Twelfth Night

by

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From the Play by

William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night was originally produced by Bristol Old Vic, UK, in 2012.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria

VIOLA, later disguised as Cesario

SEBASTIAN, her twin brother

OLIVIA, a countess

SIR TOBY BELCH, Olivia's kinsman

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK, Sir Toby's companion

MALVOLIO, Olivia's steward

FESTE, a clown

PRIEST

Originally adapted for Bristol Old Vic Theatre School for a cast of six, doubling as follows:

ACTOR 1     Orsino, Malvolio
ACTOR 2     Viola
ACTOR 3     Sebastian, Sir Andrew Aguecheek
ACTOR 4     Olivia
ACTOR 5     Sir Toby Belch, Priest
ACTOR 6     Feste
The cast on stage.

FESTE [To us.] Twelfth Night, by William Shakespeare.

A tale of the stupid things that people do when they are in love. In love with the wrong person, in love with the right person, in love with themselves, in love with their stomachs...

It begins with a storm at sea, and a pair of twins, Sebastian and Viola, a brother and sister who love each other very much.

A storm at sea.

The ship in which Viola and Sebastian are travelling is split in two, and brother and sister are separated, perhaps for ever.

Sebastian disappears beneath the waves: Viola is washed on to the unfamiliar shores of Illyria.

Viola O, my poor brother!
Perchance he is not drown'd.

Feste It is perchance that you yourself were sav'd.

Viola What country is this?

Feste This is Illyria.

Viola And what should I do in Illyria?

Feste shrugs.

Who governs here?

Feste A noble duke, Orsino.

We are treated to a glimpse of Orsino, sick with love...

Orsino If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it.

Feste He seeks the love of fair Olivia.

Orsino O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence.
VIOLA  Olivia? What’s she?

... and of OLIVIA, deep in self pity.

FESTE  A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count
That died some twelvemonth since,
For whose dear love
She hath abjur’d the company
And sight of men.

OLIVIA  I will admit no kind of suit,
No, not the Duke’s.

VIOLA  O that I serv’d that lady...

SIR TOBY lurches drunkenly across the stage.

Who’s this?

FESTE  Sir Toby Belch, uncle to Olivia.

SIR TOBY  [Belches.] A plague o’these pickle-herring!

VIOLA swiftly changes her mind.

VIOLA  I think I’ll serve the duke.

FESTE  Good choice.

VIOLA  Conceal me what I am,
And present me as a pageboy to him.
What else may hap, to time I will commit.

VIOLA exits with FESTE to change into Cesario: SIR TOBY remains. He tries in vain to raise a smile from OLIVIA.

SIR TOBY  [To us.] What a plague means my niece to take the death of her father thus? I am sure care’s an enemy to life.

OLIVIA  You must come in earlier o’nights. I take great exception to your ill hours. That quaffing and drinking will undo you. And who is that foolish knight that you brought here to be my wooer?

SIR TOBY  Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

OLIVIA  A very fool and a prodigal. And he’s drunk nightly in your company.
SIR TOBY With drinking heathths to you, my niece! Look, here comes Sir Andrew Aguecheek!

OLIVIA I'll none of him.

*OLIVIA exits. *SIR ANDREW enters.*

SIR AND. Sir Toby Belch! How now, Sir Toby Belch?

SIR TOBY Sweet Sir Andrew!

SIR AND. Shall we set about some revels?

SIR TOBY What shall we do else? Let me see thee caper. Ha, higher! Ha, ha, excellent!

*SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW dance off somewhat wildly.*

FESTE returns with VIOLA dressed as Cesario.

FESTE *[To us.] I hope you’re following it so far. Orsino’s in love with Olivia, who isn’t interested in him as she lost her dad a while back. Sir Toby is Olivia’s uncle, and he’s brought Sir Andrew in to woo Olivia. She’s not interested in him either. Hardly surprising really when you look at him. And poor Viola has lost her twin brother in a shipwreck, been washed up here in Illyria, and decided to dress up as a man and work for Orsino as his pageboy. It’s the sort of thing they do in Shakespeare, don’t worry. All clear? Okay then, three days later…

ORSINO and VIOLA.

ORSINO Cesario –

FESTE *[To us.] She’s called herself Cesario, by the way. Or should that be he’s called himself Cesario? She’s called himself Cesario? Anyway…

ORSINO Cesario,
Thou know’st no less but all: I have unclasp’d
To thee the book even of my secret soul.
I love Olivia.
Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her,
Be not denied access, stand at her doors,
And tell them, there thy fixed foot shall grow
Till thou have audience.
VIOLA Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?
ORSINO O then unfold the passion of my love.
VIOLA I’ll do my best
To woo your lady: [As she watches him exit.] yet, a barful strife!
Whoe’er I woo, myself would be his wife.
FESTE What?
VIOLA Myself would be his wife.
FESTE I thought that was what you said.

VIOLA exits.

[To us.] She’s only known him three days! And she’s in love with him already. And she’s pretending to be a man! I told you this was a tale about people being stupid. Let’s see what happens when she turns up at Olivia’s house…

OLIVIA enters.

FESTE God bless thee, lady!
OLIVIA Take the fool away.
FESTE Fool?
OLIVIA Take the fool away.
FESTE Who are you calling a fool?
OLIVIA Take the fool away.
FESTE Do you not hear? Take away the lady.
OLIVIA Sir, I bade them take away you.
FESTE Misprision in the highest degree! Good Madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.
OLIVIA Can you do it?
FESTE Dexteriously, good Madonna. Good Madonna, why mourn’st thou?
OLIVIA  Good fool, for my father's death.

FESTE  I think his soul is in hell, Madonna.

OLIVIA  I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

FESTE  The more fool, Madonna, to mourn for your father's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool!

MALVOLIO enters.

[To us.] Oh, here we go. Malvolio, Olivia’s steward. Sick with self-love, a time-pleaser and affectioned ass.

MALVOLIO  I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal.

FESTE  [To us.] What did I tell you?

MALVOLIO  He has no more brain than a stone. Unless you laugh, he is gagged.

FESTE  God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity.

OLIVIA  What is't, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO  Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman who swears he will speak with you.

FESTE  At last. That’ll be ‘Cesario’, with the message of love from Orsino. She took her time getting here.

OLIVIA  Tell him, he shall not speak with me.

MALVOLIO  ‘Has been told so: and says he’ll stand at your door like a post, but he’ll speak with you.

OLIVIA  What manner of man is he?

MALVOLIO  Of very ill manner: he’ll speak with you, will you or no.

OLIVIA  Of what personage and years is he?

MALVOLIO  Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy. He is very well-favoured, and he speaks very shrewishly. ‘Tis with him in standing water, between boy and man.
OLIVIA Let him approach. Give me my veil. We’ll hear once more Orsino’s embassy.

MALVOLIO brings VIOLA in front of OLIVIA.

VIOLA Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty – I pray you tell me if you be the lady of the house. I would be loath to cast away my speech: I have taken great pains to learn it.

OLIVIA Are you a comedian?

VIOLA No: and yet, I swear, I am not that I play. Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA I am.

VIOLA I will on. ‘Tis poetical…

MALVOLIO Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way.

VIOLA No, good swabber.

OLIVIA Give us this place alone.

MALVOLIO exits.

Now sir, what is your text?

VIOLA In Orsino’s bosom.

OLIVIA I have read it: it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. [Unveiling.] Is’t not well done?

VIOLA Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA ‘Tis in grain, sir, ‘twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA ‘Tis nature truly blent. Lady, you are the cruell’st she alive, If you will lead these graces to the grave And leave the world no copy. My lord and master loves you.
If I did love in my master’s flame, 
In your denial I would find no sense, 
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA Why, what would you do?

VIOLA Make me a willow cabin at your gate, 
And call upon my soul within the house; 
Write loyal canons of contemned love, 
And sing them loud even in the dead of night; 
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills, 
And make the babbling gossip of the air 
Cry out ‘Olivia!’ O, you should not rest 
Between the elements of air and earth, 
But you should pity me.

OLIVIA You might do much. 
What is your parentage?

VIOLA Above my fortunes, yet my state is well: 
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA Get you to your lord: 
I cannot love him: let him send no more, 
Unless, perchance, you come to me again.

VIOLA Farewell, fair cruelty. 

VIOLA exits.

OLIVIA ‘What is your parentage?’ 
‘Above my fortunes, yet my state is well: 
I am a gentleman.’ I’ll be sworn thou art. 
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?

FESTE [To us.] What!? She’s in love with him – I mean, her – I mean, him – her – whatever. This is going to get complicated…

OLIVIA Malvolio!

MALVOLIO enters. OLIVIA whispers in his ear, gives him one of her rings and points after the rapidly departing VIOLA.

MALVOLIO catches up with VIOLA.

MALVOLIO Were you not ev’n now with the Countess Olivia?
Even now, sir.

She returns this ring to you, sir.

*VIOLA looks at it in utter confusion.* With a shrug *MALVOLIO* drops it on the ground.

If it be worth stooping for, there it lies: if not, be it his that finds it.

*MALVOLIO* exits.

I left no ring with her: what means this lady? Fortune forbid my outside have not charm’d her!

She loves me, sure.

Poor lady, she were better love a dream.

How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,

And I, poor monster, fond as much on him,

And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.

O time, thou must untangle this, not I,

It is too hard a knot for me t’untie.

*VIOLA* picks up the ring and exits shaking her head.

[To us.] Meanwhile, later that night, back at Olivia’s...

*SIR TOBY* and *SIR ANDREW* enter, roaring drunk.

Approach, Sir Andrew.

The fool, i’faith!

How now, my hearts!

Welcome, ass. Now a song. Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch?

Shall we make the welkin dance indeed?

Let our catch be ‘Thou knave.’ It begins ‘Hold thy peace.’

‘Hold thy peace’?

‘Hold thy peace.’ Begin.

*FESTE* does not begin.

What? Begin, fool; it begins ‘Hold thy peace.’
**FESTE** does not begin.

Begin, fool; it begins ‘Hold thy peace.’

**FESTE** does not begin.

What? Fool, begin; it begins ‘Hold thy peace.’

**FESTE**

I shall never begin if I hold my peace.

*Silence. The penny drops.*

**SIR AND.**

Good, i’faith! Thou shalt never begin if thou hold’st thy peace. Good, excellent good.

*They sing.*

**FESTE**

What a caterwauling do we keep here!

**MALVOLIO enters.**

**MALVOLIO**

My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night?

**SIR TOBY**

Sneck up!

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you, that though she harbours you as her kinsman, she’s nothing allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your misdemeanours, you are welcome to the house: if not, and it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell.

**SIR TOBY**

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

**MALVOLIO**

She shall know of it, by this hand.

**MALVOLIO exits.**

**SIR TOBY**

Go shake your ears!

**FESTE**

Go rub your chain with crumbs!

**SIR AND.**

Go… go… go… just go.
FESTE He’s gone.

SIR TOBY Niggardly rascally sheep-biter!

*The three sit and seethe.*

FESTE He needs to be taught a lesson. We’ll trick him. If I cannot trick him, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed: I know I can do it.

SIR TOBY What wilt thou do?

FESTE I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love.

SIR AND. Epistles?

FESTE Letters. I can write very like Olivia, your niece…

SIR TOBY Excellent, I smell a device.

SIR AND. I have it in my nose too.

SIR TOBY He shall think by the letters that thou wilt drop that they come from my niece, and that she’s in love with him.

FESTE My purpose is indeed a horse of that colour. For this night, to bed, and dream on the event. Farewell.

SIR TOBY Good night.

*SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW begin to exit.*

Let’s to bed, knight. Thou hast need send for more money.

SIR AND. If I cannot marry your niece, I am a foul way out.

SIR TOBY Send for money, knight; if thou hast her not i’th’end, call me cut. Come, knight, come, knight.

*They exit.*

FESTE [To us.] Oh, there’s nothing I like better than a good plot… We’ll teach that stuck-up Malvolio a thing or two. Now, I wonder how Viola’s getting on?

*ORSINO and VIOLA.*
ORSINO  Once more, Cesario,
        Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.
        Tell her my love.

VIOLA  But if she cannot love you, sir?

ORSINO  I cannot be so answer’d.

VIOLA  Sooth, but you must.
        Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,
        Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
        As you have for Olivia…

ORSINO  Make no compare
        Between that love a woman can bear me
        And that I owe Olivia.

VIOLA  Ay, but I know –

ORSINO  What dost thou know?

        VIOLA cannot answer.

        My life upon’t, young though thou art, thine eye
        Hath stay’d upon some favour that it loves.
        Hath it not, boy?

VIOLA  A little, by your favour.

ORSINO  What kind of woman is’t?

VIOLA  Of your complexion.

ORSINO  Of my complexion?
        She is not worth thee then. What years, i’faith?

VIOLA  About your years, my lord.

ORSINO  Too old, by heaven!

VIOLA  No!

ORSINO  What say’st thou?

        VIOLA collects herself.
VIOLA My father had a daughter lov’d a man,  
As it might be perhaps, were I a woman,  
I should your lordship.

ORSINO And what’s her history?

VIOLA A blank, my lord: she never told her love,  
But let concealment like a worm i’th’bud  
Feed on her damask cheek: she pin’d in thought,  
And with a green and yellow melancholy  
She sat like Patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief. Was this not love indeed?

ORSINO But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

VIOLA I am all the daughters of my father’s house,  
And all the brothers too: and yet I know not.  
Sir, shall I to this lady?

ORSINO Ay.

VIOLA exits towards OLIVIA’s, ORSINO staring after her, puzzling over her last statement.

SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW enter to FESTE.

SIR TOBY We will fool Malvolio black and blue – shall we not, Sir Andrew?

SIR AND. And we do not, it is pity of our lives.

SIR TOBY [To FESTE.] How now?

FESTE I have the letter here. Malvolio’s coming down this walk. Get ye both into the box tree. [As SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW hide, FESTE prepares the letter.] Lie thou there: for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

FESTE suddenly sees that the actor playing ORSINO, who doubles as MALVOLIO, is still on stage, staring after VIOLA. He gestures frantically at him.

ACTOR 1 What?

FESTE Malvolio’s coming down this walk.

ACTOR 1 Oh. Okay.
FESTE  Malvolio's coming down this walk.

ACTOR 1  Right.

\textit{A sudden realisation.}

Oh, blimey. Hang on a second.

\textbf{ACTOR 1 races off to change.}

FESTE  Here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

\textit{FESTE hides as MALVOLIO enters.}

MALVOLIO  'Tis but fortune, all is fortune. Olivia uses me with a more exalted respect than anyone else that follows her, and I have heard herself come thus near, that should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion.

SIR TOBY  Here's an overweening rogue!

FESTE  Peace, I say!

MALVOLIO  To be Count Malvolio!

SIR AND.  Pistol him, pistol him!

FESTE  Peace, peace!

MALVOLIO  Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state, to ask for my kinsman Toby –

SIR TOBY  Bolts and shackles!

FESTE  O peace, peace, peace!

MALVOLIO  Toby approaches; curtsies there to me –

SIR TOBY  Shall this fellow live?

FESTE  Yet peace!

MALVOLIO  'Cousin Toby, you must amend your drunkenness' –

SIR TOBY  Out, scab!
MALVOLIO ‘Besides you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight’ –

SIR AND. That’s me, I warrant you.

MALVOLIO ‘One Sir Andrew.’

SIR AND. I knew ‘twas I, for many do call me fool.

FESTE Peace. Now is the woodcock near the gin.

MALVOLIO sees the letter.

MALVOLIO What employment have we here?

He picks up the letter.

By my life, this is my lady’s hand!

He reads the envelope.

‘To the unknown beloved.’

To whom should this be?

He opens the letter and reads.

‘Jove knows I love,
But who?
Lips, do not move,
No man must know.
M.O.A.I. doth sway my life.’

M.O.A.I... ‘M’ – Malvolio! Why, that begins my name! M.O.A.I. – every one of these letters are in my name.

He reads again.

‘If this should fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee, but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ‘em. Thy fates open their hands. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say, remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desir’st to be so. If not let me see thee a steward still.’
This is open. My lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered. I thank my stars, I am happy.

‘Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertain’st my love, let it appear in thy smiling, thy smiles become thee well.’

Jove, I thank thee, I will smile, I will do everything that thou wilt have me.

*MALVOLIO* exits.

*The others burst out of their hiding place, roaring with laughter.*

**SIR TOBY** Thou hast put him in such a dream, that when the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

**FESTE** If you will see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach to our lady: he will come to her in yellow stockings, and ‘tis a colour she abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests, and he will smile upon her, which is so unsuitable to her melancholy. Follow me!

**SIR TOBY** To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit!

**SIR AND.** I’ll make one too.

*They go to exit, still laughing.*

**OLIVIA and VIOLA** enter.

**FESTE** [To us.] Poor Viola — still desperately trying to woo Olivia on Orsino’s behalf, however much she’s in love with him herself. I wonder what Sir Andrew is going to make of this. He thinks he’s going to marry Olivia, after all.

**FESTE, SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW** watch the following from a distance.

**VIOLA** Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens rain odours on you.

**OLIVIA** Give me your hand, sir.

**VIOLA** My duty, madam, and most humble service.

**OLIVIA** What is your name?

**VIOLA** Cesario is your servant’s name, fair princess.
OLIVIA My servant, sir?
Y’are servant to Count Orsino, youth.

VIOLA And he is yours, and –

OLIVIA I bade you never speak again of him;
But would rather you undertake another suit…

*OLIVIA comes uncomfortably close to VIOLA.*

OLIVIA Yet come again!

But she is gone. *OLIVIA exits, distressed.*

VIOLA Dear lady –

OLIVIA Give me leave, I beseech you.

VIOLA You’ll nothing, madam, to my lord, by me?

OLIVIA Stay!

Cesario, by the roses of the spring,

By maidenhood, honour, truth, and everything,

I love thee so!

VIOLA Adieu, good madam; never more

Will I my master’s tears to you deplore.

*VIOLA makes good her escape.*

OLIVIA Yet come again!

SIR AND. I’ll not stay a jot longer. I saw your niece do more favours to the Count’s serving-man than ever she bestowed upon me!

SIR TOBY Why then, challenge the Count’s youth to fight with him, hurt him in eleven places: my niece shall take note of it.

SIR AND. Why, yes! There is no way but this!

They exit plotting.

FESTE [To us.] So, Sir Andrew is going to challenge Cesario to a duel over the fair Olivia. I think they’re both in for a bit of a shock. Cesario’s hardly the man he makes himself out to be, and as for Sir Andrew, if you open him up and find so much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I’ll eat the rest of th’anatomy.
SEBASTIAN enters.

Hello, who’s this?

SEBASTIAN My name is Sebastian.
O, my poor sister!
Perchance she is not drown’d.

FESTE Hang on a second…

SEBASTIAN What country is this?

FESTE This is Illyria.

SEBASTIAN And what should I do in Illyria?

FESTE Well…

SEBASTIAN Who governs here?

FESTE A noble duke, Orsino. Look, I think we’ve been through some of this before. Did anyone tell you that you look a bit like…

SEBASTIAN My sister Viola: we were both born in an hour, and it was said she much resembled me.

FESTE Eh?

SEBASTIAN We are twins.

FESTE Really?

SEBASTIAN Identical twins

FESTE Of course. The resemblance is astonishing.

SEBASTIAN We’ve got the same costume.

FESTE Yes, you have.

SEBASTIAN Well then… Alas the day! she is drowned.

FESTE There’s something that I think you ought to know –

SEBASTIAN Forgive me your trouble. I am bound to the Count Orsino’s: farewell.
And with that he is off.

**FESTE**  
*To us.* I think things are about to get a whole lot more complicated…