

### **3. All the World's a Stage**

#### **About the author**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, dramatist and actor of the Renaissance era. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in English language and the world's greatest dramatist. His most famous works include Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth.

This poem is taken from William Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. With these words "all the world's a stage" begins the monologue by the character Melancholy Jaques in Act II Scene VI of the play.

In this poem, Shakespeare has compared life with a stage. The seven stages of a person's life are infant, school going boy, lover/husband, soldier/fighter, justice ability to understand the right and wrong, Pantalone (greediness and high in status) and old-age., which can come into your mind when you go through this poem with the theme that a person is the ultimate loser in the game of life.

#### **Summary**

The poem 'All the World's a Stage' has been written by William Shakespeare. "All the world's a stage" is the phrase that begins a monologue from his pastoral comedy *As You Like It*. The lines of the poem are spoken by the melancholy Jaques in Act II Scene VII Line 139.

It describes different stages of life. In this poem we are just taken as the performers who have to play different roles in the Earth. There are entries as well as exits of human beings in this worldly stage.

In this poem, he seems to have the impression that human life is not real. What we see and hear isn't a reality. Human life is a play of make-believe. Here Shakespeare traces human life through the famous seven ages - the infant in arms, the schoolboy, the lover, the soldier, the justice, the retired man, and the worn-out senior, sinking back into dissolution. The whole world's a stage. We're only actors.

We enter the stage and we go off it again. One man in his lifetime plays a lot of roles.

"All the world's a stage" is the phrase that begins a monologue from William Shakespeare's pastoral comedy *As You Like It* spoken by the melancholy Jaques in Act II Scene VII Line 139.

At first, he plays the part of the infant, crying and throwing milk in the arms of the nurse. Then he plays the part of a schoolboy who is not willing to go to school. With his shining face of the morning, he trudges at the pace of the snail. Then there comes the role of the lover. He sighs like a furnace, and writes pitiful verses, addressing his beloved. He plays the role of a soldier in the fourth stage. It's stocked with all the violent oaths. He's wearing a wonderful beard. In a quarrel, he is too sensitive and fast and hasty. He comes in temper soon. He is willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of unsubstantial glory. Then he will play the role of judge. He's a bulging belly man, with severe eyes. He's a very wise man. His appearance is formal and he seems to be a mature person.

Then Shakespeare describes old age as the sixth stage of life. In this he wears pantaloons and slippers on his feet. He is now thin, lean, and weak, and his eyesight too has become weak. His manly voice has turned into the shrill voice of a child. It's pretty funny. The old man is in slippers, wearing glasses. His manly voice once more turns into a child's shrill tone. The last role is the second child. It's so full of forgetfulness. It's without teeth, without eyes, without taste, without everything. In this way, he completes his role in the play. His life is over by playing the role in the world stage. He leaves the stage or he dies.