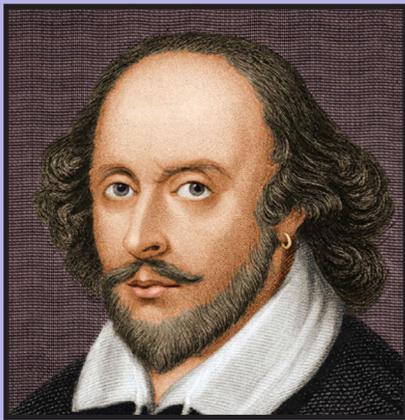




Oregon
Shakespeare
Festival.

2019 Study Guide



William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, born in 1564, is one of the most celebrated writers in English literature. He was a poet, playwright and actor. Shakespeare is best known for the 37 plays, 154 sonnets and 2 narrative poems that he wrote. After moving to London, he became a founding member of the group of actors called The Lord Chamberlain's Men. He died in 1616 at the age of 52.

This is Rosa Joshi's second time directing for OSF. She directed Shakespeare's *Henry V* in our 2018 season. Ms. Joshi is based in Seattle and works as a director, producer and professor. She is also the co-founder of a theatre in Seattle called the upstart crew collective, a company that produces classical plays with all-female casts.



Director Rosa Joshi

The History of *As You Like It*

- Scholars believe that *As You Like It* opened in 1599 at the new Globe Theatre in London.
- Shakespeare used Thomas Lodge's novel *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie*, written in 1590, as the basis for this play.
- Many scholars believe that Shakespeare based the title *As You Like It* on the comment "If you like it, so," which Lodge wrote in the preface of his novel.
- Thomas Lodge's novel was based on the poem "The Tale of Gamelyn," which is thought to have been written by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century.

Before seeing/reading the play

1. William Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* is often described as being a pastoral romance or pastoral comedy. Research this genre of literature. What are some elements that make a story pastoral?

This and other websites provide information:

<https://osuasyoulikeit.wordpress.com/contexts-for-as-you-like-it/shakespeares-sources/pastoral-conventions-in-shakespeares-as-you-like-it-by-victoria-munoz/>

2. In several of Shakespeare's plays, including *As You Like It*, characters disguise themselves in different ways. In this play, Rosalind conceals herself as a boy named Ganymede. Research what was expected of women in the Elizabethan era. What are some reasons Rosalind might choose to disguise herself as a boy?

These and other websites provide information:

<https://www.thirteen.org/program-content/gender-swaps-in-shakespeare-plays/>

<http://www2.cedarcrest.edu/academic/eng/flfletcher/ayli/azuber.htm>

<http://www.elizabethanenglandlife.com/the-life-and-roles-of-elizabethan-era-women.html>

3. What are the origins and meanings of the names of the following characters in *As You Like It*: Ganymede, Aliena, Orlando and Oliver? Based on your discoveries about these names, what might some of their characteristics be? What do these definitions tell you about what the play may be about?

These and other websites provide information:

<https://nameberry.com/babyname/Orlando>

<https://www.behindthename.com/>

4. Shakespeare includes the role of the Fool in many of his plays. Like the character Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Shakespeare's Fools serve very specific purposes in his stories. Research some of the characteristics of the Fool and how they are different than those of characters who act foolishly.

These and other websites provide information:

<https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/blog/ultimate-guide-shakespeares-fools/>

<https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/shakespeares-fools>

Touchstone



Costume rendering by Christine Tschirgi



**“Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?”
As You Like It - Act II, Scene 2**

5. Hierarchy is ingrained in Shakespeare's time and plays. There is always the hierarchy with the royals, but there are two more examples of hierarchies that we learn about at the beginning of the play. One is between a pair of Dukes, who also happen to be siblings, and another between two brothers. Research what hierarchy means and how class and status play a role in the formation of a hierarchy.

These and other websites provide information:

<https://www.hierarchystructure.com/elizabethan-era-social-hierarchy/>

<https://www.hierarchystructure.com/social-class-hierarchy/>

6. What does it mean to be a good ruler or leader? What is a tyrant, and what characteristics might they possess? How do you think people are treated by a good ruler versus how a tyrant might rule over them? These and other websites provide information:

<https://www.inc.com/nicolas-cole/3-personality-traits-that-reveal-whether-youre-a-leader-or-a-tyrant.html>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/tyrant-vs-leaderhow-recognize-you-being-led-bullied-kamal-sarma>

7. In Shakespeare's time, what inheritance rights did eldest sons have? What obligations did elder brothers have to their younger brothers? These and other websites provide information:

<http://www.elizabethan.org/compendium/41.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primogeniture>

8. Learn more about Shakespeare's life and time in the following websites:

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/index.html>

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare.html>

<http://www.bardweb.net/man.html>

After seeing/reading the play

1. Refer to your research on the meanings of character names. Now that you have seen the play, in what ways do the names Ganymede, Aliena, Orlando and Oliver fit those characters?
2. Refer to your research on character disguises and women in the Elizabethan era. What are some specific freedoms that Rosalind is afforded because she disguises herself as a boy? What does she gain in her relationships with different characters by being in this disguise? How might her actions and language be different if she entered the forest as a woman?
3. In OSF's production of *As You Like It*, the character of Duke Senior is played as Rosalind's mother. However, in the original script, Duke Senior is her father. How do you think making Duke Senior a woman affects her relationships with Rosalind, Duke Frederick and Orlando?
4. Compare the women in *As You Like It*. What are the different qualities you find in the women? How do they express themselves in the play? Compare the men in *As You Like It*. What are the different qualities you find in them? How do they express themselves in the play? How do the characters' background influence who they are and how they communicate? In what ways do the characters, both from the court and the country, change throughout the play?
5. Some characters, such as Duke Senior, Rosalind and Orlando are forcefully banished or exiled from the court, while others, such as Celia, Jaques, Touchstone and Adam, choose to leave. What hardships do the different characters face in exile? What do they learn in exile?
6. Which of the characters seem to adapt or fit most naturally in the forest? Which characters have a hard time adapting to it? How are they changed by their time in the forest?

7. What liberties do the characters have in the forest of Arden versus those they'd have at court? How does this freedom help them to either resolve hardships or gain forgiveness from earlier events in the play?

8. What are the similarities and differences between Celia's and Oliver's situations? How do the two respond to their changing circumstances? What does Oliver do to become worthy of Celia? What are the similarities between Orlando's and Rosalind's situations?

9. What is it about Ganymede that Phoebe finds attractive? In what ways is he different from Silvius? From what we learn about Phoebe, why might she prefer Ganymede over Silvius? How are Silvius and Phoebe alike? What do you think their marriage will be like?

Marriage

Shakespeare's comedies always end in marriage. In fact, there are several marriages that take place in *As You Like It*. Weddings are central to his comedies because these celebrations bring everyone back together after hardships or turmoil between couples, their families or the community. Also, his characters almost always marry for love, which may have seemed unusual to audiences in the Elizabethan era. In Shakespeare's time, most people married to gain land, wealth or social status.

Rosalind at court



Rosalind as Ganymede



Costume renderings by Christine Tschirgi

10. Refer to your research on the Fools in Shakespeare's plays. What kind of Fool is Touchstone? When does he speak the truth? Why is Jaques so enamored with Touchstone? Who else in the play do you consider to be a Fool? Who is just foolish? Why?

11. The epilogue that is traditionally spoken at the end of *As You Like It* has been changed to The Seven Ages speech that has many references to time (including different seasons in the year, the seven ages of life, etc.). What is the importance of time in the show?

12. Different kinds of love are explored in *As You Like It*: parent and child, brother and brother, cousin and cousin, woman and man, one who loves too much and one who doesn't seem to know what love is. There is also love of self, love of solitude and love of an illusion. How are these kinds of love expressed in the play and by whom?

Life in the forest of Arden versus city and court life in *As You Like It*

In the forest of Arden, a seemingly idyllic place in the country, characters can live more innocently and simply than those who are controlled by the rigid and corrupt court life. In the country, they can love openly and have a sense of freedom. This is quite the contrast to the characters in the court who have to follow strict rules, and where greed and betrayal are ever-present.

After seeing/reading the play continued

13. Shakespeare's comedies are usually about people living together in a community. Even though *As You Like It* begins with a breakdown of a flawed community, in the end, almost all of the relationships are mended. What has changed for the characters? In what ways is the community revived by the end of the play?

14. If you are seeing *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Hairspray* or *Cambodian Rock Band*, compare the relationships of the parents and their children with those in *As You Like It*. What are some of the similarities and differences in how the parents and children interact with each other? Describe the care, or lack thereof, for each other.

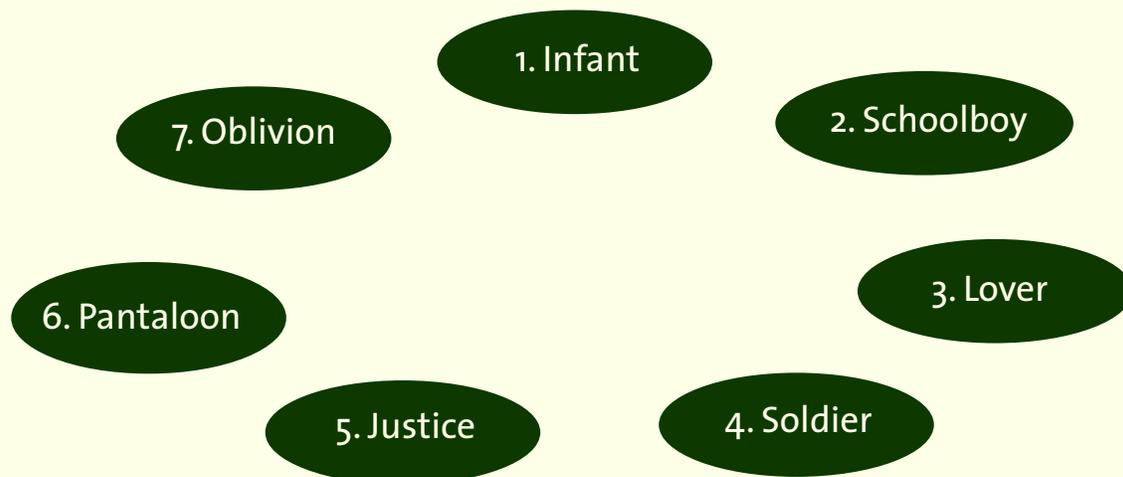
15. If you are seeing *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Macbeth* or *Cambodian Rock Band*, discuss the different ways in which the characters in those plays disguise themselves. How are their disguises different than those of Rosalind and Celia? Is what they are hiding more literal or figurative? Are they hiding their motives, their identity, or both? Why is it necessary for them to do so?

16. If you are also seeing *La Comedia of Errors*, *All's Well That Ends Well* or *Hairspray*, compare and contrast the lovers in the plays. How do the beginnings of the relationships of the lovers differ from play to play? What are some of the different approaches that the characters use in order to woo the person they love? What obstacles do the lovers need to overcome? How successful are they?

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”

This is a famous line from *As You Like It* spoken by the melancholic character Jaques. She uses the metaphor in The Seven Ages speech that all people are like actors during their life cycle. And even though everyone plays their own part in their journey, we all go through the same seven ages of life.

“The Seven Ages”



Wrestling and Battles

In the first act of the play, there is an actual wrestling match between the characters Charles and Orlando. However, there are many forms of wrestling, or battles, in the play.

- A brother who has been ill-treated by his brother battles for what is owed to him.
- One Duke forcefully takes the position in court from the rightful Duke.
- Characters have battles with their personal history.
- Characters battle with who they truly are and what they want.
- Several characters fight for the affection of the person they love.



Duke Senior



Duke Frederick



Oliver



Orlando

Costume renderings by Christine Tschirgi

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