

## As You Like It - The Story

**Duke Frederick** has usurped the place of his older brother and banished him to the Forest of Arden where he lives with some of his supporters - rather in the manner of Robin Hood. He has kept the Old Duke's daughter, **Rosalind**, at his court as a companion to his own daughter, **Celia**, and the two girls are inseparable.

**Oliver** is the eldest son of the late Sir Roland de Bois, a man much loved by the Old Duke. On his father's death, he promised to look after his two younger brothers, **Jaques de Bois** and **Orlando**. Jaques is at school but Oliver treats Orlando badly. Orlando leaves and decides to go to Frederick's court to fight his wrestler, **Charles**. Oliver suggests that Charles should try to kill Orlando.

Rosalind and Celia watch the wrestling. They both try to persuade Orlando not to fight and Rosalind and Orlando seem to fall in love. Orlando wins the wrestling contest and leaves. Duke Frederick decides to banish Rosalind - claiming she is a traitor like her father. Rosalind and Celia agree they will go together to the Forest of Arden, Rosalind disguised as a boy for safety and that they will take **Touchstone**, the court jester with them.

The Old Duke and his followers are happy in the forest, except for Jaques (not Jaques de Bois) who is described as 'melancholy', which means sad.

Orlando returns to his brother's house to be met by **Adam**, an elderly servant of his father. Adam tells him that Oliver intends to kill him that night. He offers Orlando all his life-savings and asks to be allowed to escape with him. They head for the forest.

Lots of little scenes follow showing the various characters in the forest. Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone meet two shepherds, **Corin** and **Silvius** and beg them to help them buy food. The lords, in a separate part of the forest lay out a banquet for the Old Duke. Orlando, in yet another part of the forest, leaves Adam, who is weak from hunger, to seek food.

Orlando stumbles upon the Old Duke's banquet and at first threatens them. When the Old Duke responds kindly to his requests for food, he puts away his sword and asks them to wait while he brings Adam. They do and the Old Duke finds that Orlando is the son of his old friend Sir Roland de Bois.

Frederick sends Oliver to find his brother and bring him back dead or alive. In his absence, he seizes Oliver's land.

Orlando wanders in the forest writing love poems to Rosalind which he hangs on bushes and carves in the bark of trees. Rosalind and Celia find them and Celia guesses who has written them. They hear him coming and hide, listening to his conversation about love with Jaques. When Jaques leaves, they reveal themselves, Rosalind, still dressed as Ganymede, pretending she is the brother of Aliena, the shepherdess. She tells Orlando that she will cure him of lovesickness if he visits her every day and calls her Rosalind. He agrees.

Touchstone meets **Audrey**, a goatherd with whom he is in love. He wants to be married by a country vicar outdoors but Jaques says he should be married properly in church.

Some time later, Rosalind is complaining to Celia that Orlando has not turned up for his daily 'lesson'. Corin arrives and tells them to come and watch Silvius with the woman he loves, **Phoebe**, a shepherdess. Silvius declares his love but Phoebe is proud and taunts him. Rosalind, still as Ganymede, steps in and rebukes and insults her, saying that she is ugly and that Silvius is far too good for her. She immediately falls in love with Ganymede! Once Rosalind has left, though, Phoebe realises she has been insulted and resolves to write a letter to Ganymede which Silvius promises to deliver.

Orlando comes to Ganymede to be cured of his lovesickness. Rosalind (Ganymede) encourages him to say how much he loves her then tells him that both men and women change after marriage and often end up disliking each other. Orlando assures her that he will not be like that and nor will Rosalind. They agree to meet again at two o'clock.

At two o'clock he has not arrived but Silvius does with the letter from Phoebe. It is a love poem. Rosalind reads it aloud to Silvius and tells him not to be such a drip. He leaves and Oliver enters looking for the home of a boy who has been pretending to be Rosalind. He explains why Orlando has not turned up. Orlando was on his way to see Rosalind when he saw a wretched man under a tree. A lioness was about to attack him but Orlando bravely fought off the lioness and saved the man. On closer inspection, he realised that it was Oliver, his brother. They made friends and Orlando led his brother to the Old Duke who fed him. Orlando had been wounded by the lioness and Oliver, in turn, saved him. Orlando instructed Oliver to bring a bloody handkerchief to Ganymede to prove he had not broken his word deliberately. Hearing that Orlando is

hurt, Rosalind faints.

Oliver, back with Orlando, says he has fallen in love with Aliena who he thinks is a shepherdess. He tells Orlando he can have all his father's estate and he will live in the forest with Aliena as a shepherd. Rosalind arrives and Orlando tells her that Oliver and Aliena will be married tomorrow in the forest with the Old Duke and his lords at the celebration. She adds that she knows how to make Rosalind appear and that he, too, will be married at the same time. Phoebe and Silvius turn up and are pulled into this as well.

In a separate scene Touchstone and Audrey arrange to be married the following day.

In the forest the following day, Rosalind, still dressed as Ganymede, extracts a promise from the Old Duke, her father, that he will allow his daughter to marry Orlando, a promise from Orlando that he will marry Rosalind and a promise from Phoebe that she will marry Silvius if she decides she doesn't want to marry Ganymede. She leaves and Touchstone and Audrey turn up for the ceremony. She and Celia then return, as themselves. The Old Duke is delighted to have found his daughter, Orlando is delighted to have found his love and Phoebe is adamant she will not marry another woman so is resigned to marrying Silvius. Hymen, the god of marriage, conducts the weddings.

Jaques de Bois arrives and says that Duke Frederick had come to the forest to kill his brother but had met a holy man who had converted him. Frederick had decided to relinquish his crown and estates and give them back to his brother, preferring to follow a religious life. Jaques decides to leave the Old Duke and enter a life of contemplation with Frederick rather than return to the revelries of court. So, they all live happily ever after!