



# *As You Like It*

2011 STUDY GUIDE



# Table of Contents

About the Play .....	3
About the Characters .....	4
Important Ideas.....	5
“Rosalind of Many Parts” .....	6
About William Shakespeare.....	9
Theatre in Shakespeare’s Day.....	10
Costumes in Shakespeare’s Day.....	12
Which Character Are You? .....	13
Quiz Results .....	15
Theatre Etiquette .....	17
About AST .....	18
Works Consulted.....	19

# About the Play

After the late Sir Rowland de Bois passes away, his youngest son, Orlando, is fed up with the unfair upbringing he has received from his eldest brother, Oliver. Feeling annoyed with the complaints of his younger brother, Oliver insists that Charles, the court wrestler, defeat Orlando in a wrestling match the following day. However, to everyone's surprise, Orlando pulverizes the robust Charles. Among the spectators of the match are Celia, daughter to Duke Frederick and her cousin, Rosalind, who instantly falls in love with the triumphant Orlando. Brotherly opposition exists in Rosalind's family as well since her father, Duke Senior, now resides in the Forest of Arden after having been usurped by Celia's father.



Shortly after the wrestling match, Rosalind faces the same fate as her father when Duke Frederick banishes her from the court despite Celia's pleas. Rosalind and Celia decide to flee the court together in disguise, with Rosalind taking on the identity of a young man named "Ganymede" and Celia posing as Ganymede's sister, "Aliena." The two bring the amusing court jester, Touchstone, into the Forest of Arden.

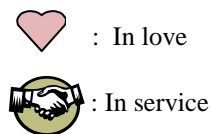
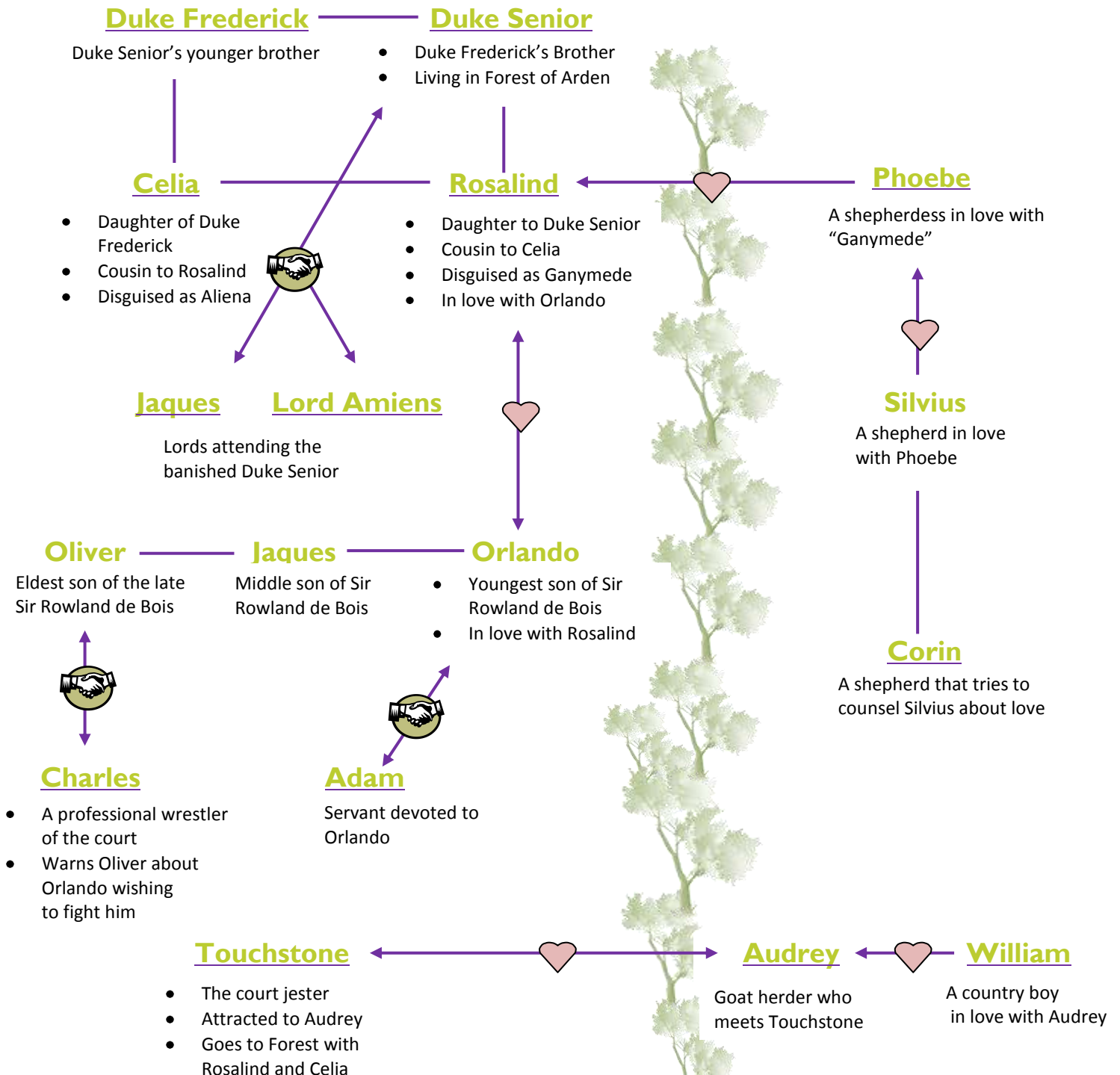
Meanwhile, Orlando flees from the harm of his furious elder brother, and goes to the Forest of Arden accompanied by his loyal servant, Adam. To complicate matters even more, Rosalind stumbles upon her newfound love, Orlando, in the forest while veiled as Ganymede. The heroine takes full advantage of Orlando being unaware of Ganymede's true identity and tests Orlando's proclaimed affection while correcting his misguided notions of love.

With two inseparable cousins parading through the Forest of Arden in disguised identities, a pair of quarreling brothers divided by power and family rights, and the country folk becoming smitten with the courtly newcomers, the comedic dilemmas begin to unravel, and the question of love between family and friends is put to the test.

# About the Characters

## Court

## Country



# Important Ideas

For *As You Like It* Shakespeare drew inspiration from Thomas Lodge's pastoral romance, *Rosalynde*. Shakespeare used the traditions and themes of the pastoral—a literary style that contrasts the authenticity of rural life to the corruption of the court—to raise questions for his audience. Shakespeare's comedy considers and challenges some oppositions typical of the pastoral style: court vs. country, realism vs. romanticism, internal virtue vs. external nobility, and nature vs. artifice, to name a few.

The two settings of the play represent the struggle between such rivalries. The oppression, artificiality, and complex social structure of court life is contrasted to the freedom, simplicity, and equality found in nature. The relief, joy, and liberty the characters experience during their time in the forest touches audiences both past and present—who cannot relate to the desire for complete freedom to be oneself and to live in harmony with others?

In addition to the contrast of the court and the forest, the question of what is natural as opposed to what is artificial permeates the play in various forms. Many of the relationships and situations in the production challenge the idea that some qualities—nobility, for example, or masculinity—are inherent and predetermined, merely consequences of nature. What makes a quality a “natural” one? Are women born with feminine qualities naturally assigned or have generations of society declaring them to be so caused them to become a part of women? Do first-born males truly deserve the inheritance despite character or capability, or is it only because Renaissance society has deemed it so?



## No Girls Allowed!

*During the Elizabethan era in England, women were prohibited by law from acting on the stage. Companies instead hired young boys to play the roles of female characters. Because their voices had not yet changed and their muscles had not fully developed, they spoke with a relatively high pitch, were slender, and able to pass off as women when in full costume.*

*We find it funny for a female Rosalind to dress as a man and undergo all the crazy moments during her adventure in the forest, but how much funnier would it have been for the original audience? Rosalind would have been a boy playing a girl pretending to be a boy acting like a girl. Did you follow that?*

*Our production features a woman playing the role of Rosalind, but while you are watching consider the gender twists that would have been occurring before Shakespeare's audience. Keep in mind that the religious and cultural beliefs of Shakespeare's day viewed gender and sexuality as part of a rigid hierarchy and would not have condoned such cross-dressing antics in real life. So while the gender play on stage may have been amusing, can you imagine the underlying fear and uncertainty it would hold for the viewers who had such strong beliefs regarding that very issue?*

# “Rosalind of Many Parts”

The role of Rosalind has been portrayed by numerous of actors over the centuries. From past to present, each rendition alters the perception of the heroine while providing social insight of the time.

1787-1814 Dorothy Jordan



1845- **Charlotte Cushman** was renowned for playing male characters such as Romeo. One critic claimed above all previous actresses Cushman “was [Shakespeare’s]



1882-**Helena Modjeska**



1897- **Ada Rehan**- “The great feature of Miss Rehan’s Rosalind is that she never for one moment forgets, or allows herself to forget, that she is a woman.”  
-Critic Lindsay Duguid



1936- Elisabeth



1936- **Edith Evans**- “As Rosalind the girl, [Evans] was less than persuasive. But when she changed into a boy her whole being seemed transformed.”  
-Michael Redgrave, fellow actor as Orlando.

1952-**Margaret Leighton**-“The un-Englishness of this new image of woman that is such a threat to conservative critics: the trans-atlantic girl bicyclist or androgynous French gamine look, lacking feminine curves; intellectual, even”  
-Critic Penny Gay

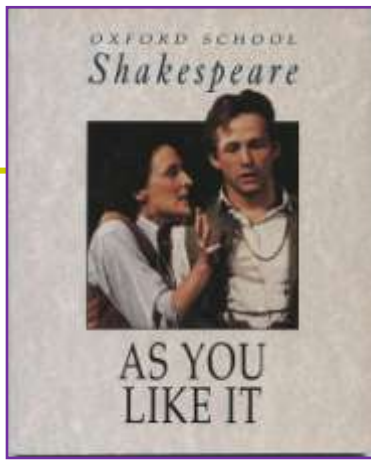


1957-**Peggy Ashcroft**



1961- **Vanessa Redgrave**- “Her boyish Rosalind was a triumph at the beginning of the swinging sixties”  
-Scholar Juliet Dusinberre





1989- **Fiona Shaw**-“She appears not as a woman dressed as a man but as herself. It is not the costume that makes Shaw’s Rosalind into a man; rather it is Shaw’s Personality which enlivens and supports both parts”  
-Critic Goodman

1991-**Adrian Lester**- Director Declan Donnellan’s Cheek by Jowl all-male production



2000-**Helena Bonham**

2002-**Franziska Gottwald**- This singer “was so convincing that many of the audience believed she was a man until she began to sing” (Left)  
- Scholar Juliet Dusinberre



2003-**Nina Sosanya**- Nina was the first black actress to take the part in the Royal Shakespeare Company.

2006-**Bryce Dallas**



# About William Shakespeare

## Where was Shakespeare born?

Scholars believe he was born in Stratford upon Avon since we have records showing that he was baptized in 1564 at The Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

## Did Shakespeare ever marry?

At age 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, a woman 8 years older than himself. The two stayed married for the rest of his life, until he died in 1616 at age 52.

## What is the inscription on Shakespeare's grave?

"Good frend for Jesus sake forbear,  
To dig the dust enclosed heare:  
Bleste be ye man yt [that] spares thes stones,  
And curst be he yt moves my bones."



## How many works did Shakespeare write?

37 plays and 154 sonnets.

## How many words did Shakespeare write?

Shakespeare's complete works consist of 884,647 words and 118,406 lines.

## What is Shakespeare's longest play?

*Hamlet*, with 4,042 lines.

## What is Shakespeare's shortest play?

*The Comedy of Errors*, with 1,787 lines.

## Did Shakespeare invent words?

Shakespeare is said to have contributed a vocabulary of some 29,066 words like "assassination," "school boy," and "radiance," just to name a few. An average person today might use just 2000 words used in everyday conversation.

# Theatre in Shakespeare's Day

## Playhouses

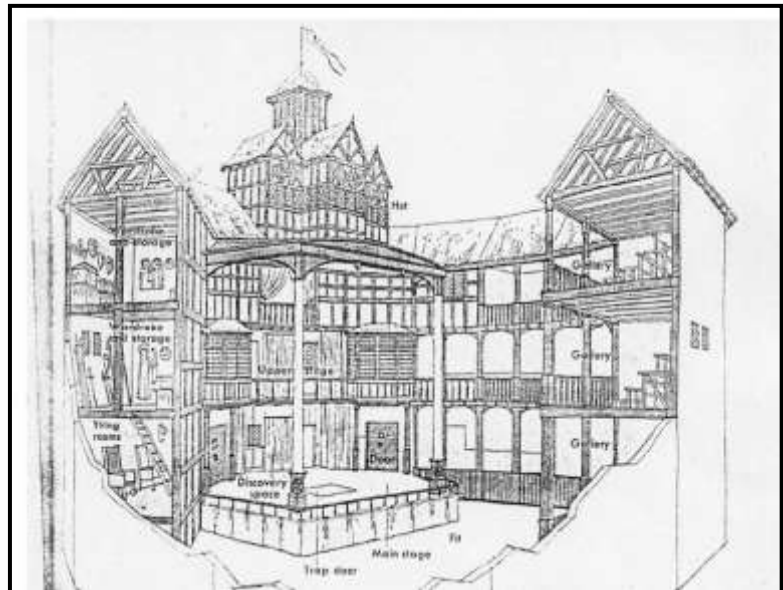
To earn extra payment while still entertaining the public, actors and wandering minstrels temporarily adapted inns and animal-baiting rings or "game houses" for outdoor playhouses. A booth stage was set up against a wall on one side of the yard, while the audience gathered the stage on the other three sides. Out of these "natural" playhouses grew two major classes of permanent Elizabethan playhouse, "public" and "private."

Private playhouses featured actors performing in upper class locations such as the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the homes of great lords and civil officials. Most private playhouses, such as The Second Blackfriars, only held about 700 spectators while public playhouses like The Swan held about 3,000 spectators. Because the audiences for private playhouses were much smaller, many of Shakespeare's plays were instead viewed outdoors where the lower class could also enjoy the theatrical entertainment.

## Design

In 1576, James Burbage built the first permanent outdoor theatre in London called "The Theatre." The structure was based on the style of old Greek and Roman open-air amphitheatres. The Globe theatre was also constructed in this style.

The outdoor theater consisted of the pit or yard, the stage, the heavens supported by posts rising from the yard, the discovery space where actors could be revealed, and three galleries for audience members.



## Production

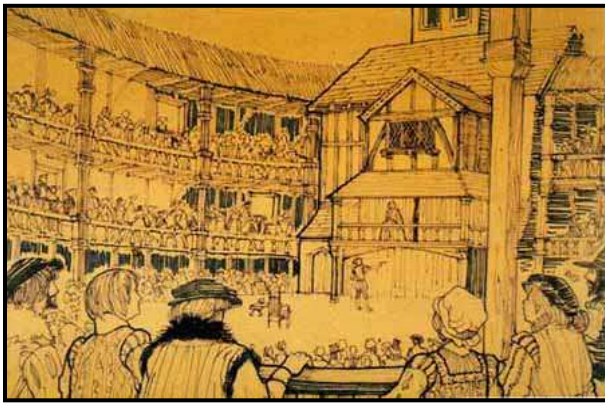
Unlike plays today with elaborate sets and props, theater of the Elizabethan Age lacked grandeur sets; however, the actors still wore magnificent costumes provided by the company. The Elizabethans used their imagination to portray the scenery and special effects of the play. For instance, spectators had to imagine scenes that were set at night even though the plays took place in mid-afternoon. The audience was not separated by the dropping of a curtain between acts and scenes, so playwrights of this time signaled a

change in scene by having everyone onstage exit at the end of one scene and then bringing one or more different characters to enter the following scene.

## Audiences

The majority of the spectators in the outdoor theaters stood in the dirt yard and were called “groundlings.” The groundlings stood in a circle about sixty feet in length from the front of the stage that stood five feet off the ground.

Because these seats cost a penny, which was roughly one-sixth of a day’s wages, we can safely assume that the groundlings wanted their money’s worth and would often shout encouragement and applause for what they approved of, or boo and throw rotten fruit and vegetables at productions they did not care for.



## Actors

Most actors were quite poor, but a few dozen were able to establish a name for themselves and even become shareholders in their respective companies. Being an actor was no easy task, especially since a company played six days a week and rehearsals seemed to never end. An actor would learn a new role every week, with thirty to forty roles to memorize, and to make matters more complicated, an actor would only get his lines

and cues in a rolled up parchment, not the whole script. Over a period of three years, a tragedian actor such as Edward Alleyn, would learn not only fifty new parts but also retain twenty or more old roles under his belt.

## Questions to Consider:

- 1.) Why do you think Shakespeare wanted to appeal lower class citizens?
- 2.) How have modern play productions changed from productions of the 1600s?
- 3.) Do you agree or disagree with the attitude lower class audiences would display when they approved or disapproved of a play? Why or why not?
- 4.) What challenges do you think still exist in the production of a play today?
- 5.) How significant would costumes be in the play *As You Like It*?

“All the world's a stage, And  
all the men and women  
merely players; They have  
their exits and their  
entrances, And one man in  
his time plays many parts, His  
acts being seven ages.”

*Jaques*

# Costumes in Shakespeare's Day

In the theatre of Shakespeare's day, costumes were invested with meaning much differently than they are in our film and stage productions today. Records show that playing companies spent a substantial portion of their money on costumes, which were elaborate, expensive, and of the latest fashion. Imagine going to a fashion show every time you attend the theater! Considering the monopoly the theatre held in the entertainment realm, it's not difficult to see why costumes were so important and placed at the top of the priority list for the Elizabethan playing companies.

Unfortunately, some Renaissance beliefs and practices found a few problems with the costumes that were so important to the theatre. Religious moralists denounced cross-dressing, and given the status of strictly male actors, cross-dressing was unavoidable when aiming for suspension of disbelief. Not only was cross-gender dressing an issue, cross-dressing socially also raised the eyebrows of nobles and wealthy audience members. A poor, unrespectable actor donning the robes of a king or the garments of a noble would have been highly frowned upon.



# Which Character Are You?

## 1. Which of these would you do on your spare time?

- a.) Watch a sports game with my best friend, or make my own game to play!
- b.) I would go to the movies and see the latest comedy, of course.
- c.) It doesn't matter to me, as long as I can be with my one and only love.
- d.) There is no spare time when I have to handle every task around here.
- e.) Anything! I just want to get away from the weirdoes around here.
- f.) Hum, I think a camping trip would sound fun as long as I can go with someone else!
- g.) I would bring out my artistic side through some poetry, or perhaps music.
- h.) A day out in the woods with my best buds would be a good day in my book.
- i.) I'm pretty versatile. I'll do anything to get out of the house and relax.
- j.) Spare time?! There are too many chores to do around here first.

## 2. Which of these traits describes your personality best?

- a.) I'm independent and a bit of a control fanatic. I want these to go according to my plan.
- b.) I am definitely a wit, although some would choose harsher words, especially the ones I mock.
- c.) Well, I would say I'm a romantic and faithful person. There's nothing better than being with the person you would do anything for.
- d.) I have a dominant personality. Some might say I'm even aggressive.
- e.) I am a flirt and I like to speak my mind, whether you like what you hear or not.
- f.) I am loyal to my loved ones and I help others any way I can, even if I don't feel like it.
- g.) I have been told that I am moody and melodramatic, but they do not understand the inner depths of my soul like I do.
- h.) I enjoy the better things in life, like brotherhood, nature, and family.
- i.) I can be a bit stubborn when I am determined to get something, but I'm patient enough to take on my struggles one day at a time.
- j.) I may not be the wittiest person you'll meet, but I've got a mind of my own and I do what I please.

## 3. What is your goal at the moment, or in life?

- a.) To get the one I like to finally notice me for who I really am.
- b.) My goal is to always have fun and make others laugh, even if I have to ruffle a few feathers in the process.
- c.) All I've ever wanted is to settle down with that someone special.
- d.) I want to take charge and prove my strength to those that doubt me.
- e.) At the moment, I'm just trying to separate myself from the rest of the crowd, especially those that aren't worth my time.
- f.) I would like all the bickering and confusion to stop, and for things to go back the way they used to be.
- g.) My goal is to unveil the ignorance of those around me and show the beauty that

lies in everything, even in what some might consider irrelevant.

- h.) Nothing would please me more than to restore the balance and vigor I once had, but in the mean time I'll make the best of the situation I am in.
- i.) To finally find the person of my dreams. If only I knew where to start.
- j.) I don't want anything too fancy, just someone I can count on and maybe have a couple of laughs with.

#### **4.) What is your biggest annoyance?**

- a.) Sappy love poems. Where's the real depth in love these days? I think actions speak louder than words anyway.
- b.) Ignorance is definitely not bliss! I will point out the naivety I find in others.
- c.) I don't find many things annoying, but I do wish that my friends and loved one would understand how I feel sometimes.
- d.) I get really annoyed when other people try to bring me down just because I am better suited for a job than they are.
- e.) When someone won't get the hint that I do *not* like them.
- f.) Being in the middle of a crazy situation.
- g.) I dislike bubbly, cheery people. These people are simply afraid of facing deeper emotions like sorrow.
- h.) I do not care for two-faced people that will backstab me without a second thought.
- i.) I become annoyed when other people try to belittle me. I just have to prove them wrong.
- j.) Sarcasm is annoying to me. Just say what you mean and mean what you say.

#### **5.) What is your greatest strength?**

- a.) Taking charge of what I want.
- b.) Getting the last word in a battle of wits.
- c.) Having a devoted compassion for my loved one.
- d.) Keeping my determination and a strong motivation.
- e.) Not breaking the promises that I make.
- f.) Sticking by my friends, no matter what obstacles we face.
- g.) Embracing all that is poignant and artistic in life.
- h.) Taking life as it comes and making the best of it.
- i.) Standing up for what I believe in-bet it love, friendship, or family
- j.) Taking things as they are and not making them into grandeur spectacles.

# Quiz Results

*Look below to see which character you are most like!*

## **Mostly A's:**

You are Rosalind. Like Rosalind, you are determined to get what you want and look past all the superficial extremities of love as you search for something more humble and worthwhile in life. You are an expert at hiding your emotions around those you are still getting to know, and while a little mystery can make a relationship exciting being too secretive will only lead to suspicions from those who are only trying to get to know you more.

## **Mostly B's:**

You are Touchstone. Touchstone provides the comedic yet brutally honest commentary for *As You Like It*. While you are honest in your feelings, your constant sarcasm can be overbearing, for wit also relies on the right timing and sometimes its best not to say anything at all, which proves to be a real challenge for someone like you with such a sharp mind.

## **Mostly C's:**

You are Silvius. In order for you to be truly happy, you feel that you must be around your loved one all the time, just as Silvius is infatuated with Phoebe despite her disapproval in him. While your compassion is your source of strength, it can also be your downfall since you tend to ignore the advice of your family and friends give you.

## **Mostly D's:**

You are Oliver. Being the oldest of the de Bois sons, Oliver feels he has to demonstrate his superiority to his younger brother, Orlando. Like Oliver, you also tend to domineer over family and friends because you feel you are the only one capable of doing the job right, so to say. If you begin to break the wall separating you from friends and family, you'll find that you needed their help all along, and that being vulnerable is not a sign of weakness but instead an opportunity to build trust with those around you.

## **Mostly E's:**

You are Phoebe. While Phoebe explicitly tells Silvius she does not feel the same for him as he does for her, she does not understand why "Ganymede" does not like her back after she is repeatedly mocked by the disguised Rosalind. You have to be more open-minded to see how someone really is before making any judgments. You may find that someone was more (or less) suited for you than you realized.

## **Mostly F's:**

You are Celia. Even though Celia gets caught in the middle of Rosalind's plan to appear as a man to Orlando, she takes everything in stride. You are similar to Celia in the way that you

help your friends and family with whatever they need, even if you don't necessarily agree with it. Your desire to be around other people is not from does not make you a dependent person, but rather someone who chooses to share what you love with those closest to you.

**Mostly G's:**

You are Jaques. In *As You Like It*, Jaques is frequently described as melancholy and overdramatic. You enjoy the fine arts such as theater, music, and poetry because in your opinion they are the truest forms of human emotion. Jaques' personality often distances himself from other characters who are perplexed by his behavior, but you understand how to socialize and still make time for yourself to reflect and think creatively

**Mostly H's:**

You are Duke Senior. You are admired for the optimism and fortitude you display each day, no matter what life throws at you. Like Duke Senior who keeps a close tie with the group of men in the forest, you are loyal to those who respect you and a natural leader. Just remember to embrace people as much as your embrace nature because there are those that still value brotherhood, love, and family like yourself.

**Mostly I's:**

You are Orlando. Most of the time, you feel like the underdog of a situation, therefore you are constantly outdoing yourself to prove you are capable of just about anything. At times, you can be a bit naive in the matters of love or family, but that does not hold you back from keeping your goals, such as when Orlando was determined to find Rosalind. You have to be ready to defend what you value in life like love, friends, and the respect you deserve.

**Mostly J's:**

You are Audrey. As a shepherdess, Audrey lives a simple life in the country side where everyone knows each other and life moves a little more slowly than in the court. However, when Audrey meets Touchstone, she learns more about people who live in the court and how they are different from her. You may not be the most poetical or wittiest person, but you have a lot of heart and nearly everyone is charmed by your presence.

# Theatre Etiquette

Live theatre is very different from film. When you go to a movie theatre, you don't have to worry about distracting the actors you're watching, for example. Also, while a movie is the same each time you watch it, a play changes with every performance because every show has a new audience and new possibilities. The performance you will see of *As You Like It* is unique –it will never happen exactly the same way again. Please enjoy this experience to the fullest by following a few simple guidelines.

- Arrive a few minutes early so that you can enjoy the entire experience.
- Please turn off your cell phone and do not text during the show.
- Please do not talk during the performance. Intermission is a great time to talk to your friends about the show, so try to save your comments until then.
- Please do not eat or drink during the performance.
- Please keep your feet on the floor (not on the chairs).
- Please stay seated until intermission or the end of the play.
- Please come back with a friend! Seeing a play is even more fun when you have someone to share it with!

# About AST

Founded in 2006, The Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre produces a repertory of family-friendly professional productions each summer in Conway. With our missions of artistic excellence, educational opportunities, and community outreach, the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre adds something unique in our region and provides thousands of families with a one-of-a-kind experience in a world-class facility.



After 4 seasons of outstanding theatre, education, and outreach opportunities, over 10,000 tickets sold to date, over 1000 tickets given away to local students and charities, over 75 intern scholarships created, and over 150 theatre artists hired from all over the country, 2010 is proving to be a great year for this one-of-a-kind festival, and we hope to see you again (and again and again!). For this theatre to most effectively serve our community, we need to represent our community! Become a part of this exciting experiment as a board member, volunteer, season ticket holder, Member, or patron. Thank you for supporting your local theatre.

FOR MORE DETAILS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ARKANSAS SHAKESPEARE THEATRE, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.ARKSHAKES.COM/](http://www.arkshakes.com/)

# Works Consulted

## **Court and Country Character Map**

Eriks, Lauren. "As You Like It" *Teacher Handbook*. Chicago Shakespeare, 2010. Web. 30 May 2011.

## **Timeline of Rosalind**

Shakespeare, William, and Juliet Dusinberre. Introduction. *As You like It*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006. 13-27. Print.

## **About William Shakespeare**

"Shakespeare FAQs-Folger Shakespeare Library." -*Folger Shakespeare Library*. Web. 24 May 2011.

## **Theatre in Shakespeare's Day**

"Elizabethan Theatre." *Globe Theatre*. Web. 25 May 2011.

Milner, Cork. "Stage Construction - Shakespeare." *Netplaces*. Web. 25 May 2011.

Mowat, Barbara A. "London Playhouses and Other Sites-Folger Shakespeare Library." -*Folger Shakespeare Library*. Web. 25 May 2011.

Narey, Wayne. "Renaissance English Drama: Elizabethan Theatre Venues: Playhouses." *Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature*. Web. 25 May 2011.

Spear, Hilda D. "The Elizabethan Theatre." *Universität Zu Köln*. Web. 25 May 2011.