



## ‘HOURLANDO’

Charleston Trust

### THE COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR ‘HOURLANDO’

As part of the celebrations for the 90th anniversary of the publication of Virginia Woolf’s ‘Orlando’, Charleston has developed a script and materials for schools, colleges and community groups to explore the book in a lively, engaging way with ‘HOURLando’ – the entire book condensed into a 60 minute interactive session.

Chapter 1	Narrator	It is the [ALL: LATE 1500s]. Queen Elizabeth 1 is on the throne (a Queen who famously ruled like a King). Orlando is a 16 year old boy in the attic of his family home. The house has 365 rooms and 52 staircases to symbolise TIME and for 400 years it has been home to privileged men who killed less privileged men, usually of other ethnicities, in far-off countries with all the pomp, pageantry and prejudice that went with it.
	Vita	Hi everyone! Vita Sackville-West here. Virginia wrote Orlando for me, don't you know. I am Orlando, isn't that sublime? And this house is Knoles House, my beloved ancestral home that I was denied from inheriting because I was a woman.
	Narrator	Orlando is playing at being his forefathers. He is bathing in light from the family herald on the stained glass window and writing terrible, pretentious poetry:
	Orlando	I'm trying to capture the exact green of that laurel bush but it's no use! Green in nature is one thing; green in literature another. Bring nature and letters together and they tear each other to pieces. Not that I'll ever become a poet or anything...
	Narrator	(Spoiler alert). He takes himself off for a stroll in the countryside, something he'll do a lot of over the next 300 years, usually in a huff, usually ending with some flinging onto the roots of a his favourite oak tree
	Orlando	I need to feel the earth's spine beneath me. I need something I can attach my floating heart too. I love solitary places, vast views, and to feel forever and ever and ever alone. I AM ALONE!
	Narrator	He looks around and counts what belongs to his family – houses, turrets, heaths, forests, badgers, butterflies – well, basically just everything. Suddenly he hears a trumpet [ALL: TRUMPET NOISE]
	Orlando	Oh good, it's Queen Elizabeth 1. I better get my party clothes on – red breeches, taffeta waistcoat, shoes with rosettes as big as double dahlias – and run downstairs. But on the way I am struck by the sight of a shabby scribbling poet. I want to ask him the meaning of life...

<p><b>Narrator</b></p>	<p>Not now, Orlando. Wait 100 years and you'll meet so many poets you'll be bitterly disappointed that they aren't the heroes you believe. For now, you must run to the Queen. When he gets there, he bows and offers her a bowl of rosewater. All he sees is her hands and all she sees is his head, but they both extrapolate huge insights from that, because Woolf wants us to think about this issue of only seeing part of someone, not seeing the whole person.</p>
<p><b>Vita</b></p>	<p>Hold on! I said something about that! I said 'there is no living soul who knows the complete truth; here, may be one who knows a section; and there, one who knows another section: but to the whole picture not one is initiated.'</p>
<p><b>Narrator</b></p>	<p>Yes Vita! And that's why Virginia spends the whole novel showing us only parts of characters or situations, with other parts hidden by shadow, or costume, or transport, and people wearing cloaks all the time, and lots of references to disembodied heads. Anyway, back to Orlando... He is meeting the Queen, who smells like a cupboard in which furs are kept in camphor and who wants him to be the son of her old age...the oak tree on which she lent her degradation (and sure enough in the final pages of the book, Orlando gives her queenly ghost the big house).</p>
<p><b>Orlando</b></p>	<p>I do hope Queen Elizabeth falls in love with me in a weird, son-replacement way, moves me to London, gives me loads of money, property, and status, and an emerald ring that will be important all the way through the book, and generally sorts out my first awakening, including kissing loads of girls for the first time, most of which are commoners that I meet when out in disguise in my cloak!</p>
<p><b>Narrator</b></p>	<p>She does, Orlando, she does! And in the process she represents lots of key Orlando things like gender, costume, mirrors, oak trees, love, mortality and identity! Then she dies. King James replaces her. It's [ALL:1608]. It's winter, but not just any old winter, it's The Great Frost Fair, an opportunity for Woolf to show off some of her most dazzling, dramatic writing...</p>
<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>Frozen roses fell in showers... Near London Bridge, where the river had frozen to a depth of some twenty fathoms, a wrecked wherry boat was plainly visible, lying on the bed of the river where it had sunk, overladen with apples. The old woman, who was carrying her fruit to market on the Surrey side, sat there in</p>

		her plaids and farthingales with her lap full of apples, for all the world as if she were about to serve a customer, though a certain blueness about the lips hinted the truth
<b>Narrator</b>		... which is obviously all a metaphor, and the start of us learning that all elements like wind, rain, ice, fire, fog, are precursors to transformation. ANYWAY, who should come skating along but...
<b>Sasha</b>		ME! A Russian Princess of ambiguous gender. I'm Love Interest Number 1.
<b>Vita</b>		Mostly based on my lover, Violet Trefusis
<b>Sasha</b>		I do have my own proper name but Orlando calls me Sasha. I'm not sure why.
<b>Narrator</b>		Because Woolf wanted to show that all relationships are essentially subjective constructs and we see in others what we want to see! And don't worry, when Orlando becomes a woman later on, she will suddenly realise everything that's going on for you right now. She also thinks she sees you in a department store in 1928 and reckons you've got old and fat. But for the moment:
<b>Orlando</b>		An extraordinary seductiveness issues from this whole person. Images, metaphors of the most extreme and extravagant twine and twist in my mind. She is a melon, a pineapple, an olive tree, an emerald, and a fox in the snow – I don't know if I have heard her, tasted her, seen her, or all three together... But alas it must be a boy – no woman could skate with such speed and vigour! I am ready to tear my hair with vexation that this person is of my own sex, and thus all embraces are out of the question. Legs, hands, carriage, are a boy's, but no boy ever had a mouth like that; no boy had those breasts; no boy had eyes which looked as if they had been fished from the bottom of the sea. But look! She is - a woman!
<b>Sasha</b>		Yes, yes, I am non-binary, what else do you expect? It's Orlando! Now let's make private jokes in French that no one else can speak. We can skate off and have a cuddle and represent lots of metaphors about freezing and thawing! Before I nip back onto my frozen ship to fetch some clothes, and you think you see me cheating on you with a sailor, and you faint and freak out, but then agree to elope with me at midnight.

	<b>Orlando</b>	Here I am waiting to elope at midnight! But the clock strikes twelve – <b>ALL: DONG!</b> - and Sasha doesn't arrive. I hang on for two more hours, and it rains, and I'm fuming. She isn't gonna show.
	<b>Narrator</b>	The Great Frost thaws, London totally floods, the streets are full of drowning people (and metaphors)
	<b>Orlando</b>	I run back to the docks in time to see Sasha leaving in her boat back to Russia. I shout and swear and curse all women ever. She was the first person I properly fancied! Because of her, I lost my fiancé (who I wasn't that bothered about) and all my respect and standing in society! And because of all that, I will mostly spend Chapter Two moping around like a Byronesque teenager.
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	Chapter two. The year is roughly <b>[ALL:1668]</b> . Charles II is King of England, a hedonistic libertine nicknamed the Merry Monarch with long flowing feminine hair. Orlando is once again home alone in his big house, now aged 25. Heartbroken by Sasha, poor Orlando has gone full emo, obsessed with death, sitting in the family crypt with rats and skulls, writing bad poetry about nature and the futility of life.
	<b>Orlando</b>	Oh, how I take strange delight in thoughts of death and decay... all pomp is built upon corruption; the skeleton lives beneath the flesh; we that sing and dance above must lie below; the crimson velvet turns to dust; the ring loses its ruby and the eye which was so lustrous shines no more!
	<b>Narrator</b>	Perhaps because Orlando isn't doing anything exciting at the beginning of this chapter, Woolf introduces us to the idea of The Biographer, who is partly the narrator of the book (although of course being Woolf it's all a little more complicated than that. It might be better to think of the Biographer as the dummy that sits on ventriloquist Woolf's lap).

<b>Biographer</b>	<i>Hello, readers. I am the traditional Victorian biographer. Let's assume I am male and represent all that Woolf thought wrong about patriarchal, misogynist ideas of history, time and importance. I like fact, evidence and documentation. I like privileged men doing well-documented manly things, like fighting and conquering. I do not like this woolly business of mystical transformation. As the book goes on you'll see I also don't much rate women's things, by which I mean lives, identities, experiences, emotions etcetc.</i>
<b>Vita</b>	Also Virginia's dad Sir Leslie Stephen was editor of the Dictionary of National Biography (referenced in Chapter Six) and author of English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century, so it's all a bit of a dig at him too.
<b>Narrator</b>	One summer morning, Orlando suddenly falls into a mysterious 7 day sleep.
<b>Orlando</b>	They sent barking dogs and crashing cymbals to my room...they put a gorse bush under my pillow and mustard on my feet but I STILL didn't wake up! Because otherwise how would readers know that a transformation was happening?? On the seventh day, I woke up like nothing had happened, although the quacks still insisted on giving me peacock's gall and newt slobber. If you ask me, it was just my body's way of helping me cope with trauma and change and it's all completely natural.
<b>Vita</b>	This sounds more like Virginia talking... you know she's rather been through the mill...
<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando wakes up, apparently the same, apart from some short term memory problems (Sasha who?) and free again to mope around with skeletons. But he is about to be heartbroken for the second time as he meets his hero, the celeb poet Nicholas Greene, and has his hopes severely dashed.
<b>Nicholas Green</b>	Greetings! I am the great poet Nicholas Greene! Orlando idolises me, but he slowly discovers I am a bit of a nincompoop. I stay with Orlando for ages, get fat on his food and compliments, moan about how hard it is being a poet and then write a poem that takes the mickey out of Orlando and totally humiliates him.

	Orlando	Well thanks for nothing, Poetry-Hero. Now I'm going to burn everything I ever wrote. Except the Oak Tree poem, just in case that ends up being significant in, say, 300 years' time. Now if you'll excuse me, I'll just go back to being all grumpy and alone and flinging myself at nature – which is my muse and only friend. Wait, who's that woman in the strange hood coming to the house to bother me?
	Archduchess	It is I, the Archduchess Harriet. But guess what, Readers – it's all a ruse! I'm actually a man! You'll find out in a couple of chapters, when Orlando becomes a woman.
	Orlando	To be honest, male or female, you're a bit of a pain in the non-gendered backside.
	Archduchess	What if we peruse this old suit of armour and I fasten a gold shin plate to your beautiful lower leg (that many people remark on throughout the book)? Would that make you fall in love with me?
	Orlando	<p>No way! No! You? Never! Even if we have some wine and I have been kinda lonely recently and you kneel down and fasten a gold shin plate to my – AGH!! Curses!! I do fancy you! But now I'm going to freak out about it and call Lust 'a vulture' and rant about how 'love has...two bodies, two hands, two feet, two of every member and each one is the exact opposite of the other. Yet, so strictly are they joined together that you cannot separate them.'</p> <p>And then I'm going to be so plagued by thoughts of love and lust, alone in my grand redecorated house, that I will beg King Charles to send me to Constantinople to be an Ambassador, and I will forget about you and about love forever! Or rather, for one chapter.</p> <p>Right, off to Turkey where I can live a quiet privileged life and nothing out of the ordinary will happen whatsoever!</p>

CHAPTER 3	<b>Narrator</b>	So the Archduchess Harriet is gone, the house and the English countryside are gone, poetry is forgotten, and we find ourselves in Constantinople, a city that was a fusion of cultures and religions, made up of two identities, and a city where -
	<b>Vita</b>	Where I lived for several years while my husband Harold worked for the Embassy. I loved Constantinople.
	<b>Narrator</b>	But Vita, would you have loved the city in [ALL: 1688]? Revolution is brewing. Not that Ambassador Orlando knows. He is 30, smoking cheroots, excelling at his new role, and is on a daily programme of Dine, Drink, Charm, Repeat. Everyone is in love with him, male and female, aristocrat and peasant.
	<b>Orlando</b>	Apparently I have a mysterious power over the imagination... a million candles burn in me, without me being at the trouble of lighting a single one.
	<b>Narrator</b>	Here he is now in all his finery, about to be given the Dukedom. But the ceremony is interrupted by revolution as the clock strikes midnight [ALL: DONG]
	<b>Orlando</b>	I'd better have another seven day mega-sleep now, I reckon. I do hope no massive transformation happens while I'm out for the count...
	<b>Narrator</b>	When Orlando is found the next morning in profound slumber, his room and costume are in disarray, a mysterious marriage deed is on the table, a great fire is raging outside as the city riots (remember elements always herald transformation) and looters have stolen the accessories of his Dukedom. If that wasn't bad enough he's about to be visited by three draped female figures...
	<b>Purity</b>	I am the Lady of Purity. I'm covered in snow. On all things frail or dark or doubtful, my veil descends
	<b>Chastity</b>	I am the Lady of Chastity. I am ice incarnate. I will freeze Orlando to the bone
	<b>Modesty</b>	Lady of Modesty, me. Lady of the Moon. Virgin I am and ever shall be. My hair covers my eyes. I do not see.

<b>Narrator</b>	The three join hands and dance slowly while singing – essentially a girl band but with depressing lyrics and too many morals
<b>Altogether:</b>	<p>‘Truth come not out from your horrid den.  Hide deeper, fearful Truth.  For you flaunt in the brutal gaze of the sun  Things that were better unknown and undone;  You unveil the shameful;  The dark you make clear,  Hide! Hide! Hide!’</p>
<b>Narrator</b>	Trumpets blast out ‘The Truth and nothing but the Truth.’ <b>ALL: TRUMPET NOISE</b> and Orlando wakes up. He stretches. He stands upright in complete nakedness in front of the mirror and while the trumpets peel ‘The Truth The Truth’, Orlando sees –
<b>Orlando</b>	I am a woman!
<b>Narrator</b>	The change was accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it. ‘No human being, since the world began, has ever looked more ravishing. His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman’s grace’. ‘The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity’
<b>Biographer</b>	<p><i>I don’t know about all this. Many people, holding such a change of sex is against nature, have been at great pains to prove</i></p> <p><i>(1) that Orlando had always been a woman</i></p> <p><i>(2) that Orlando is at this moment a man.</i></p> <p><i>Let biologists and psychologists determine. It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since. Let other pens treat of sex and sexuality; we quit such odious subjects as soon as we can</i></p>

	<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando hops on a donkey and heads off to the mountains to live a simple life in the wilderness with the Romany community
	<b>Vita</b>	Oh I am fascinated by the Romany community! I always fantasised about running off to live like that!
	<b>Orlando</b>	<p>I am immersed in nature and simplicity. I try to become one of them. I milk a few goats. But ultimately I just want to meditate and sit for hours thinking about nature, and write again even though I have to make ink from berries.</p> <p>But then I get homesick and think about my nice big house...and the Romanies tell me 400 years of family history is nothing, because they've been around for thousands of year living the same life... Weirdly, a change of class and status flips me upside down way more than a change in gender. I must get back to England at once.</p>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando jumps on a ship called the Enamoured Lady – just in time because the Romanies were planning on killing her. Orlando spends a lot of time in the book on journeys. They are often where big thoughts and questions emerge, which can conveniently never be answered when Orlando's destination is reached. Anyway, here we are on a boat, where Orlando wears women's clothes for the first time and is struck all of a sudden by what it means to be a woman – the penalties and privileges of her position.
	<b>Orlando NEW ACTOR</b>	Lord, these skirts are plaguy things to have about one's heels. Yet the material is the loveliest in the world. Never have I seen my own skin look to such advantage! Could I, however, leap overboard and swim in clothes like these? No! Therefore I should have to trust to the protection of a blue-jacket. Do I object to that? Do I?
	<b>Narrator</b>	Don't worry Orlando, you've got another three chapters to work that out, and a good few pages right now to debate the pros and cons of each gender.

	<b>Orlando</b>	I am man; I am woman; I know the secrets and share the weaknesses of each – truly a whirligig state of mind to be in.
	<b>Narrator</b>	<p>Shall we help Orlando out? Let's go through some of the fors and againsts of Orlando's gender debate. You should find two clipboards under seats at opposite sides of the room – this side of the room is Team Female, this side is Team Male. Can we pass them around and read one point at a time?</p> <p>So male identity group, give us your pros (read from list) – and now your cons (read from list). Well that was pretty clear-cut and listy wasn't it?</p> <p>Now female identity group do you have some quick bullet points too?</p> <p>Or are your pros and cons all mixed in together in nuanced reflective sentences?</p> <p>What do you say, Biographer?</p>
	<b>Biographer</b>	<i>'She has none of the formality of a man, or a man's love of power. She is excessively tender- hearted. She could not endure to see a donkey beaten or a kitten drowned. She detested household matters, was up at dawn and out among the fields...no farmer knew more about the crops than she did. She could drink with the best and likes games of hazard. She rode well and drove six horses at a gallop over London Bridge. Yet... the sight of another in danger brought on the most womanly palpitations. She burst into tears on slight provocation. She was apt to think of poetry when she should have been thinking of taffeta. She was unversed in geography, found mathematics intolerable, and held caprices more common among women than men, as for instance that to travel south is to travel downhill.'</i>
	<b>Narrator</b>	And Orlando what do you finally conclude
	<b>Orlando</b>	'Better is it to be clothed with poverty and ignorance, which are the dark garments of the female sex; better to leave the rule and discipline of the world to others; better be quit of martial ambition, the love of power and all the other manly desires if one can more fully enjoy the most exalted raptures known to the humane spirit, which are... contemplation, solitude, love. Praise God that I'm a woman!'

	<b>Narrator</b>	So Orlando is, and will now remain, female-identifying, but as they arrive back in England she finds she isn't the only thing that has changed. London is transformed. There has been a plague and a fire since she left, and it's all built anew. She is excited to spot famous celeb poets like Alexander Pope (not the world's greatest feminist) but less excited when she discovers that, on home soil, her new identity brings her a host of law suits ...
	<b>The Law</b>	The chief charges are: (1) that you are dead and therefore cannot hold any property whatsoever (2) that you are a woman, which amounts to much the same thing
	<b>Narrator</b>	So she heads home to wait until the law decides what and who she is. The house staff don't bat an eyelid at her identity change, simply remarking how now she's female she can do some much-needed sewing repairs and pop out some children. She sees familiar places in her house in a new light – literally - like the stained glass window from the opening paragraph where the heraldic symbols now glow ironically on her female chest. She sits in the family chapel and smokes a cheroot while holding the prayer book Queen Mary held at her execution
	Orlando	Of what odds and ends are we compounded? I am growing up. I am losing my illusions, perhaps to acquire new ones. Writing is my religion. I must start again in earnest on The Oak Tree poem. But wait, who's this?
	<b>Harriet</b>	It is I, Orlando, Archduchess Harriet!
	Orlando	Oh not you again, you monstrous hare.
	<b>Harry</b>	Only this time – I am Archduke Harry! Yes, I am a man! Orlando, you are and always will be the Pink, the Pearl, the Perfection of your sex. Marry me!
	Orlando	If this is love, there is something highly ridiculous about it.

	<b>Narrator</b>	Harry comes every single day. Orlando, unable to just bop him over the head or run a rapier through him, engages him instead in an endless game of betting which fly will land on a sugar cube, played with such high stakes she bankrupts him in order to avoid marriage.
	<b>Harry</b>	You have broken my heart, Orlando! Eugh, what's that you have put down my neck?
	Orlando	If rapiers are forbidden, one must have recourse to toads.
	<b>Narrator</b>	That's right, she has dumped the guy who refused to take no for an answer by shoving a toad down the back of his shirt. Toads of course a symbol of a creature living two identities, able to live in both land and in water. Orlando now realises she is properly alone. She tries on a variety of outfits:
	Text	Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us... they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues... If we compare the picture of Orlando as a man with that of Orlando as a woman, the man has his hand free to seize his sword, the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even suspicion. Had they both worn the same clothes, it is possible their outlook might have been the same.
	<b>Narrator</b>	She sets off to London where she gets whipped up into London society, flooded with party invites and lovers, yet the answer to her great question remains elusive:
	Orlando	Life and a lover. Or – Life, a lover?  I go to all these parties, but it strikes me that society doesn't really exist. It elicits tremendous excitement when one is in it but the next day nothing remains – yet the excitement of the moment was intense. Society is everything and society is nothing. It is the most powerful concoction in the world. I don't care if I never meet a soul again. I also have a positive hatred of tea. Is this what people call life?

	<b>Narrator</b>	Oh dear Orlando. It's hard isn't it, this life malarkey? Luckily it is <b>ALL: 1712</b> and poetry is all the rage in London's beau-monde. Why not go along to some fashionable salons, buddy up with Pope, Swift et al despite finding their attitudes to women and petticoats utterly repulsive, and eventually invite Pope back to your place?
	Orlando	What am I doing? It is rash to go home alone with a poet. A poet is Atlantic and lion in one. A man who can destroy illusions is both beast and flood. All these men might be amazing at writing but they are very poor at being decent, interesting people.
	<b>Narrator</b>	Struggling to find where she might fit in, Orlando dresses in the boy's clothes of her youth (from 200 years ago – now that's vintage) and heads out into London's alleyways to find a prostitute. Nell takes her back to her room, but Orlando feels so sorry for her she reveals her disguise. Nell is relieved – 'The plain Dunstable of the matter is I'm not in the mood for the society of the other sex tonight'. Orlando makes friends with Nell and her circle of street women and they sit around sharing life stories - again, Orlando, struggling to fit in to her own society, finds belonging in a group of outsiders in liminal spaces. She spends her days and nights experimenting with different costumes and personas ...
	Orlando	In fact I change so frequently from one set of clothes to another that I appear in other people's memoirs as Lord So-and-So. By changing sex so often, my pleasures of life increase, its experiences multiply. For the probity of breeches, I exchange the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoy the love of both sexes equally.
	<b>Everyone</b>	<b>DONG!</b>
	<b>Narrator</b>	It is midnight once more, and Orlando's libertine ways must end. A great cloud has enveloped the city and everything is dark. The Victorian era has arrived.

Chapter 5	Narrator	<p>The main thing we take from the start of this chapter is how much Woolf hates the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To show this again we're going to take up our clipboards. Can we first read the Victorian downsides... and now the positives?</p> <p>Now Orlando might be a crumpet fan but she'll struggle to eat any at the moment because she has started to be afflicted with something most peculiar – Orlando, can you start tingling electrically all over – that's it – and now hold up your ring finger and just show us how that is alive with this strange tingling – thank you. Now what do we think is going on here?</p> <p>Yes. MARRIAGE. Something else for the cons list of the Victorian age...</p>
	Orlando	<p>I can only suppose that some new discovery had been made about the race, that humans were somehow stuck together, couple after couple, but who made this discovery and when I cannot guess...that each man and each woman has another allotted to it for life, whom it supports, by whom it is supported, till death do them part. What a world we live in! <i>It's Life, A Lover! not Life, A Husband!</i></p> <p>But still... Whom can I lean upon? Everyone is mated except myself... I am mistress of it all yet I am single, I am mateless, I am alone!</p>
	Narrator	<p>She flings herself into nature again, declaring:</p>
	Orlando	<p>I am nature's bride! My hands shall wear no wedding ring. The roots shall twine about them. I have sought happiness through many ages and not found it; fame and missed it; love and not known it. I have known many men and many women; none have I understood!</p>
	Narrator	<p>She trips up and lies in the grass with an injured ankle - the same ankle that several centuries earlier she had taken great care to cover up from sailors, lest she make them fall from the masthead. She thinks she is dying, she thinks she can hear a heartbeat in the earth. But it's not a heartbeat. It's a horse. It is Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine esquire...</p>

	<b>Vita</b>	Based on my darling husband Harold
	Shel	Madam, you're hurt!
	Orlando	I'm dead, sir!
	<b>Narrator</b>	<p>A few minutes later, they became engaged. The match is passionate and supportive and perfect – perfect, perhaps, by virtue of him spending most of their union away at sea (men and mastheads again). They both 'had guessed as always happens between lovers everything of any importance about each other in two seconds at the utmost, and it now remained only to fill in such unimportant details as what they were called; where they lived; and whether they were beggars or people of substance'. We can also guess from this hammy pastiche of a classic Victorian gothic romance novel, that Woolf would add melodramatic literature to the list of Victorian cons.</p> <p>They both realise and exclaim at the same time that they are each of them the opposite:</p>
	Orlando	You're a woman, Shel!
	Shel	You're a man, Orlando
	<b>Narrator</b>	The wind changes, meaning Shel must leave again for the sea (and also meaning, as we know by now, that a transformation is on the cards). The thought of him departing brings tears to Orlando's eyes.
	Orlando	I am a woman - a real woman at last!
	Lawyers	Erm, sorry to interrupt – just wanted to let you know that the law thinks you are officially female, so you can officially live in the house until you have a son to officially own it. All those children you may have had over the last 300 years or so are now officially illegitimate, and that small business of a random marriage in Constantinople has been officially annulled. It's all officially official.

	<b>Narrator</b>	And so Shel and Orlando make it officially official too, with a quickie marriage in the family chapel. Queen Mary's blood-spattered prayer book resurfaces again, birds are blown in by the gathering storm and crash into the chapel window. Luckily the thunder gets so loud, no one hears the word 'Obey' in the marriage vows and no one sees a ring, and at the end of it all, Shel leaps onto his horse and rides off to the sea
	<b>Orlando</b>	Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmardine!!
	<b>Shel</b>	Orlando!!
	<b>Narrator</b>	And their words went dashing and circling like wild hawks together among the belfries and higher and higher, further and further, faster and faster they circled, till they crashed and fell in a shower of fragments to the ground; and she went in.
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Narrator</b>	And so we arrive at the final chapter. While Shel is away at sea, Orlando is at her writing desk, reflecting on her whirlwind marriage and her newfound commitment to writing.
	<b>Orlando</b>	<p>If one's husband was always sailing around Cape Horn, was it marriage? If one liked him, was it marriage? If one liked other people, was it marriage? And finally, if one still wished, more than anything in the whole world, to write poetry, was it marriage?</p> <p>I feel more myself now. I find myself in an extremely happy position; I need neither fight my age, nor submit to it; I am of it, yet remain myself. Now therefore, I can write. When I write I feel a power. And I write and I write. I wonder what the biographer is making of all this sitting and writing and thinking...</p>

<b>Biographer</b>	<i>Oh I switched off a long time ago. You just sit! One could hear a pin drop! If only a pin would drop, that would be LIFE! Can't you at least kill a wasp? That may be the merest trifle compared with killing a man but it would be a fitter subject for a biographer than this mere wool-gathering. Do you know how irritating it is to see one's subject slipping out of one's grasp? What is more humiliating than to see all this dumb show of emotion and excitement when we know that what causes it – thought and imagination – are of no importance whatsoever.</i>
<b>Narrator</b>	Calm down biographer. I think we have established that you like the bold bloody deeds of manly men. Perhaps you are beginning to see that Woolf calling Orlando a biography was a cruel joke. Orlando is a writer now. She's about to win awards and fame. And as Woolf tells us here, 'every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind is written large in his works, yet we require critics to explain the one and biographer to expound the other'.  Orlando is still in pursuit of answers to the question of life...
Orlando	Listen to that bird, asking what life is - LIFE! LIFE! LIFE! If I were dead all this nature would remain just the same. And what of love? Love, the poet says, is woman's whole existence. And what of writing? Didn't I pray once to wrap up in a book something so hard, so rare, one could swear it was life's meaning?
<b>Narrator</b>	Indeed you did Orlando, and you've been working on that book for 300 years. Now at this precise moment she pushes back her chair, stretches her arms, drops her pen and exclaims:
Orlando	DONE! Now I'll get the carriage to London, head to my father's house at Blackfriars and see about sharing my completed manuscript with the world.
<b>Narrator</b>	Carriage, Orlando? No, no, no. This is [ALL:1900]. Trains have been invented! And your father's house in Blackfriars has been sold to the Salvation Army and an umbrella factory. The poetry salons are over. Pope is dead.

	Orlando	I don't recognise this London. Everyone is so busy, each man and woman bent on their own affairs. All I can do is walk, confused. Vast windows are piled with handbags and I can't tell if people are happy or not happy at all. Oh look there's Nicholas Greene!
	<b>Nicholas Greene</b>	<i>Sir</i> Nicholas Greene now! I too have lived 300 years. I am an eminent critic. All English writing is still rubbish mind you. Young writers are in the pay of booksellers, turning out any trash that pays their tailor's bills, an age marked by precious conceits and wild experiments.
	<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando was super disappointed. All these years she had thought of literature as something wild as the wind, hot as fire, swift as lightning, something errant and incalculable, abrupt – and behold, literature was an elderly man in a grey suit talking about the old days. In fact, she was so overcome with disappointment that her bodice jerked slightly and out flew her manuscript.
	<b>Nicholas Greene</b>	What have you got there? A completed manuscript? The Oak Tree, you call it? Brillo. Let's get that published immediately so you can win lots of awards and money and kudos before the end of the book.
	Orlando	<p>Alright, fine, whatever. I thought this was the biggest thing I wanted in life but now I realise, as I wonder around streets once familiar to me, that what I want more is to understand life itself.</p> <p>I will laugh and cry and watch toy boats on the Serpentine and mutter 'Ecstasy, Ecstasy' and talk out loud to myself and feel all the centuries of memories rushing in. I will also talk much more like a normal Woolfian character, with this stream of consciousness business, and the feeling of having thousands of selves</p>
	<b>Narrator</b>	In fact, she is indeed a full Woolfian heroine now, gripped by something of an existential crisis, and the next thing we know –

<b>Biographer</b>	<i>Oh yes. She has a son. 'Safely delivered on Thursday March the 20<sup>th</sup> at 3 o clock in the morning'. See, that's what I'm talking about, dates! Times! Masculinity! Proven fact! Apart from that, Orlando, you are now too boring and weird for me to continue.</i>
<b>Narrator</b>	Time passes. King Edward is on the throne. Lights illuminate everything, everywhere, all day and night.
Orlando	There's no privacy anymore, no lingering shadows and odd corners. Water is hot in seconds. It is harder to cry. Everything feels brighter than ever, louder than ever. Ow! What was that?
<b>Everyone</b>	<b>DONG!</b>
<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando leapt 10 times as if she had been violently struck on the head. It is 10 o clock in the morning on the 11 <sup>th</sup> October 1928. The present day.
Orlando	What more terrifying revelation can there be than that it is the present moment? That we survive the shock at all is only possible because the past shelters us on one side and the future on another. I don't like this at all. I think I'm going to jump in a car that I have only just discovered has been invented and drive down central London shouting at everyone and talking to myself.
<b>Narrator</b>	Orlando ends up wide-eyed in a department store. She keeps getting flashes from her past, symbolised by going up and down in the lift. She thinks she sees Sasha. Nothing is any longer one thing. She wonders if this is middle age. Back in the car, she puts her foot down and hightails it to the countryside, obsessing about the meaning of 'self' ...
Orlando	There's a new self at every corner... there may be more than two thousand... the Captain Self or Key Self locks up and commands all the others. All my different identities are like plates piled on a waiter's hand – each with attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own. A biography is considered complete if there are 6 or 7 selves, but people have thousands. What of me right now? What then? Who then? Thirty-six; in a motorcar; a woman. Yes, but a million other things as well.

<b>Narrator</b>	Finally she arrives home and tours the great house, remembering all its people and events, its stories and histories. The house has been her one constant companion, never judging all her different selves, seeing her for who she was at each age, permitting her to hide, to write, containing her emotions. But she realises the house belongs to history, not to her. The clock strikes four. It is like an earthquake, an explosion.
Orlando	<p>I head out into the fields. My mind begins to toss like the sea. Agh! My gardener has lost the nail on his thumb, gross! And here is my oak tree. I will fling myself onto it and feel the bones of the tree running out like ribs from a spine...I am riding the back of the world.</p> <p>Oh, this old manuscript. I should have brought a trowel to bury it. I'll just leave it here on the earth and give it back to the land. Writing has nothing to do with fame or prizes. Writers must not write for others. Poetry should be 'a voice answering a voice'.</p>
<b>Narrator</b>	Looking all around, she sees nature as its own master or mistress – no human can ever own it. Over the last 300 years, it is the one thing that has never changed. Night descends, her favourite time. She is expecting Shel back from his voyage. Ecstasy, Ecstasy she says again, standing by the oak tree. Then she cries –
Orlando	Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine!
<b>Narrator</b>	All is still, and all is lit for a dead queen. Elizabeth I arrives and Orlando curtsseys.
Orlando	The house is at your service Ma'am, nothing has been changed.
<b>Everyone</b>	<b>DONG!</b>
<b>Narrator</b>	Yes, it is midnight. An aeroplane is approaching. She bears her breasts to the moon and her pearls are the only light source guiding the plane home like a phosphorescent flare
Orlando	Here! Shel! Here!

	<b>Narrator</b>	Shel, now grown into a fine sea captain, leaps to the ground. Over his head flew a single wild bird
	Orlando	It is the goose! The wild goose! That has appeared throughout as a symbol of elusive literary accomplishment!
	<b>Everyone</b>	And the twelfth stroke of midnight sounded, the twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday the eleventh of October, nineteen hundred and twenty eight. THE END.