

## AS YOU LIKE IT – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S As You Like It

### Basic Info:

- a pastoral comedy by **William Shakespeare** believed to have been written in 1599 or early 1600.
- It remains a favorite among audiences and has been adapted for radio, film, and musical theatre.

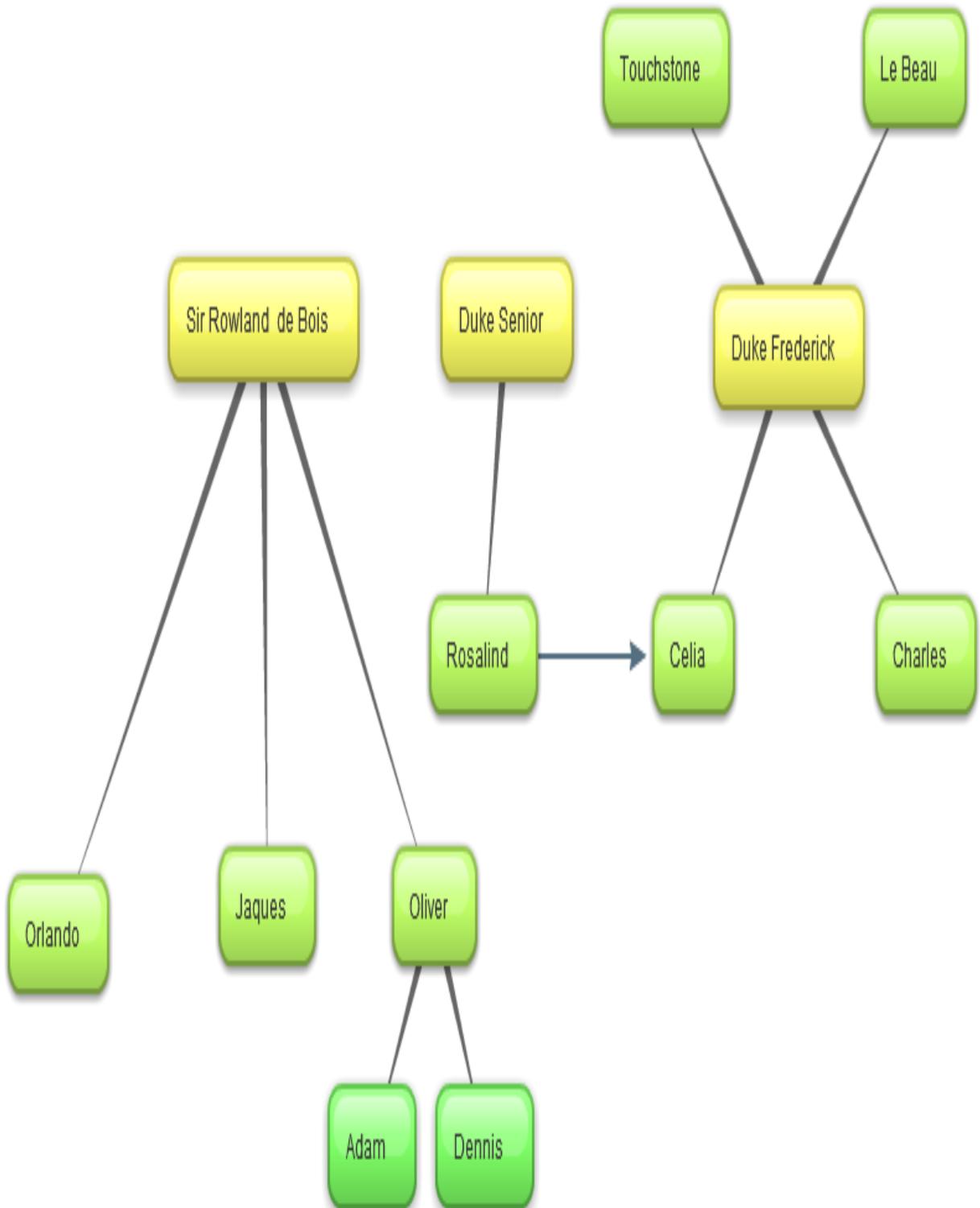
### Basic Info:

- It was most likely written **around 1598–1600**, during the last years of **Elizabeth's reign**.
- It was first printed in the collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, known as the **First Folio**, during 1623.

### William Shakespeare's Main Source

- All characters and plot are **purely fictitious** but information was drawn from **Rosalynde by Thomas Lodge (1557-1625)**

## Character Map





## MAIN Characters:



Rosalind



Orlando

**Rosalind** - The daughter of Duke Senior. Rosalind, considered one of Shakespeare's most delightful heroines, is independent minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and terribly clever. Rather than slink off into defeated exile, Rosalind resourcefully uses her trip to the Forest of Ardenne as an opportunity to take control of her own destiny. When she disguises herself as Ganymede—a handsome young man—and offers herself as a tutor.

Rosalind is one of Shakespeare's most recognized heroines. Generally noted for her resilience, quick wit, and beauty, Rosalind is a vital character in *As You Like It*. Most commonly seen next to her beloved cousin Celia, Rosalind is also a faithful friend, leader, and schemer. She stays true to her family and friends throughout the entire story, no matter how dangerous the

consequences. Rosalind dominates the stage. Her true decision-making skills can be seen in the last scene of Act V (5) where she has to present herself as Rosalind to her father and to Orlando, but at the same time change Phebe's opinion to marry Silvius. She is the main character of the play who extracts the clarity of important traits in other characters.

**Orlando** - The youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and younger brother of Oliver. Orlando is an attractive young man who has languished without a gentleman's education or training. Orlando cares for the aging Adam in the Forest of Ardenne and later risks his life to save Oliver from a hungry lioness, proving himself a proper gentleman. He is the most obvious romantic match for Rosalind.

**Duke Senior** - The father of Rosalind and the rightful ruler of the dukedom in which the play is set. Having been banished by his usurping brother, Frederick, Duke Senior now lives in exile in the Forest of Ardenne with a number of loyal men, including Lord Amiens and Jaques. Content in the forest, where he claims to learn as much from stones and brooks as he would in a church or library.

**Celia** - The daughter of Duke Frederick and Rosalind's dearest friend. Celia's devotion to Rosalind is unmatched, as evidenced by her decision to follow her cousin into exile. To make the trip, Celia assumes the disguise of a simple shepherdess and calls herself Aliena. As elucidated by her extreme love of Rosalind and her immediate devotion to Oliver, whom she marries at the end of the play.

**Duke Frederick** - The brother of Duke Senior and usurper of his throne. Duke Frederick's cruel nature and volatile temper are displayed when he banishes his niece, Rosalind, from court without reason. That Celia, his own daughter, cannot mitigate his unfounded anger demonstrates the intensity of the duke's hatefulness.

## The PLOT

- As You Like It is based on **traditional pastoral romance**, a very popular literary form in the Renaissance.

-The pastoral celebrated the virtues of a simple life lived close to nature, and idealized romantic love.

-**Shakespeare** tries to please his audiences with their likes in certain make up of the plot.

Duke Senior, banished and usurped by his brother, Duke Frederick, now lives in the Forest of Arden, with his noblemen. Senior's daughter Rosalind has been allowed to remain at court with Frederick's daughter Celia, but she suddenly incurs Frederick's displeasure, and is banished. Celia decides to run away with her, and they leave for Arden with Rosalind disguised as a man, and accompanied by Touchstone, a clown. Rosalind changes her name to Ganymede, and Celia to Aliena.

Before they leave, Rosalind falls in love with one of the sons of Rowland De Boys—Orlando, who is ruled and hated by his elder brother, Oliver. Orlando foils Oliver's plan to have him killed in a match against the Duke's chief wrestler, Charles, by defeating the champion.

Orlando is then advised by Le Beau to leave the court, and he flees to Arden with his old servant Adam. They are starving when they encounter Duke Senior, who takes them in, delighted to discover that Orlando is the son of his old friend Sir Rowland.

Rosalind and Celia observe two shepherds, Corin and Silvius, talking, and learn of Silvius's love for Phebe, a shepherdess. They buy pastures and herd from them, and decide to live as shepherds. Touchstone spends much time in the company of Audrey, a country wench who is loved by William, eventually wooing her himself. Jacques, a melancholy nobleman of Duke Senior's company, becomes fascinated by Touchstone, and spends much time talking to him.

Orlando leaves love messages for Rosalind all over the forest, which she in due course sees. When the two girls meet Orlando again, 'Ganymede' persuades Orlando to treat 'him' as his Rosalind, so that he may practise wooing. Frederick, believing Celia and Rosalind to have fled with Orlando, sends Oliver after his brother, threatening to take the De Boys' lands if Oliver returns without him.

Oliver is saved from a lion by Orlando, and the two brothers are reconciled. Oliver relates the story to the two girls, and falls in love with Celia. Phebe has fallen for Ganymede, which causes some confusion until Rosalind reveals herself. Phebe then agrees to marry Silvius. Rosalind is reunited with her father, and marries Orlando. Oliver marries Celia. Touchstone marries Audrey.

The third son of Sir Rowland, Jacques, arrives to announce that Frederick had intended to invade the forest with an army, but on his way he met a religious man who converted him from his harsh ways, and he has now begun a religious life. Jacques decides to join him. Duke Senior has his lands and crown restored.

### ***As You Like It* is a romantic pastoral comedy,**

*As You Like It* is considered to be a romantic pastoral comedy, one of Shakespeare's most light-hearted plays. It is a romantic comedy in that it ends in multiple marriages: Rosalind and Orlando; Celia and Orlando's brother Oliver; the shepherd Silvius and the maid Phebe; and Touchstone and his milkmaid Audrey. It is pastoral because it extols the virtues of life in the country, in the peace of Nature, as opposed to the life of the courtier. Shakespeare's party of royals, banished to the Forest of Arden, surrounded by farms and happy, simple folk, discover that they are much happier in these simpler surroundings than they ever were at court. The pastoral was a kind of nostalgic, sentimental representation of country life that really did not reflect reality, but was set up to be a kind of ideal. Shakespeare plays with this ideal in *As You Like It*.

Possible essay questions :

1. *As You Like It* as a Pastoral Comedy
2. *As you like it* as a Pastoral Romantic Comedy
3. Gender Roles/ Mistaken Identity/ Role of Disguise in *As you like it*
4. Jacques as a Melancholic character in *As you like it*

- **As You Like It is considered by many to be one of Shakespeare's greatest comedies, and the heroine, Rosalind, is praised as one of his most inspiring characters and has more lines than any of Shakespeare's female characters. Rosalind, the daughter of a banished duke falls in love with Orlando the disinherited son of one of the duke's friends. When she is banished from the court by her usurping uncle, Duke Frederick , Rosalind switches genders and as Ganymede travels with her loyal cousin Celia and the jester Touchstone to the Forest of Arden, where her father and his friends live in exile.**