

Shakespearean Drama

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

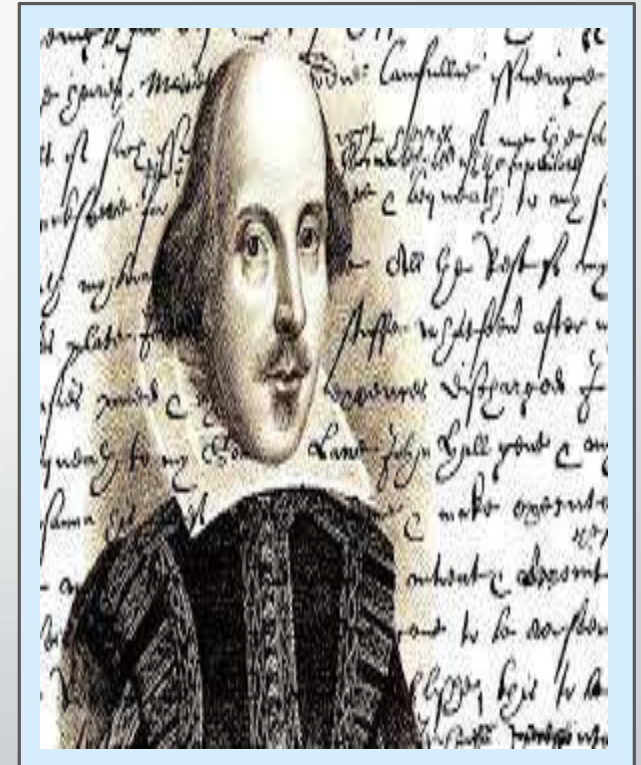
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William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in **Stratford-upon-Avon**. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April, which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616.

Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre (sometimes called the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Period). **Shakespeare's plays** are perhaps his most enduring legacy, but they are not all he wrote. **Shakespeare's poems** also remain popular to this day.

Records survive relating to **William Shakespeare's family** that offer an understanding of the context of Shakespeare's early life and the lives of his family members. **John Shakespeare** married **Mary Arden**, and together they had eight children. John and Mary lost two daughters as infants, so William became their eldest child. John Shakespeare worked as a glove-maker, but he also became an important figure in the town of Stratford by fulfilling civic positions. His elevated status meant that he was even more likely to have sent his children, including William, to the **local grammar school**.

William Shakespeare would have lived with his family in their house on Henley Street until he turned eighteen. When he was eighteen, **Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway**, who was twenty-six. It was a rushed marriage because **Anne** was already pregnant at the time of the ceremony.



Together they had three children. Their first daughter, **Susanna**, was born six months after the wedding and was later followed by twins **Hamnet** and **Judith**. Hamnet died when he was just 11 years old.

Shakespeare's career jump-started in London, but when did he go there? We know Shakespeare's twins were baptised in 1585, and that by 1592 his reputation was established in London, but the intervening years are considered a mystery. Scholars generally refer to these years as '**The Lost Years**'.

During his time in London, Shakespeare's first printed works were published. They were two long poems, '**Venus and Adonis**' (1593) and '**The Rape of Lucrece**' (1594). He also became a founding member of The Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company of actors. Shakespeare was the company's regular dramatist, producing on average two plays a year, for almost twenty years.

He remained with the company for the rest of his career, during which time it evolved into The King's Men under the patronage of King James I (from 1603). During his time in the company Shakespeare wrote many of his most famous tragedies, such as **King Lear** and **Macbeth**, as well as great romances, like **The Winter's Tale** and **The Tempest**.

Altogether **Shakespeare's works** include 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems. No original manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays are known to exist today. It is actually thanks to a group of actors from Shakespeare's company that we have about half of the plays at all. They collected them for publication after Shakespeare died, preserving the plays. These writings were brought together in what is known as the **First Folio** ('Folio' refers to the size of the paper used). It contained 36 of his plays, but none of his poetry.

Shakespeare's legacy is as rich and diverse as his work. His plays have had an enduring presence on stage and film. William Shakespeare continues to be one of the most important literary figures of the English language.



TWELFTH NIGHT: INTRODUCTION

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- ❑ **Twelfth Night**, in full **Twelfth Night; or, What You Will**, comedy in five acts by **William Shakespeare**, written about 1600–02 and printed in the **First Folio** of 1623 from a transcript of an authorial draft or possibly a playbook.
- ❑ One of Shakespeare's finest comedies, *Twelfth Night* precedes the great tragedies and problem plays in order of composition.
- ❑ The original source appears to have been the story *Apollonius and Silla* in **Barnabe Riche's** *Riche His Farewell to Military Profession* (1581), based in turn on a number of Continental versions that included an Italian comedy called *Gl'ingannati* (1531; "The Deceived"), published anonymously, and a story in **Matteo Bandello's** *Novelle* (1554–73)
- ❑ The title of **Twelfth Night** refers to the twelfth night of Christmas, also referred to as the eve of Epiphany, a day that commemorates the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus and is often celebrated with a temporary suspension of rules and social orders. As in the play, *Twelfth Night* revels in the overturning of convention and general merriment.
 - ❑ Although Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* clearly mimics the conventions of the Twelfth Night celebrations, with the social order of the play suspended and characters easily crossing social classes, there is no obvious reference to the holiday within the play itself.

TWELFTH NIGHT: SHORT SUMMARY

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Viola, separated from her twin Sebastian, dresses as a boy and works for the Duke Orsino, whom she falls in love with. Orsino is in love with the Countess Olivia, and sends Viola to court her for him, but Olivia falls for Viola instead. Sebastian arrives, causing a flood of mistaken identity, and marries Olivia. Viola then reveals she is a girl and marries Orsino.

ACT I

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is despairing that he is spurned by the Countess Olivia. She has forsworn men's company for seven years while she mourns the death of her brother and rebuffs all his advances. Nearby, a group of sailors arrive on shore with a young girl, Viola, whom they have rescued from a storm at sea. Viola laments the loss of her twin brother, Sebastian, in the shipwreck. She resolves to fend for herself by dressing as a boy to get work as a page to Duke Orsino.

Despite his former rejection, Orsino sends his new page Cesario (Viola in disguise) to court Olivia for him. Cesario/Viola fell in love at first sight with her master Orsino, so she goes to court Olivia unwillingly. To make matters more complicated, Olivia continues to reject Orsino but is attracted to Cesario. She sends her proud steward, Malvolio, after him with a ring. Thus, a genuine love triangle arises between Olivia, Viola/Cesario, and Orsino.

ACT II

Meanwhile, members of Olivia's household plot to expose the self-love and aspirations of the steward, Malvolio. These include Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, her servant, Maria, and Sir Toby's friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Sir Andrew also happens to be seeking the hand of Olivia. Together, they use a letter to trick Malvolio into believing Olivia loves him. The letter demands that Malvolio appear in yellow stockings, cross-gartered, and smiling to show his love for Olivia. After he does so, the Countess is horrified and has Malvolio shut up in the dark as a madman. Meanwhile, Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, has also survived the shipwreck. He comes to Illyria with his sea-captain friend, Antonio, who is a wanted man for former piracy against Orsino.

ACT III

Sir Andrew's affections for Olivia lead him to be jealous of Cesario, and he decides to declare a duel between them. Thanks to a prank by Sir Toby, both Andrew and Cesario believe that their opponents intend to fight to the death. They both shirk the fight. However, the sea-captain Antonio passes by and mistakes Cesario for Sebastian, and intervenes to defend his friend. He is recognised by Orsino's men and arrested. Later, Sebastian comes along and is challenged by Sir Andrew, who thinks *he* is Cesario. Sebastian, trained in combat, wins the fight.

But Olivia intervenes and invites Sebastian into the house, also thinking him to be Cesario (this is clearly a common mistake). Olivia and Sebastian are married that night.

ACT IV

Malvolio, held in the dungeon for being a madman, is psychologically tortured by Maria, Sir Toby, and Feste, the court fool. Feste dresses up as a priest to convince Malvolio that he is, in fact, mad. After realising that they might get into trouble for treating Malvolio this way, they allow him a pen and paper to be able to write a letter to Olivia.

ACT V

Antonio is brought to talk with Orsino, and upon seeing Cesario, he accuses him of betrayal. Just then, the real Sebastian arrives to apologise for fighting Sir Toby. The twins see each other and discover that they are both alive. Orsino's fool, Feste, brings a letter from Malvolio, and on his release, Maria's letter is revealed to be fraudulent. Malvolio departs promising revenge. Maria and Sir Toby have already married in celebration of the success of their plot against the steward.

The play ends as Orsino approves the union between Olivia and Sebastian. Realising his own attraction to 'Cesario', Orsino promises that once Viola is dressed as a woman again, they will be married as well.



TWELFTH NIGHT: CHARACTER

□ Viola

A young woman of aristocratic birth, and the play's protagonist. Washed up on the shore of Illyria when her ship is wrecked in a storm, Viola decides to make her own way in the world. She disguises herself as a young man, calling herself "Cesario," and becomes a page to Duke Orsino. She ends up falling in love with Orsino—even as Olivia, the woman Orsino is courting, falls in love with Cesario. Thus, Viola finds that her clever disguise has entrapped her: she cannot tell Orsino that she loves him, and she cannot tell Olivia why she, as Cesario, cannot love *her*. Her poignant plight is the central conflict in the play.

□ Orsino

A powerful nobleman in the country of Illyria. Orsino is lovesick for the beautiful Lady Olivia, but becomes more and more fond of his handsome new page boy, Cesario, who is actually a woman—Viola. Orsino is a vehicle through which the play explores the absurdity of love: a supreme egotist, Orsino mopes around complaining how heartsick he is over Olivia, when it is clear that he is chiefly in love with the idea of being in love and enjoys making a spectacle of himself. His attraction to the ostensibly male Cesario injects sexual ambiguity into his character.

□ Olivia

A wealthy, beautiful, and noble Illyrian lady, Olivia is courted by Orsino and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but to each of them she insists that she is in mourning for her brother, who has recently died, and will not marry for seven years. She and Orsino are similar characters in that each seems to enjoy wallowing in his or her own misery.

Viola's arrival in the masculine guise of Cesario enables Olivia to break free of her self-indulgent melancholy. Olivia seems to have no difficulty transferring her affections from one love interest to the next, however, suggesting that her romantic feelings—like most emotions in the play—do not run deep.

❑ Sebastian

Viola's lost twin brother. When he arrives in Illyria, traveling with Antonio, his close friend and protector, Sebastian discovers that many people think that they know him. Furthermore, the beautiful Lady Olivia, whom he has never met, wants to marry him. Sebastian is not as well rounded a character as his sister. He seems to exist to take on the role that Viola fills while disguised as Cesario—namely, the mate for Olivia.

❑ Malvolio

The straitlaced steward—or head servant—in the household of Lady Olivia. Malvolio is very efficient but also very self-righteous, and he has a poor opinion of drinking, singing, and fun. His priggishness and haughty attitude earn him the enmity of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria, who play a cruel trick on him, making him believe that Olivia is in love with him. In his fantasies about marrying his mistress, he reveals a powerful ambition to rise above his social class.

❑ Feste

The clown, or fool, of Olivia's household, Feste moves between Olivia's and Orsino's homes. He earns his living by making pointed jokes, singing old songs, being generally witty, and offering good advice cloaked under a layer of foolishness. In spite of being a professional fool, Feste often seems the wisest character in the play.

❑ Sir Toby

Olivia's uncle. Olivia lets Sir Toby Belch live with her, but she does not approve of his rowdy behaviour, practical jokes, heavy drinking, late-night carousing, or friends (specifically the idiotic Sir Andrew). Sir Toby also earns the ire of Malvolio. But Sir Toby has an ally, and eventually a mate, in Olivia's sharp-witted waiting-gentlewoman, Maria. Together they bring about the triumph of chaotic spirit, which Sir Toby embodies, and the ruin of the controlling, self-righteous Malvolio.

☐ **Maria**

Olivia's clever, daring young waiting-gentlewoman. Maria is remarkably similar to her antagonist, Malvolio, who harbours aspirations of rising in the world through marriage. But Maria succeeds where Malvolio fails—perhaps because she is a woman, but, more likely, because she is more in tune than Malvolio with the anarchic, topsy-turvy spirit that animates the play.

☐ **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**

A friend of Sir Toby's. Sir Andrew Aguecheek attempts to court Olivia, but he doesn't stand a chance. He thinks that he is witty, brave, young, and good at languages and dancing, but he is actually an idiot.

☐ **Antonio**

A man who rescues Sebastian after his shipwreck. Antonio has become very fond of Sebastian, caring for him, accompanying him to Illyria, and furnishing him with money—all because of a love so strong that it seems to be romantic in nature. Antonio's attraction to Sebastian, however, never bears fruit. Despite the ambiguous and shifting gender roles in the play, *Twelfth Night* remains a romantic comedy in which the characters are destined for marriage. In such a world, homoerotic attraction cannot be fulfilled.



TWELFTH NIGHT

ACT-SCENE WISE DISCUSSION

ACT 1

SCENE - 1

Duke Orsino lounges in his palace in Illyria, alternately praising and lamenting the nature of love. First, he asks his attendants to serenade him with music. Then, he makes them stop. Love, he says, like the ocean, consumes whatever is cast into it. He adds that it is so "full of shapes," constantly changing its objects, that it is like a **hallucination**.

Curio, one of Orsino's attendants, enters and asks the Duke whether he will he come **hunt** "hart" (male deer). Orsino jokes that, since he first saw **Olivia**, he himself has been like a hart, hunted by his own desires.

Valentine, another attendant, returns from **Olivia's** palace, where **Orsino** has sent him. He reports that Olivia is deep in mourning for her brother, who recently passed away. To keep her brother's "dead love" fresh in her memory, she has vowed to live like a nun, cloistered and weeping, for seven years. Orsino is further impassioned, rather than discouraged, by this news. If Olivia will "pay this debt of love but to a brother", he exclaims, imagine how intensely she will love when she is filled with (romantic) affections for only one man.

ACT 1

SCENE - 2

Somewhere on the coast, **Viola**, a young noblewoman, a **Captain**, and several sailors, have just washed ashore from a shipwreck. Viola asks what country they are in, to which the Captain responds, "Illyria." She then cries out that her brother is "in Elysium"—the land of the dead. The Captain reassures her that he last saw her brother, **Sebastian**, alive, clutching the mast of their ship during the storm. Viola thanks the Captain for granting her some hope.

The **Captain**, who was born in Illyria, explains to **Viola** that Illyria is governed by a **Duke Orsino**, a bachelor who is in love with a noblewoman named **Olivia**. Olivia, herself the orphaned daughter of a count, who out of "dear love" for her brother, died a year ago, has promised to never marry.

Intrigued, **Viola** wonders whether she could temporarily conceal her aristocratic identity and go work for Olivia. The **Captain** replies that this would be difficult because Olivia is refusing to see anyone. Viola then decides that she wants to become a servant to Orsino, and asks the Captain to help her disguise herself as a man and get an interview with Orsino. The Captain agrees.

ACT 1

SCENE - 3

At **Olivia's** palace, Olivia's crass uncle, **Sir Toby Belch**, has just returned from a night of drinking. Olivia's serving woman, **Maria**, scolds him in a flirting way: Olivia has been complaining about Sir Toby's bad behavior and about **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**, the foolish knight he brought to her. Sir Toby protests: Sir Andrew is tall—and rich! Maria scoffs that this makes no difference. The two are still quarreling when Sir Andrew enters the room.

Sir Andrew and **Sir Toby** greet each other affectionately. Sir Toby jokes that Sir Andrew should "accost" **Maria**—"woo her, assail her" (1.3.54)—setting off a volley of double entendres in which Maria easily bests Sir Andrew, Maria then departs.

Sir Andrew tells **Sir Toby** that he is leaving the next day, because Olivia refuses to see him. But Sir Toby persuades Sir Andrew to stay just one month longer.

ACT 1

SCENE - 4

At **Orsino's** palace, **Viola**, now disguised as the page boy **Cesario**, chats with **Valentine**. Valentine tells Cesario that if he continues to please Orsino this well, he will advance quickly in the household: after only three days the Duke already trusts him intimately.

Orsino enters and asks to speak with **Cesario** privately. Orsino then tells Cesario he has Orsino's full confidence, and tells Cesario to go to Olivia's house and do whatever he can to receive an audience on Orsino's behalf. Cesario is skeptical, given the firmness of Olivia's resolve not to see anyone. But Orsino is confident that Cesario will be able to persuade her—particularly because, prepubescent, he still looks like a woman: his lips, his voice all resemble "a woman's part".

Cesario departs for **Olivia's** house with four or five attendants. But, privately, Viola remarks to herself that she is in a difficult situation: she must woo on behalf of a man whom she herself would like to marry!

ACT 1

SCENE - 5

In **Olivia's** house, **Maria** is chiding **Feste**, the clown, for a recent unexplained absence. Feste responds by teasing Maria about her recent flirtations with **Sir Toby Belch**. Snapping that he should keep this to himself, she exits.

Olivia enters, wearing mourning clothes and attended by her steward, **Malvolio**. Olivia first instructs her attendants to send **Feste** away, but he teases her into better spirits by saying that she is the fool of the two of them—for mourning her brother, who is in heaven. This pleases Olivia. But Malvolio disapproves and calls Feste a "barren rascal". Olivia criticizes Malvolio for his "self-love"—taking himself too seriously.

Maria returns to announce that a young man at the gate wishes to speak with **Olivia**. Olivia asks if he has been sent by Orsino. Maria doesn't know. Olivia sends Malvolio to send the man away. Passing through, **Sir Toby** exchanges a few drunken words with Olivia—also informing her about the gentleman at the gate. Olivia sends **Feste** to look after Sir Toby, who, Feste agrees, is drunk as a "mad man".

Malvolio returns and informs **Olivia** that the young man outside will not leave. Olivia asks what he is like. Malvolio replies that he is an androgynous adolescent, "between boy and man," and speaks like a woman. Hearing this, Olivia gives in: she agrees to see the messenger. She quickly asks **Maria** to give her a veil to hide her face.

Cesario enters and recites ornate poetry about Olivia's "unmatchable beauty" **Olivia** instructs him to get to the point. Cesario protests that he put a lot of effort into memorizing this speech and adds that, besides, it is beautiful poetry. But Olivia refuses to listen: it is "not the time of moon," she says, to try to make her crazy by carrying on like this **Maria** asks Cesario to leave but he persists, insisting that he must speak with Olivia in private. Finally, Olivia agrees. She sends the others away. Now, she demands to know: who wrote Cesario's "text"? Cesario confesses that it was indeed **Orsino**. Exasperated, Olivia says that she has already heard all he has to say. Cesario asks to see Olivia's face. Olivia consents, joking that they are "now out of text", and unveils herself.

Cesario says it would be cruel for Olivia to go through life without producing an heir to keep such beauty alive after her death. Cesario adds that **Orsino** loves Olivia so deeply that she should yield to him. Olivia asks Cesario to describe Orsino's affections for her. Cesario reports: he adores her, weeps for her, groans, and sighs. Olivia replies that Orsino is a worthy man but knows perfectly well that she cannot return his affections. Cesario responds that, if he were Orsino, he would not accept this denial: he would build a makeshift hut at the gate of Olivia's house, and spend all his time calling, writing, and singing to her, until she was finally moved to pity.

Cutting **Cesario** off, **Olivia** asks what his own background is. Cesario replies that he is a gentleman by birth, although conditions have reduced him. Olivia replies that Cesario should return to **Orsino**, tell him that Olivia cannot love him and must not to send any further messengers—except, that is, for Cesario.

Olivia offers Cesario money but he refuses, telling Olivia that he hopes that one day she will love as passionately as Orsino does, and find that the object of her affections has a heart of stone. With this, Cesario departs.

Once she is alone, **Olivia** admits to herself that she is extremely attracted to **Cesario**. She lists his beautiful features—"Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs" —and describes them as a "blazon." Thinking fast, **Olivia** summons **Malvolio** and gives him a ring, which, she lies, **Cesario** left behind on **Orsino's** behalf. She commands Malvolio to chase down Cesario, return the ring, and instruct him to come back on the following day to hear her reasons for rejecting it. Malvolio takes the ring and hurries off to catch up with Cesario. Olivia remarks to herself that she does not know what she is doing: she is acting irrationally, purely on the basis of physical attraction. Yet, she says, she cannot resist fate.



ACT 2

SCENE - 1

Somewhere on the coast of Illyria, two men, **Antonio** and **Sebastian**, stand in front of Antonio's house. Antonio begs Sebastian to remain as his guest, but without success. Finally, Antonio asks at least to know where Sebastian is going. Moved by Antonio's concern for him, Sebastian admits to the identity he has been hiding: his name is Sebastian, he is an aristocrat from Messaline, and he has a twin sister who drowned on the same day that Antonio saved him from the sea. His sister was beautiful and intelligent, and he cannot stop weeping whenever he thinks of her.

Touched by the story, Antonio begs **Sebastian** to let him remain with him as his servant. Sebastian says that he would prefer to be left alone but tells Antonio he is headed to Orsino's court. Antonio pauses, because he has many enemies at Orsino's court, yet decides that since he does "adore" Sebastian he will follow him, despite the danger.

ACT 2

SCENE - 2

Malvolio catches up with **Cesario**. He gives Cesario the ring from **Olivia** and explains that Olivia doesn't want it and has nothing more to say to the Duke, but would like Cesario to return to tell her how Orsino reacts. Although momentarily confused because he didn't leave any such ring, Cesario plays along by refusing to take the ring back. Malvolio, growing angry, throws the ring at Cesario's feet, then storms off.

Alone, **Viola** picks up the ring and realizes that **Olivia** has fallen in love with "**Cesario**," and that by taking on her disguise she has created an impossible love triangle: **Orsino** loves Olivia, Olivia loves Viola/Cesario, and Viola loves Orsino. Because Orsino takes Viola for a man, she has no chance with him; and because Olivia takes her for the pageboy Cesario, she is in love with someone who does not even exist. Overwhelmed, Viola remarks that only time can solve this mess.

ACT 2

SCENE - 3

Sir Toby Belch and **Sir Andrew Aguecheek** are up late, eating and drinking in a room in **Olivia's** house. **Feste** soon joins them, and they are all raucously singing together, when **Maria** shows up. Maria warns them that if they aren't quiet, Olivia will have **Malvolio** throw them out of the house. Sir Toby responds that he is Olivia's relative and she will do no such thing. They continue singing.

Malvolio enters and berates the group for treating his "lady's house" like an "ale-house". Sir Toby retorts that Malvolio is just a steward and should not expect others to follow his strict standards of behavior. Furious, Malvolio yells at **Maria** that if she respected her mistress, she would reprimand these lowlifes. Threatening to tell **Olivia** everything, he storms off. Maria is annoyed at Malvolio, but begs Sir Toby and **Sir Andrew** to quiet down because ever since Olivia saw **Cesario** earlier that day, she has been badly distressed.

Maria then says she has a great idea for a prank on **Malvolio**. She boasts that she can imitate **Olivia's** handwriting perfectly, and will drop in Malvolio's way a love letter that Malvolio, in his arrogance, will assume is from Olivia to him. Meanwhile, **Sir Toby**, **Sir Andrew**, and **Feste** will get to watch how Malvolio reacts.

Maria leaves to go to bed. **Sir Andrew** notes approvingly that she is a good woman. **Toby** agrees. Andrew once again laments that he needs more money in order to stay in Illyria and continue wooing Olivia. Sir Toby reassures Sir Andrew that he will win Olivia's affections in the end.

ACT 2

SCENE - 4

The next day, **Orsino** lounges in his palace as usual, attended by **Cesario**, **Curio**, and other servants and musicians. Orsino sends for **Feste**, to sing. While Curio looks for him, the musicians start playing.

Orsino tells **Cesario** that, if he is ever in love, he must remember and imitate Orsino's passion for **Olivia**. Noticing that Cesario seems moved by the music, Orsino then asks whether he is not himself in love. Cesario—who is in fact in love with Orsino—confesses that he is. Orsino asks what Cesario's beloved is like. Cesario responds that she is very similar to Orsino, in both appearance and age. Orsino tells Cesario that this woman cannot be worthy: because men's passions are less stable than those of women, and women quickly lose their beauty with age, men should always take younger wives.

Curio returns with **Feste**. **Orsino** instructs him to sing what he sang the previous night, a melodramatic lover's lament. After he sings, Orsino rewards Feste with a few coins, and Feste prays for the "melancholy god" to protect the Duke. Orsino dismisses everyone but **Cesario**.

Orsino instructs **Cesario** to go woo **Olivia** once again on his behalf. Cesario suggests that Orsino give up. What if a woman loved Orsino just as he loves Olivia, and he did not requite her love? She would have to give up eventually. Orsino says no woman could love like he does. Cesario responds that his father had a daughter, very similar to Cesario, who once loved a man just as much as Orsino loves Olivia. The girl never confessed her love but pined away with melancholy. Orsino asks if she died of love. Cesario avoids the question. Orsino then sends Cesario with a jewel to Olivia, instructing him to hurry.

ACT 2

SCENE - 5

As **Sir Toby**, **Sir Andrew**, and **Fabian**, one of Olivia's attendants, wait in **Olivia's** garden, Maria runs in and instructs them all to conceal themselves inside a tree because Malvolio—who has been in the sun, practicing elegant mannerisms—is coming! They hide. Maria rushes off.

Malvolio enters, talking to himself. As it happens, he already believes that **Olivia** fancies him. Hiding in the tree, **Sir Toby**, **Sir Andrew**, and **Fabian** try to suppress their laughter, as Malvolio fantasizes about how wonderful it would be to marry Olivia and become a count. Suddenly, Malvolio breaks off: he has caught sight of the letter that Maria planted in his path. Inside the tree, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian can hardly contain themselves. Malvolio immediately recognizes "Olivia's" handwriting and seal. He opens the letter and starts reading it aloud. It says that Olivia has a secret love she will call "M, O, A, I". After some puzzling, Malvolio concludes that these letters must refer to him. He reads on. The letter instructs that, if "Olivia's" beloved finds it, he must indicate that he reciprocates her feelings by being surly with the servants, wearing yellow stockings, crossing his garters at the knee, and smiling all the time. Overjoyed, Malvolio resolves to do all of these things and hurries off.

Sir Toby says he could marry **Maria** for thinking up this prank. Sir Toby, **Sir Andrew**, and Maria then rush off to watch **Malvolio** make a fool of himself.

ACT 3

SCENE - 1

Cesario arrives at **Olivia's** palace (following Orsino's instructions in 2.4). Outside he finds **Feste**, who clowns a bit and mocks both Olivia and **Orsino**. Amused, Cesario gives him a few coins. As Feste scurries off, **Sir Toby** and Sir Andrew appear. Then Olivia arrives with **Maria**. Cesario asks to see her in private. Olivia sends everyone else away.

When they are alone, **Cesario** says that he is **Olivia's** servant: he is **Orsino's** servant and Orsino belongs to Olivia. So, by extension, he does too. Olivia says she wishes Cesario would never again speak of Orsino but, rather, woo her for himself.

Cesario responds that he pities **Olivia** but cannot love her—because, as he tells her, "I am not what I am". Cesario adds that no woman will ever have his heart; he himself shall be mistress of it forever. Nonetheless, Olivia encourages him to return in hopes that he will learn to reciprocate her affections.

ACT 3

SCENE - 2

In another room of **Olivia's** house, **Sir Andrew** tells **Sir Toby** that he has finally decided to give up and leave because he saw Olivia flirting with **Cesario** in the orchard. Sir Toby assures Sir Andrew that Olivia was only trying to test his valor, and that to impress Olivia, Sir Andrew should now challenge Cesario to a duel. Persuaded, Sir Andrew goes off to write a letter of challenge. Sir Toby promises to deliver it.

Once Sir Andrew has left, Sir Toby admits to **Fabian** that he only wants Sir Andrew to hang around so that he can keep leeching off of him.

Maria arrives, and tells **Sir Toby** and **Fabian** that **Malvolio** is doing everything instructed in Maria's letter, and making himself entirely ridiculous in the process. Maria comments that **Olivia** will probably hit Malvolio for his idiotic behaviour and that, when she does, Malvolio will simply smile and consider it a sign of favour. Sir Toby is delighted.

ACT 3

SCENE - 3

Antonio and **Sebastian** arrive in Illyria. Sebastian says that Antonio didn't have to come, but Antonio insists that he has come out of "willing love".

Sebastian then suggests that they take in the sights of the city, but **Antonio** explains that he once fought at sea against Orsino. If discovered in Illyria, he will be in danger. He gives his purse to Sebastian, telling him to feel free to buy anything that he desires. Antonio himself will wait at a local inn, The Elephant. They make plans to meet at the inn in an hour.

ACT 3

SCENE - 4

In her garden, **Olivia** consults with **Maria** on how best to woo **Cesario**, who has agreed to come back yet again. She asks Maria to bring **Malvolio** to advise her, as his melancholy mood will better match her own. Maria replies that Malvolio seems to have gone mad, for he does nothing but smile. Sending Maria off to fetch him, Olivia remarks that she herself feels just "as mad as he, if sad and merry madness equals be".

Malvolio enters wearing yellow cross-gartered stockings, smiling idiotically. **Olivia** scolds him for this behavior. However, he continues grinning and alluding to the letter which he believes she sent. Olivia concludes that Malvolio has fallen into "midsummer madness" (3.4.52). A servant enters, reporting that **Cesario** has returned. Olivia asks **Maria** to get **Sir Toby** to look after Malvolio. Then she goes to receive **Cesario**. Once Olivia and Maria are gone, Malvolio celebrates. He is convinced that his behaviour has pleased Olivia and that now nothing can come between him and the "full prospect of [his] hopes".

Maria enters with **Sir Toby** and **Fabian**. All three pretend to be worried about **Malvolio**. Maria implies to Malvolio that he is acting crazily and reminds him that **Olivia** wanted him to remain in Sir Toby's care. Quickly losing patience, Malvolio dismisses the others as lower in rank than he, warns that they will hear more from him later, and storms off. Fabian comments that if their prank "were played upon a stage," he would dismiss it as "improbable".

Maria encourages them both to pursue Malvolio and continue to torment him. Sir Toby reports that Olivia already thinks that Malvolio is mad.

Sir Andrew enters, holding the letter he has written to challenge **Cesario** to a duel. **Sir Toby** reads it, declares that it's sure to provoke **Cesario**, and offers to deliver it. When they learn from **Maria** that Cesario is at that moment visiting **Olivia** and is about to depart, Sir Toby convinces Sir Andrew to go lie in wait and swear at Cesario when he passes. Sir Andrew hurries off. Once alone with **Fabian** Toby confides that he has no intention of delivering Sir Andrew's letter: Cesario is clearly too well bred even to acknowledge such a ridiculous challenge. Instead, Sir Toby will tell Cesario that Sir Andrew wants to fight, convince each of the other's dueling skills, and make each terrified of the other.

Olivia enters with **Cesario**, apologizing for having said too much: she is so in love, she cannot help herself. Cesario reminds Olivia that his master, **Orsino**, is suffering just as she is. Olivia gives Cesario a locket containing her picture and promises that she won't deny Cesario anything he wishes. Cesario insists that he wants only for Olivia to reciprocate Orsino's love: she should transfer her feelings for Cesario to the Duke. Frustrated, but not defeated, Olivia bids Cesario farewell, reminding him to come the next day. She is so in love, she remarks, Cesario is almost like a "fiend" to bear her soul to "hell". Olivia exits.

Once **Olivia** has gone, **Sir Toby** and **Fabian** approach **Cesario**. Using all sorts of double entendre's about swords and sheathes, Sir Toby warns Cesario that a deadly assailant is waiting to attack him in the orchard. Baffled, Cesario asks Sir Toby to explain to this assailant that he did not mean to offend anyone. Sir Toby departs. Fabian picks up where Sir Toby left off, telling Cesario that the knight is the most dangerous in all Illyria. Cesario says he does not mind admitting that he's too cowardly to fight.

Meanwhile, Sir Toby finds **Sir Andrew** and tells him that after receiving the (actually undelivered) letter, Cesario is furious and ready to duel. Fearful of what he has set in motion, Sir Andrew curses. As Sir Toby's prank comes to a head, Cesario remarks, in an aside, that he is so terrified he almost wants to confess that he is a woman to save himself.

Cesario and **Sir Andrew** approach each other and draw swords, terrified. At this instant, **Antonio** enters. Seeing Cesario—whom he thinks is **Sebastian**—he says that he will fight in Cesario's place. Sir Toby demands to know who Antonio is. Antonio replies that he is someone who in "his love dares yet do more". Puzzled and irritated at this interruption, Sir Toby draws against Antonio.

Suddenly, several officers appear. **Sir Andrew** and **Cesario**, overjoyed to stop fighting, put away their swords. The officers arrest **Antonio**, who asks **Cesario**—whom he still mistakes for **Sebastian**—to return the purse that he lent him. Cesario, confused but grateful for Antonio's help in the fight, offers him half of the money that he has on him. Dismayed, Antonio asks how the friend for whom he has done so much can deny him in his moment of need? Cesario replies that he doesn't know what Antonio is talking about, and that Antonio must be crazy.

As the officers pull him away, **Antonio** explains to them that he saved the life of this boy when he was drowning at sea. He shouts that "**Sebastian**" should be ashamed of himself. The officers drag Antonio off. **Viola**, meanwhile, is filled with sudden hope that her brother is still alive. She rushes off to search for him.

Once everyone has left, Sir Andrew vows that he will pursue and defeat **Cesario**. He runs off, with **Sir Toby** and **Fabian** following.

ACT 4

SCENE - 1

Near **Olivia's** house, **Feste** runs into **Sebastian**, whom he mistakes for **Cesario**. Feste asks Sebastian to return and speak with Olivia. Confused, Sebastian offers Feste some coins to leave him alone. Feste is about to run off with the money when **Sir Andrew** appears, trailed by **Sir Toby** and **Fabian**. Sir Andrew punches **Sebastian**. Stunned for a moment, Sebastian then punches Sir Andrew back, asking "are all the people mad?" in Illyria. Feste rushes off to tattle to **Olivia**. Sir Toby and Sebastian begin to fence.

Olivia rushes in, ordering **Sir Toby** to stop. Olivia sends Toby away, while begging "**Cesario**" (in fact, **Sebastian**) not to be offended. Once **Sir Toby**, **Sir Andrew**, and **Fabian** have sulked off, Olivia apologizes profusely to "Cesario" and asks him to return with her to her house. Sebastian fears that he is mad or dreaming, and yet he is also overwhelmed by attraction to Olivia. If this is a dream, he says, he would like to keep on sleeping! He accepts the invitation and leaves with Olivia.

ACT 4

SCENE - 2

Back at Olivia's house, **Maria** and **Toby** have locked **Malvolio** in a dark chamber to cure his "madness." Outside the chamber, Maria instructs **Feste** to put on a gown and beard she has procured and to pretend to be a "great scholar" "Sir Topas." Maria goes to fetch Sir Toby while Feste puts on the gown. When they return, Sir Toby is delighted: "the knave," he says, "counterfeits well"

"Sir Topas" goes to the door of **Malvolio's** cell. Malvolio tries desperately to enlist him as an ally; Sir Topas parries his every attempt, telling him that the dark room he is in is really light as day. Malvolio begs Sir Topas to test whether or not he is mad by asking him a question. Sir Topas asks, "[W]hat is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?" Malvolio replies (correctly) that Pythagoras argued that the human soul might just as well inhabit the body of a bird. Sir Topas asks what Malvolio thinks of this; Malvolio (who, we will recall, is a Puritan) says that he thinks nobly of the soul and does not in any way approve of Pythagoras' opinion. Sir Topas replies that Malvolio must remain in the darkness then: he will not be let out until he believes that a human soul could just as well inhabit the body of a bird. With this "Sir Topas" leaves Malvolio, who cries out after him.

Sir Toby, amused, mocks **Malvolio's** desperate cries. But he confides in Maria that they must find a way out of this prank to avoid irritating **Olivia** any further. The two sneak off to Sir Toby's bedroom.

Back in his clown personality, **Feste** returns to **Malvolio's** cell. Malvolio begs Feste to bring him a candle, pen, ink, and paper, so that he can write a letter asking **Olivia** for help. Feste agrees to deliver the letter, but first dallies for a while, teasing Malvolio.

ACT 4

SCENE - 3

In another room in **Olivia's** palace, **Sebastian** is wandering around, trying to make sense of what has happened. Sebastian wishes that he could find **Antonio** to get his advice, but for some reason Antonio wasn't at the Elephant Inn when Sebastian went to meet him. Sebastian keeps turning over the facts: it seems as if either he or Olivia must be mad.

Sebastian's thoughts are interrupted when **Olivia** enters with a priest. She begs Sebastian to agree to marry her secretly at once. Then, when Sebastian is ready, they can then make their marriage known and have another celebration, commensurate with Olivia's wealth and social standing. Sebastian agrees. The priest leads him and Olivia away.

ACT 5

SCENE - 1

In front of **Olivia's** house, **Feste** holds the letter that Malvolio has written begging for Olivia's help. As **Fabian** tries to get Feste to let him read it, **Orsino** arrives with Cesario and several others. After exchanging some casual banter with Feste, Orsino sends the clown to inform Olivia of his arrival.

While **Orsino** waits, the officers barge in with **Antonio**. **Cesario** defends Antonio—noting that Antonio saved him from **Sir Toby** and **Sir Andrew**—but concedes that he did seem crazy. Orsino asks Antonio why he came to Illyria, where he knew it would be dangerous for him. Antonio explains that he came to serve the "ingrateful boy" Cesario, whom he still mistakes for **Sebastian**. He says that he saved this "boy" from a shipwreck and, from then on, followed and defended him, "pure for his love") Yet, when Antonio was arrested, the boy ignored him, refusing even to return the purse, which Antonio had lent him. Cesario is mystified. Orsino asks when the boy Antonio is talking about arrived in Illyria. Antonio replies that they arrived today, having spent the past three months together. As Olivia approaches, Orsino tells Antonio that he is mad, considering Cesario has been in Illyria for the past three months.

Olivia demands to know where **Cesario** has been. Has he broken his marriage promises to her already? Cesario is confused. **Orsino**, who now thinks that Cesario has wooed Olivia in secret, grows enraged. He tells Olivia he should kill her out of "savage jealousy" or kill Cesario to spite Olivia, although he holds his page boy dear.

Cesario replies that to give Orsino rest, he would die a thousand deaths: he loves Orsino more than he will ever love a wife. Horrified, Olivia fetches the priest who has just married her to **Sebastian**. The priest confirms that he has sealed an "eternal bond of love" between Olivia and Cesario. Hearing this, Orsino storms off, disgusted, while Cesario struggles to stop him.

As **Orsino** is leaving, **Sir Andrew** enters, bleeding and calling for a surgeon. He accuses **Cesario** of injuring him. General puzzlement descends upon the group. **Sir Toby**, also bleeding, enters with **Feste** and joins in accusing Cesario. **Olivia** sends them away to have their injuries tended and demands to know who is actually responsible.

At this moment, **Sebastian** rushes in, apologizing to **Olivia**, begging her pardon for having hurt her kinsman. Everyone is astonished. **Orsino** exclaims that Sebastian and **Cesario** are identical: "one face, one voice, one habit, and two persons". **Antonio** says, "an apple, cleft in two, is not more twin" while Olivia exclaims that what they are seeing is like magic, "most wonderful".

Through a series of questions, **Sebastian** and **Viola** identify each other and rejoice: they are reunited! Yet, Viola says to the confused onlookers, Sebastian should not embrace her until she has discarded the "masculine usurped attire" that has been her costume, and proven who she is to everyone's satisfaction. To do this, she must return to the **Captain** who saved her from their shipwreck, knows her story, and has her old clothes.

Sebastian turns to **Olivia** to explain: all that time, she wanted to marry a woman. **Orsino** reassures Olivia, telling her that the twins have noble blood. He then turns to **Viola** and says that he often heard **Cesario** swear that he would never love a woman as he loves Orsino. Is it true? Viola affirms that it is. Then, Orsino continues, she should give him her hand and let him see her in her "woman's weeds" or clothing. Viola replies that the **Captain** who brought her to shore from the shipwreck has her clothes. But he is currently tied up in some legal suit led by Malvolio.

Olivia instantly agrees to take care of this minor detail—which reminds her that, distracted by her own "frenzy," she has completely forgotten about **Malvolio**. At this moment, **Feste** enters, holding Malvolio's letter. The letter warns Olivia that Malvolio will show the world how she wronged him: he still has the letter in which Olivia instructed him to adopt the costume and behavior for which all the others have called him mad. Olivia remarks that the letter does not sound like it was written by someone crazy. She sends **Fabian** to fetch Malvolio from the cell where he has been imprisoned.

Waiting for them to return, **Olivia** asks **Orsino** to think of her as a sister and offers to host a wedding feast for all four of them. Orsino accepts. He releases her from his service and from the persona of **Cesario**.

Malvolio enters with **Fabian**. Fuming, he presents **Olivia** with **Maria's** trick letter. After a quick examination, Olivia replies that the handwriting is Maria's, and she realizes that Maria and the others must have pulled a prank on Malvolio. Although Olivia initially promises Malvolio that she will let him punish the guilty parties, Fabian defends himself, as well as **Sir Toby** and Maria—who, he reports, have just been married. He convinces Olivia that, all in all, the whole thing was a good joke, not to be taken too seriously. **Feste** interjects that it was he who played Sir Topas. Enraged, Malvolio declares that he will revenge himself on everyone present, and storms off-stage. Orsino sends Fabian to try to appease him, because they still need news from Viola's loyal **Captain**.

Orsino says that when the **Captain** has given his account, he and **Viola** and **Olivia** and **Sebastian** will be properly married. Aside, he adds that as long as Viola is still dressed as **Cesario**, he will call her "Cesario" and think of her as a man, but that once he has seen her in her "other habits" she will be his mistress and the queen of his love. All exit.

After the others have departed, **Feste** remains alone on stage, singing a melancholy song about growing old that ends with the gloomy refrain: "The rain it raineth every day".

...the End

