

All the world's a stage is the phrase that begins a famous soliloquy from William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, spoken by the melancholy Jaques. The speech compares the world to a stage and life to a play, and catalogues the seven stages of a man's life, sometimes referred to as the **seven ages of man**: infant, school-boy, lover, soldier, justice, pantaloon, and second childhood, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything". Shakespeare means that the world is nothing but a theatrical stage where we humans are actors. From our birth we enter the stage and keep on acting true to our age, until old age when we act the last scene. It is one of Shakespeare's most frequently-quoted passages.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." — Jaques (Act II, Scene VII, lines 139-166)