

As You Like It

SYNOPSIS

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Orlando, the youngest of three brothers, is badly treated by Oliver, the eldest. Oliver even arranges for Charles, the court wrestler, to injure him. The court is under Frederick, who has usurped his elder brother, known as Duke Senior, and banished him. Duke Senior is in exile in the Forest of Arden. His daughter Rosalind has been allowed to remain at court because Duke Frederick's daughter Celia is her best friend.

When Orlando unexpectedly defeats Charles, Rosalind and he fall in love. Duke Frederick, in anger, banishes Rosalind too, but Celia decides to go into exile with her. Rosalind disguises herself as a boy called Ganymede, while Celia calls herself Aliena. They take the court fool Touchstone with them into the winter forest and agree to buy a farm there to help a shepherd they meet, called Corin.

Meanwhile, warned by his old servant Adam that there is a plot to kill him, Orlando sets off for the forest too, accompanied by Adam. There they meet Duke Senior and his friends, including the cynical philosopher Jaques.

Learning that Orlando has come to the forest and is carving her name on the trees, Rosalind talks to him, and as he does not recognize her, she decides to play a game: she goes on pretending to be Ganymede, and claims to be able to cure him of the sickness of love by pretending to be Rosalind and showing him how impossible women can be. At the same time the young shepherd Silvius is in love with the shepherdess Phebe, but she falls in love with 'Ganymede'. Touchstone falls for the goat-girl Audrey and promises to marry her. Jaques has always wanted to work as a fool, and is delighted to find Touchstone.

When Oliver comes to the forest he meets Celia, who tells Rosalind how she has fallen in love with him because he has changed after Orlando has been injured by a lion while saving his life. Rosalind nearly reveals her true identity when she faints. Finally Rosalind promises to sort out all the couples, after making Phebe promise to marry Silvius if she can't have 'Ganymede'. She returns as herself. There are four weddings, and Duke Senior is pleased to be reunited with his daughter. The brother of Orlando and Oliver also brings the news that Frederick has been converted and become a hermit, and they can all go back to court. Only Jaques is dissatisfied and decides to join Frederick.

Media:

DVD:

As You Like It (1937), dir. Paul Czinner with Laurence Olivier

As You Like It (BBC TV Shakespeare 1978), dir. Basil Coleman, with Helen Mirren

As You Like It (1992), dir. Christine Edzard

As You Like It (2006), dir. Kenneth Branagh (set among British merchants in 19th century Japan)

Shakespeare: The Animated Tales Act 5 (2007) *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*

As You Like It (Shakespeare's Globe 2009), dir. Thea Sharrock

CD Audio:

As You Like It (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]