHSTONE

Touch. God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear, and to forswear, according as marriage binds and blood breaks. A poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own: a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that no man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul oyster.

~~**Duke S.** By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.~~

Touch. According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

~~**Jaq.** But, for the seventh cause; how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause?~~

Touch. Upon a lie seven times removed: 'bear your body more seeming, Audrey:' as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard: he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was: this is called 'the retort courteous.' If I sent him word again, it was not well cut, he would send me word, he cut it to please himself: this is called the 'quip modest.' If again, it was not well cut, he disabled my judgment: this is called the 'reply churlish.' If again, it was not well cut, he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the 'reproof valiant:' if again, it was not well cut, he would say, I lie: this is called the 'countercheck quarrelsome': and so to the 'lie circumstantial,' and the 'lie direct.'

~~**Jaq.** And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?~~

Touch. I durst go no further than the 'lie circumstantial,' nor he durst not give me the 'lie direct;' and so we measured swords and parted.

~~**Jaq.** Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?~~

Touch. O sir, we quarrel in print; by the book, as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the 'retort courteous;' the second, the 'quip modest;' the third, the 'reply churlish;' the fourth, the 'reproof valiant;' the fifth, the 'countercheck quarrelsome;' the sixth, the 'lie with circumstance;' the seventh, the 'lie direct.' All these you may avoid but the lie direct; and you may avoid that too, with an 'if.' I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel; but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an 'if,' as 'If you said so, then I said so;' and they shook hands and swore brothers. Your 'if' is the only peace-maker; much virtue in 'if.'