William Shakespeare’s

AS YOU LIKE IT

143 PAGES

A PASTORAL COMEDY

REVIEWED BY SANDEEP SAMANT

FE COMP(3142)

MAIN CHARACTERS:

*The Court of Duke Frederick:*

* Duke Frederick, Duke Senior's younger brother and his usurper, also [Celia's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celia_(As_You_Like_It)) father
* [Rosalind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosalind_(As_You_Like_It)), Duke Senior's daughter
* [Celia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celia_(As_You_Like_It)), Duke Frederick's daughter and Rosalind's cousin
* [Touchstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touchstone_(As_You_Like_It)), a court [fool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespearian_fool) or jester

*The Household of the deceased Sir Rowland de Boys:*

* Oliver de Boys, the eldest son and heir
* Jaques de Boys, the second son
* [Orlando de Boys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orlando_(As_You_Like_It)), the youngest son
* Adam, a faithful old servant who follows Orlando into exile

*The Exiled Court of Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden:*

* Duke Senior, Duke Frederick's older brother and Rosalind's father
* [Jaques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaques_(As_You_Like_It)), a discontented, melancholic lord
* Amiens, an attending lord and musician
* Lords in Duke Senior's forest court

*Country folk in the Forest of Arden:*

* Phebe, a proud shepherdess
* Silvius, a shepherd
* Audrey, a country girl
* Corin, an elderly shepherd
* William, a country man

PLOT SUMMARY:

The play is set in a [duchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duchy) in France, but most of the action takes place in a location called the *Forest of Arden.*

Frederick has usurped the Duchy and [exiled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exile) his older brother, Duke Senior. Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind, has been permitted to remain at court because she is the closest friend and cousin of Frederick's only child, [Celia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celia_(As_You_Like_It)).

Orlando, a young gentleman of the kingdom who at first sight has fallen in love with Rosalind, is forced to flee from his home after being persecuted(ill treated) by his older brother, Oliver.

Frederick becomes angry and banishes Rosalind from court. Celia and Rosalind decide to flee together accompanied by the court clown, Touchstone, with Rosalind disguised as a young man and Celia disguised as a poor lady.

Rosalind, now disguised as [Ganymede](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganymede_(mythology))  and Celia, now disguised as Aliena arrive in the [Forest of Arden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_of_Arden), where the [exiled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exile) Duke now lives with some supporters, including "the [melancholy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depression_(mood)) Jaques", a [malcontent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcontent) figure, who is introduced to us weeping over the slaughter of a [deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deer). "Ganymede" and "Aliena" do not immediately encounter the Duke and his companions, as they meet up with Corin, an impoverished [tenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leasehold_estate), and offer to buy his master's crude cottage.

Orlando and his servant Adam, meanwhile, find the Duke and his men and are soon living with them and posting simplistic [love poems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_poem) for Rosalind on the trees. Rosalind, also in love with Orlando, meets him as Ganymede and pretends to counsel him to cure him of being in love. Ganymede says that "he" will take Rosalind's place and that "he" and Orlando can act out their relationship.

The shepherdess, Phebe, with whom Silvius is in love, has fallen in love with Ganymede (Rosalind in disguise), though "Ganymede" continually shows that "he" is not interested in Phebe. Touchstone, meanwhile, has fallen in love with the dull-witted shepherdess, Audrey, and tries to woo her, but eventually is forced to be married first. William, another shepherd, attempts to marry Audrey as well, but is stopped by Touchstone, who threatens to kill him "a hundred and fifty ways".

Finally, Silvius, Phebe, Ganymede and Orlando are brought together in an argument with each other over who will get whom. Ganymede says he will solve the problem, having Orlando promise to marry Rosalind, and Phebe promise to marry Silvius if she cannot marry Ganymede.

Orlando sees Oliver in the forest and rescues him from a lioness, causing Oliver to repent for mistreating Orlando. Oliver meets Aliena (Celia's false identity) and falls in love with her, and they agree to marry. Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, Silvius and Phebe, and Touchstone and Audrey all are married in the final [scene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scene_(fiction)), after which they discover that Frederick also has repented his faults after meeting a hermit on his way as he decides to restore his legitimate brother to the [dukedom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke) and adopt a religious life. Jaques, ever melancholic, declines their invitation to return to the court preferring to stay in the forest and to adopt a religious life as well. Rosalind speaks an epilogue to the audience, commending the play to both men and women in the audience.

CRITICAL REVIEW:

**BY SANDEEP SINGH SAMANT**

A Shakespearean comedy is one filled with humor and vivid characters. As You Like It, for example, is the story of two girls who go walking in the woods and find husbands. It is the story of a young man who writes thousands of poems and tapes them on a tree in monument of his beloved. It is the story of the pessimistic philosopher. It is the story of the pessimistic philosopher

As You Like It is indeed one of Shakespeare‘s finest and most entertaining comedies. The small stories connected with the main story of Rosalind and Orlando are very interesting, the portrayal of characters is vivid and convincing, the dialogues are brilliant and full of wit and humour. Most of all, Rosalind is one of the wittiest and the most beautiful heroines of Shakespeare‘s plays.

**The Main Plot and the Sub-Plots:** As You Like It has at its centre the main plot of Rosalind and Orlando love-affair. We have some other sub-plots like the dispute between Duke Senior and Duke Frederick which leads to the banishment of Duke Senior and usurpation of the Kingdom by Duke Frederick unlawfully, a dispute between two other brothers Oliver and Orlando. Celia-Oliver love affair, the Silvius-Phebe-Ganymede complication and the Touchstone-Audrey love-affair. All these love affairs find fulfillment in the last scene and are closely related to the main plot.

**Themes of the Play:** Love is, in fact, the main theme of the play but there are several other themes which find expression in the play-the futility of injustice, cruelty and selfishness, the triumph of love, the theme of self-reform and forgiveness. Love manifests itself in the play in many ways but the most striking kind of love is the love-at-first-sight.

**A Romantic Comedy:** There are a number of romantic elements in the play. The theme of love is at the center of the play which in itself is a romantic subject. Orlando‘s intense love for Rosalind, Celia‘s passionate love for Oliver give a romantic touch to the play.

**Comic Elements in the Play:** Although the play begins on a note of sadness due to the banishment of the rightful Duke and also because of the treatment that Orlando receives at the hands of his brother Oliver, the play ends on a happy note. A happy ending is one of the essentials of a comedy. Rosalind is perhaps Shakespeare‘s wittiest heroine. Some of her remarks are most amusing and brilliant. Celia too is a witty woman, always ready with her humorous remarks. Then, of course, we have Touchstone, who offers witty and laughable comments over various matters. Touchstone pokes fun at everything and everybody. Indeed, As You Like It is rich in laughter and comic elements.

**The Pastoral Character of the Play:** As You Like It has a pastoral setting. The major portion of the play takes place in the Forest of Arden inhabited by sheep, shepherds, shepherdesses, goat-herds and the like. But the pastoral element is emphasized by the presence of three characters namely Corin, Silvius and Phebe.

**At the end I would say it was worth reading this novel I liked it and I was really inspired by the versatility of Rosalind’s character and I even found that we are all secretly the character Jaques, the play's cynical observer, who watches the love bloom and persists in his views: that this is a story that has happened before to us all and will happen many times before it is retired.**

**Old this play may be, but its values are anything but ancient.**