

Examrace

Competitive Exams: William Shakespeare as You like It Character List

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- **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 in the ways of love to her beloved Orlando, Rosalind's talents and charms are on full display. Only Rosalind, for instance, is both aware of the foolishness of romantic love and delighted to be in love. She teaches those around her to think, feel, and love better than they have previously, and she ensures that the courtiers returning from Ardenne are far gentler than those who fled to it.
- **Orlando**-The youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and younger brother of Oliver. Orlando is an attractive young man who, under his brother's neglectful care, has languished without a gentleman's education or training. Regardless, he considers himself to have great potential, and his victorious battle with Charles proves him right. 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 a fitting hero for the play and, though he proves no match for her wit or poetry, 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. We have the sense that Senior did not put up much of a fight to keep his dukedom, for he seems to make the most of whatever life gives him. Content in the forest, where he claims to learn as much from stones and brooks as he would in a church or library, Duke Senior proves himself to be a kind and fair-minded ruler.
- **Jaques**-A faithful lord who accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Ardenne. Jaques is an example of a stock figure in Elizabethan comedy, the man possessed of a hopelessly melancholy disposition. Much like a referee in a football game, he stands on the sidelines, watching and judging the actions of the other characters without ever fully participating. Given his inability to participate in life, it is fitting that Jaques alone refuses to follow Duke Senior and the other courtiers back to court, and instead resolves to assume a solitary and contemplative life in a monastery.
- **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, Celia possesses a loving heart, but is prone to deep, almost excessive emotions.

- 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. Frederick mounts an army against his exiled brother but aborts his vengeful mission after he meets an old religious man on the road to the Forest of Ardenne. He immediately changes his ways, dedicating himself to a monastic life and returning the crown to his brother, thus testifying to the ease and elegance with which humans can sometimes change for the better.
- Touchstone-A clown in Duke Frederick's court who accompanies Rosalind and Celia in their flight to Ardenne. Although Touchstone's job, as fool, is to criticize the behavior and point out the folly of those around him, Touchstone fails to do so with even a fraction of Rosalind's grace. Next to his mistress, the clown seems hopelessly vulgar and narrow-minded. Almost every line he speaks echoes with bawdy innuendo.
- Oliver-The oldest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and sole inheritor of the de Bois estate. Oliver is a loveless young man who begrudges his brother, Orlando, a gentleman's education. He admits to hating Orlando without cause or reason and goes to great lengths to ensure his brother's downfall. When Duke Frederick employs Oliver to find his missing brother, Oliver finds himself living in despair in the Forest of Ardenne, where Orlando saves his life. This display of undeserved generosity prompts Oliver to change himself into a better, more loving person. His transformation is evidenced by his love for the disguised Celia, whom he takes to be a simple shepherdess.
- Silvius-A young, suffering shepherd, who is desperately in love with the disdainful Phoebe. Conforming to the model of Petrarchan love, Silvius prostrates himself before a woman who refuses to return his affections. In the end, however, he wins the object of his desire.
- Phoebe-A young shepherdess, who disdains the affections of Silvius. She falls in love with Ganymede, who is really Rosalind in disguise, but Rosalind tricks Phoebe into marrying Silvius.
- Lord Amiens-A faithful lord who accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Ardenne. Lord Amiens is rather jolly and loves to sing.
- Charles-A professional wrestler in Duke Frederick's court. Charles demonstrates both his caring nature and his political savvy when he asks Oliver to intercede in his upcoming fight with Orlando: He does not want to injure the young man and thereby lose favor among the nobles who support him. Charles's concern for Orlando proves unwarranted when Orlando beats him senseless.

- Adam-The elderly former servant of Sir Rowland de Bois. Having witnessed Orlando's hardships, Adam offers not only to accompany his young master into exile but to fund their journey with the whole of his modest life's savings. He is a model of loyalty and devoted service.
- Sir Rowland de Bois-The father of Oliver and Orlando, friend of Duke Senior, and enemy of Duke Frederick. Upon Sir Rowland's death, the vast majority of his estate was handed over to Oliver according to the custom of primogeniture.
- Corin-A shepherd. Corin attempts to counsel his friend Silvius in the ways of love, but Silvius refuses to listen.
- Audrey-A simpleminded goatherd who agrees to marry Touchstone.
- William-A young country boy who is in love with Audrey.

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