

DID YOU KNOW?

- ❖ The plot of *As You Like It* was well known in Shakespeare's day. Audiences would have been as familiar with the story as we are with the story of *Romeo and Juliet* today.
- ❖ The Seven Ages of Man speech is a favorite not only with audiences, but also at the Folger Shakespeare Library. When you come to visit, notice the tapestry hanging above the theater space and ask a docent to show you the stained glass window in the Reading Room. Both are inspired by this speech.
- ❖ The origin of the word "role" comes from actors being given a rolled up copy of their lines.
- ❖ Shakespeare's ancestry can be traced to a group of villages in the Forest of Arden, not far from Stratford-upon-Avon.
- ❖ There are more songs in *As You Like It* than in any of Shakespeare's other plays.



Folger Theatre Tapestry: Elizabethan Theatre "sky" canopy

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

- ❖ The entrance of the god Hymen at the end of the play is sometimes difficult for modern audiences who are not familiar with seeing gods on stage. How would you stage this scene in order to have it make sense today?
- ❖ To what extent do you think Rosalind, dressed as Ganymede, looks like a boy? How do you imagine Rosalind dresses when she is pretending to be Ganymede? What does she do with her hair?
- ❖ According to the laws of primogeniture, the inheritance of the father was passed along to the eldest son. It was the responsibility of the eldest to maintain the affairs of the estate and to assume any previous debts. The younger the sibling, the worse he fared. He could only hope that his father would stipulate an allotment for him. (Daughters were left a dowry). In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare explores the ramification of this law in two different families. Jaques, Orlando's middle brother, was sent to school as was customary; Orlando's older brother, Oliver, refused to relinquish Orlando's inheritance of 1000 crowns (\approx \$30,000 today). Discuss possible reasons why Oliver would have withheld what was rightfully Orlando's. When Oliver threatened his life, why do you think Orlando chose to flee instead of fighting back? Duke Frederick usurped his older brother, Duke Senior. What reasons could Duke Frederick have had for committing such an act?