

Rosalind: The heroine of the play. Rosalind is the daughter of the exiled Duke Senior and the constant companion of her cousin Celia. She is independent-minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and intelligent. At the opening scene she seems less important than Celia. She is sad and quiet and is found to blame fortune for her fallen condition. Celia is praying her *"to be merry"* and it shows that it was unusual for her to be downcast and that naturally she was vivacious, bright and merry. Her sympathy for the old man, his three peasant sons and with Orlando reveals her tender womanly character. She is tactful in trying to persuade Orlando not to wrestle, telling him that his reputation shall not suffer. Yet, she is the mark of envy of the usurping Duke Frederick who frankly confesses to his daughter *"She is too subtle for thee; and her smoothness, her very silence and her patience speak to the people and they pity her."* She is the love of all eyes. Celia renounces her father and home to follow her cousin to an unknown forest. Orlando falls in love with her at first sight. Her unexpectedly falling in love with Orlando makes her appear sentimental. But a brave change comes over her when she stands up against the Duke to defend herself and her father from the blame of treachery. Her dignity and loyalty is commendable. She has great love for her cousin Celia as well. She sets aside all her thoughts of sorrow and grief at the bidding of her cousin – *"Well, I shall forget the condition of my estate to rejoice in yours."*

Celia: The daughter of Duke Frederick and Rosalind's dearest friend is an embodiment of loyalty and unselfishness. Although she is less brilliantly attractive, she is no less loveable as a woman. Celia's devotion to Rosalind is unmatched, as evidenced by her decision to follow her cousin into exile. Her loyalty can be traced in her other actions as well. She hangs her head in shame for the "rough and envious disposition" of her father but she is quick to defend him against the favoured clown – "My father's love is enough to honour him. She puts others before herself. Her decision to follow Rosalind to the forest of Arden, shows that she was thinking of her cousin's happiness only. She is more conventional and more prudent than Rosalind. In matters of love, Celia thinks of keeping love at a distance- *"but love no man in good earnest."* She possesses a loving heart.

Celia and Rosalind are like two delicate roses in the same bough; inseparable like Juno's swans. Yet they stand in sharp contrast to each other. The fact that she is no match for the more impressive Rosalind is clear from Duke Frederick's words *"She robs thee of thy name. And thou will show more bright and seem more virtuous when she is gone."*