

“Twelfth Night or, What You Will”

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Orsino: A Duke who thinks he is in love with his neighbor, the Countess Olivia. He struggles to gain Olivia’s attention and later he falls in love with Viola, who is disguised as male (Cesario).

Viola: A young woman that, after surviving a shipwreck which she thinks has killed her twin brother, Sebastian, disguises herself as a page to get a job in Duke Orsino’s home. When disguised as a male her name is Cesario.

Olivia: Having recently gone into mourning over the loss of her brother, this rich Countess ignores the advances of her neighbor, Duke Orsino, but falls in love with the disguised Viola, thinking he is really a man.

Sebastian: Viola’s Twin brother who, unbeknownst to Viola, survives the shipwreck.

Sir Toby Belch: Olivia’s drunken uncle. Crude and funny, he carouses with Sir Andrew and flirts with Maria.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek: A knight, and the drinking companion of Sir Toby and a suitor of Olivia.

Malvolio: Olivia’s snobbish Steward who thinks she is in love with him.

Feste: A professional jester who serves Olivia but also moves freely to Duke Orsino’s palace, commenting on the action rather than participating in it.

Maria: Olivia's lady-in-waiting, she organizes the plot against Malvolio.

Fabian: Olivia’s servant.

Valentine: Attendant of Duke Orsino.

Curio: Attendant of Duke Orsino.

Antonio: A sea captain and friend of Sebastian.

Sea Captain: Viola’s friend and Captain of the wrecked ship who survived.

Priest/Officers/Musicians

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PLOT SUMMARY

Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, is in love with his neighbor, the Countess Olivia. She has sworn to avoid men's company for seven years while she mourns the death of her brother, so rejects him. Nearby a group of sailors arrive on shore with a young woman, Viola, who has survived a shipwreck in a storm at sea. Viola mourns the loss of her twin brother but decides to dress as a boy to get work as a page to Duke Orsino.

Despite his rejection, Orsino sends his new page Cesario (Viola in disguise) to woo Olivia on his behalf. Viola goes unwillingly as she has already fallen in love at first sight with the duke. Olivia is attracted by the 'boy' and she sends her pompous steward, Malvolio, after him with a ring.

Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, her servant Maria, and Sir Toby's friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is also hoping to woo Olivia, and is being led on by Sir Toby, who is trying to fleece him of his money, all plot to expose the self-love of Malvolio. By means of a false letter they trick him into thinking his mistress Olivia loves him. Malvolio appears in yellow stockings and cross-garters, smiling (as instructed) in the letter. Unaware of this trick the Countess is horrified and has Malvolio shut up in the dark as a madman.

Meanwhile Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, who has also survived the shipwreck, comes to Illyria. His sea-captain friend, Antonio, is a wanted man for piracy against Orsino. The resemblance between Cesario and Sebastian leads the jealous Sir Andrew to challenge Cesario to a duel. Antonio intervenes to defend Cesario whom he thinks is his friend Sebastian and is arrested. Olivia has in the meantime met and become betrothed to Sebastian.

Cesario is accused of deserting both Antonio and Olivia when the real Sebastian arrives to apologize for fighting Sir Toby. Seeing both twins together, all is revealed to Olivia. Orsino's fool, Feste, brings a letter from Malvolio and on his release the conspirators confess to having written the false letter. Malvolio departs promising revenge. Maria and Sir Toby have married in celebration of the success of their device against the steward. The play ends as Orsino welcomes Olivia and Sebastian and, realizing his own attraction to Cesario, he promises that they, too, will be married.