

A small orange and black butterfly is perched on a branch in the upper left corner of the image.

As You Like It

William Shakespeare



There was once a wicked Duke named Frederick, who took the dukedom that should have belonged to his brother, sending him into exile.



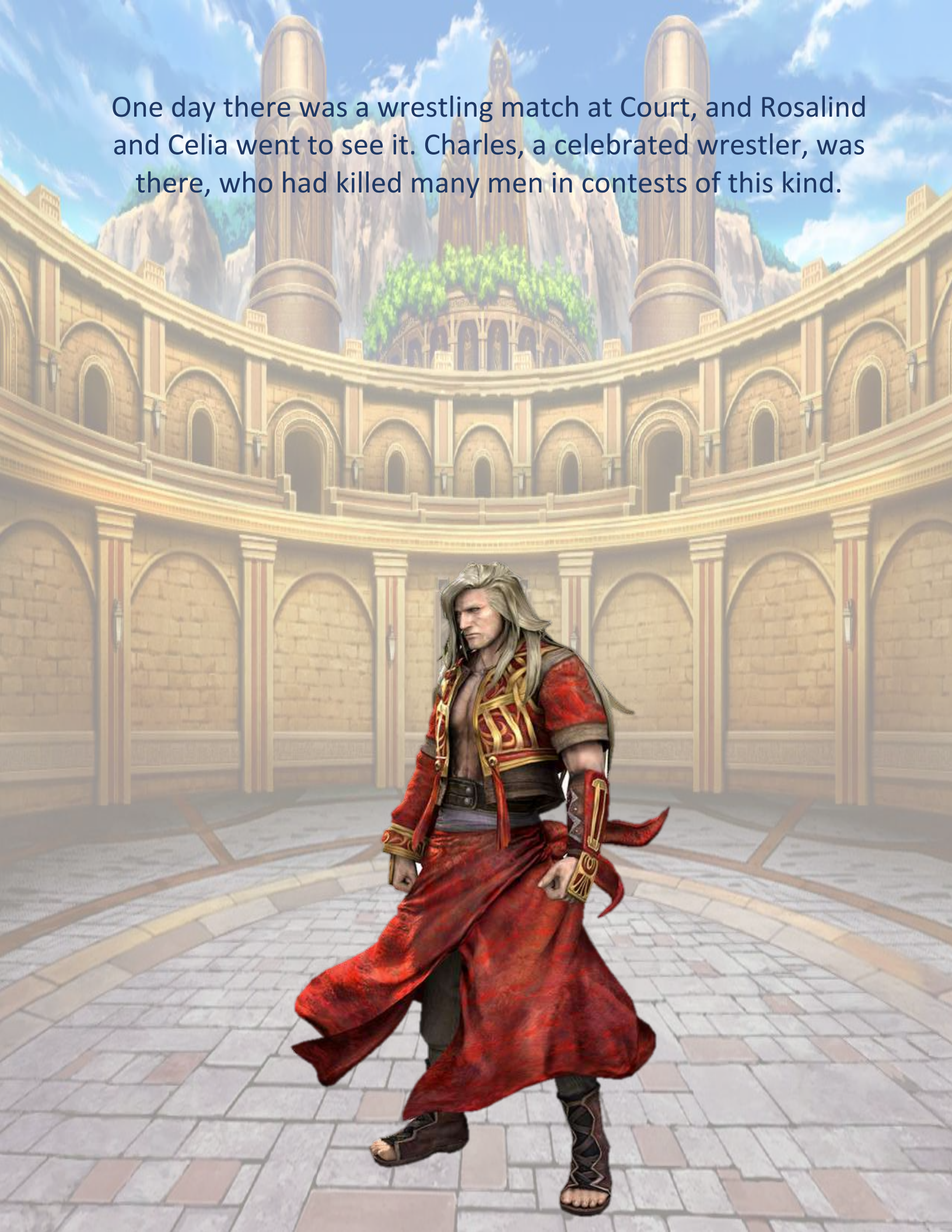
His brother went into the Forest of Arden, where he lived the life of a bold forester, as Robin Hood did in Sherwood Forest in merry England.



The banished Duke's daughter, Rosalind, remained with Celia, Frederick's daughter, and the two loved each other more than most sisters.



One day there was a wrestling match at Court, and Rosalind and Celia went to see it. Charles, a celebrated wrestler, was there, who had killed many men in contests of this kind.



Orlando, the young man he was to wrestle with, was so slender and youthful, that Rosalind and Celia thought he would surely be killed, as others had been; so they spoke to him, and asked him not to attempt so dangerous an adventure; but the only effect of their words was to make him wish more to come off well in the encounter, so as to win praise from such sweet ladies.



Orlando, like Rosalind's father, was being kept out of his inheritance by his brother, and was so sad at his brother's unkindness that, until he saw Rosalind, he did not care much whether he lived or died. But now the sight of the fair Rosalind gave him strength and courage, so that he did marvellously, and at last, threw Charles to such a tune, that the wrestler had to be carried off the ground.



Duke Frederick was pleased with his courage, and asked his name.

“My name is Orlando, and I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys,” said the young man.

Now Sir Rowland de Boys, when he was alive, had been a good friend to the banished Duke, so that Frederick heard with regret whose son Orlando was, and would not befriend him.



But Rosalind was delighted to hear that this handsome young stranger was the son of her father's old friend, and as they were going away, she turned back more than once to say another kind word to the brave young man.

"Gentleman," she said, giving him a chain from her neck, "wear this for me. I could give more, but that my hand lacks means."



Rosalind and Celia, when they were alone, began to talk about the handsome wrestler, and Rosalind confessed that she loved him at first sight.

“Come, come,” said Celia, “wrestle with thy affections.”

“Oh,” answered Rosalind, “they take the part of a better wrestler than myself. Look, here comes the Duke.”

“With his eyes full of anger,” said Celia.



“You must leave the Court at once,” he said to Rosalind.
“Why?” she asked.

“Never mind why,” answered the Duke, “you are banished. If
within ten days you are found within twenty miles of my
Court, you die.”



So Rosalind set out to seek her father, the banished Duke, in the Forest of Arden.

Celia loved her too much to let her go alone, and as it was rather a dangerous journey, Rosalind, being the taller, dressed up as a young countryman, and her cousin as a country girl, and Rosalind said that she would be called Ganymede, and Celia, Aliena



They were very tired when at last they came to the Forest of Arden, and as they were sitting on the grass a countryman passed that way, and Ganymede asked him if he could get them food. He did so, and told them that a shepherd's flocks and house were to be sold.



They bought these and settled down as shepherd and shepherdess in the forest.



In the meantime, Oliver had sought to take his brother Orlando's life. Orlando also wandered into the forest, and there met with the rightful Duke, and being kindly received, stayed with him.



Now, Orlando could think of nothing but Rosalind, and he went about the forest carving her name on trees, and writing love sonnets and hanging them on the bushes, and there Rosalind and Celia found them.



One day Orlando met them, but he did not know Rosalind in her boy's clothes, though he liked the pretty shepherd youth, because he fancied a likeness in him to her he loved.



“There is a foolish lover,” said Rosalind,
“who haunts these woods and hangs sonnets on the trees. If I
could find him, I would soon cure him of his folly.”

Orlando confessed that he was the foolish lover, and Rosalind
said—“If you will come and see me every day, I will pretend to
be Rosalind, and I will take her part, and be wayward and
contrary, as is the way of women, till I make you ashamed of
your folly in loving her.”



And so every day he went to her house, and took a pleasure in saying to her all the pretty things he would have said to Rosalind; and she had the fine and secret joy of knowing that all his love-words came to the right ears. Thus many days passed pleasantly away.



One morning, as Orlando was going to visit Ganymede, he saw a man asleep on the ground, and that there was a lioness crouching near, waiting for the man who was asleep to wake: for they say that lions will not prey on anything that is dead or sleeping.



Then Orlando looked at the man, and saw that it was his wicked brother, Oliver, who had tried to take his life. He fought with the lioness and killed her, and saved his brother's life.



While Orlando was fighting the lioness, Oliver woke to see his brother, whom he had treated so badly, saving him from a wild beast at the risk of his own life. This made him repent of his wickedness, and he begged Orlando's pardon, and from thenceforth they were dear brothers.

The lioness had wounded Orlando's arm so much, that he could not go on to see the shepherd, so he sent his brother to ask Ganymede to come to him.



Oliver went and told the whole story to Ganymede and Aliena, and Aliena was so charmed with his manly way of confessing his faults, that she fell in love with him at once.

But when Ganymede heard of the danger Orlando had been in she fainted; and when she came to herself, said truly enough, "I should have been a woman by right."



Oliver went back to his brother and told him all this, saying, “I love Aliena so well that I will give up my estates to you and marry her, and live here as a shepherd.”

“Let your wedding be to-morrow,” said Orlando, “and I will ask the Duke and his friends.”



When Orlando told Ganymede how his brother was to be married on the morrow, he added:

“Oh, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man’s eyes.”

Then answered Rosalind, still in Ganymede’s dress and speaking with his voice—“If you do love Rosalind so near the heart, then when your brother marries Aliena, shall you marry her.”



Now the next day the Duke and his followers, and Orlando, and Oliver, and Aliena, were all gathered together for the wedding.

Then Ganymede came in and said to the Duke, "If I bring in your daughter Rosalind, will you give her to Orlando here?" "That I would," said the Duke, "if I had all kingdoms to give with her."

"And you say you will have her when I bring her?" she said to Orlando. "That would I," he answered, "were I king of all kingdoms."



Then Rosalind and Celia went out, and Rosalind put on her pretty woman's clothes again, and after a while came back. She turned to her father—"I give myself to you, for I am yours." "If there be truth in sight," he said, "you are my daughter."



Then she said to Orlando, "I give myself to you, for I am yours." "If there be truth in sight," he said, "you are my Rosalind."

"I will have no father if you be not he," she said to the Duke, and to Orlando, "I will have no husband if you be not he."



So Orlando and Rosalind were married, and Oliver and Celia, and they lived happy ever after, returning with the Duke to the kingdom.



For Frederick had been shown by a holy hermit the wickedness of his ways, and so gave back the dukedom of his brother, and himself went into a monastery to pray for forgiveness.



The wedding was a merry one, in the mossy glades of the forest. A shepherd and shepherdess who had been friends with Rosalind, when she was herself disguised as a shepherd, were married on the same day, and all with such pretty feastings and merrymakings as could be nowhere within four walls, but only in the beautiful green wood.



