

## SYNOPSIS:

### The plot of *As You Like It*

**Duke Frederick** has unlawfully taken the lands and dukedom from his older brother, **Duke Senior** (Act 1), who now lives in exile in the **Forest of Arden** with a handful of his lords (also called courtiers), among them the melancholy **Jaques** (Act 2-5). There they lead a simple life surrounded by a few shepherds and other country people. Duke Senior's daughter **Rosalind** has been allowed to stay at court with her cousin and best friend **Celia** (Act 1).

**Orlando**, youngest son of the nearby landowner **Sir Roland de Boys**, has been cheated out of his inheritance by **his older brother Oliver** after their father's death. When Orlando tries to change his fortune by challenging the undefeated **wrestler Charles** at Duke Frederick's court, he wins the match to everyone's surprise. There, he also meets Rosalind and the two fall in love with each other at first sight. When Duke Frederick learns that the successful new champion is the son of one of his brother's loyal followers, he does not give him any reward and sends him away. (Act 1)

In one of his angry moods, Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind because he fears that she is too popular with the people in the dukedom. Celia decides to run away together with Rosalind to the Forest of Arden. For safety reasons, they disguise themselves and change their normal looks: Celia becomes the country maiden "**Aliena**" who is accompanied by Rosalind disguised as her brother "**Ganymede**". They take **Touchstone**, the court's fool, with them. (Act 1)

After the match, Orlando returns home and is warned by **his old servant Adam** that his brother wants to kill him. The two of them decide to flee at night to the Forest of Arden. There they find the exiled Duke and join his camp, while "Ganymede", "Aliena" and Touchstone meet the **shepherd Corin** who helps them to buy a cottage. (Act 2)

In the following (Acts 3-5), the trio meets old and new inhabitants of the forest. The **goatherd Audrey** falls for Touchstone and they talk about marriage. "Ganymede" meets Orlando again who does not recognize her in her disguise. Orlando has pinned his love poems at trees all over the forest and admits to being love-sick for Rosalind. "Ganymede" offers to cure Orlando of this by pretending to act as Rosalind to him and they arrange several meetings for this role-play. The **shepherdess Phoebe** also meets "Ganymede" and falls in love with him. This makes the **young shepherd Silvius** even sadder, who madly and sheepishly loves Phoebe, even though she does not return his feelings at all.

(Act 5) Oliver comes to the Forest of Arden looking for Orlando, gets attacked by a lioness and Orlando saves him. This act/deed changes Oliver at heart: He becomes a loving and selfless brother who gives all his land and wealth to Orlando. Oliver meets "Alien" and they fall instantly in love. Finally, Rosalind arranges for everyone to meet at Duke Senior's camp. She reveals her true identity and pairs everyone with their proper partners: herself with Orlando, Celia with Oliver, Phoebe with Silvius, and Touchstone with Audrey. News arrives that Duke Frederick has changed his ways and given the dukedom back to Duke Senior. The play ends happily with four weddings.