



Exit Lines

Gotta run. Must dash. Oh, I'll just amble on. Call the cops while I hold him down! Well... if that's the way you want it. Catch you later. Follow me. I'm outa here. Hit the road, Jack. Get out of my face. Thank you, senator, I shall strive to live up to this honor. Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

There are a hundred ways from never to say goodbye and leave good company. In Shakespeare's plays there are ten times that amount. Here are exit lines from six comedies. Use them to get Shakespeare's words in the mouth, to link movement to words, to imagine a situation that might have gone on before and during the speaking of a line, and to enjoy a short improvisation.

THE PROCEDURE:

1. Assemble participants into pairs. Give each pair one of the exit lines below.
2. Give participants five minutes to practice saying the line, to imagine the circumstances surrounding the line, to plan action to accompany the line, and to practice delivering the line with appropriate action.
3. Encourage participants not to hold back, to throw themselves into the scene. Participants can add gestures, sounds, dance steps, acrobatics, improvised props—anything but additional words.

Titania: Fairies, away! We shall chide downright if I further stay. [Exeunt Titania and her fairies.] *A Midsummer Night's Dream (MND)* 2.1.144-45

Puck: I'll put a girdle around the earth in forty minutes. *MND* 2.1.175

Demetrius: I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell, / To die upon the hand I love so well. *MND* 2.1.243-44

Oberon: And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow. *MND* 2.1.266

Puck: I go, I go, look how I go, / Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. *MND* 3.2.159-60

Lysander: Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl. *MND* 3.2.338-39

Theseus: Sweet friends, to bed. / In nightly revels and new jollity. *MND* 5.1.370

Portia: Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before. / Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, / another knocks at the door. *Merchant of Venice (MV)* 1.2.132-34

Jessica: I will make fast the doors, and gild myself / With some more ducats, and be with you straight. *MV* 2.5.48-49

Benedick: O God, sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. *Much Ado About Nothing (MAAN)* 2.1.274-75

Benedick: Go comfort your cousin. I must say / She is dead; and so farewell. *MAAN* 4.1.334-36

Benedick: I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes, and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's. *MAAN* 5.2.102-04

Celia: Now go [we in] content To liberty, and not to banishment. *As You Like It (AYLI)* 1.3.137-38

Duke Ferdinand: Well, push him out of doors, / And let my officers of such a nature / Make an extent upon his house and lands / Do this expediently, and turn him going. *AYLI* 3.1.15-18

Touchstone: God buy you, and God mend your voices! Come, Audrey. *AYLI* 5.3.40-41

Olivia: Farewell, fair cruelty. *Twelfth Night (TN)* 2.1.288

Feste: He is but mad yet, madonna, and the fool shall look to the madman. *TN* 1.5.137-38

Sir Toby: Come, Come, I'll go burn some sack, 'tis too late to go to bed now. Come, knight, come, knight. *TN* 2.3.190-92

Maria: Here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling. *TN* 2.5.22

Antonio: To the Elephant.
Sebastian: I do remember. *TN* 3.4.49-50

Malvolio: I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you. *TN* 5.1.377

Evans: Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you follow. *The Merry Wives of Windsor (MWW)* 3.1.125

Shallow: Well, fare you well. We shall have the freer wooing at Master Page's. *MWW* 3.2.84-85

Host: Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, knight, / I am undone! Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone! *MWW* 4.5.90-91

Mrs. Ford: The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak! *MWW* 5.3.23-24

Host: Farewell, my hearts. I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him. *MWW* 3.2.87-88