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Twelfth Night, or What You Will

A PLAY IN ONE ACT ADAPTED BY
John Minigan

FROM THE ORIGINAL BY
William Shakespeare
Twelfth Night, or What You Will
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## Characters

### MALE

**ORSINO:** Duke of Illyria.

**SEBASTIAN:** A young man from Messaline. Viola’s twin brother.

**SIR TOBY BELCH:** Olivia’s uncle. He loves parties and is often drunk.

**SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK:** Sir Toby’s friend. A knight. He is not very bright and not as appreciated by Sir Toby as he thinks he is.

**MALVOLIO:** Olivia’s overly stern butler. He is secretly in love with Olivia.

**PRIEST**

### FEMALE

**VIOLA:** A young woman from Messaline. Sebastian’s twin sister. Later disguised as Cesario, a boy. Pronounced VY-oh-lah.

**OLIVIA:** A Countess. As the play begins, she is in mourning for the death of her brother.

**MARIA:** Olivia’s chambermaid, secretly attracted to Sir Toby. Pronounced Ma-RY-ah.

### EITHER MALE OR FEMALE

**FESTE:** An entertainer. The fool.

**FABIAN:** Servant to Olivia. Friend of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

**ANTONIO/ANTONIA:** A pirate-like sailor. Friend of Sebastian.

**CAPTAIN:** The Captain of the ship Viola and Sebastian were on.

**VALENTINE/VALENTINA:** Servant to Duke Orsino.

**CURIO/CURIA:** Servant to Duke Orsino.

**OFFICERS, SAILORS, MUSICIANS, ATTENDANTS**

* Much doubling of roles is possible. As few as two actors can play the Officers, Sea Captain, Priest, Attendants and Musicians. It is also possible to combine the roles of Valentine and Curio into one servant. Cast size can therefore range from 13 to 20 speaking parts or more.
**Music Notes**

There are several songs throughout the script. Feel free to make up your own music to fit the mood and tone of your production. Alternatively, sheet music has been posted at:

http://songs.theatrefolk.com

**How to Shorten to 45 Minutes**

This adaptation offers two lengths: One hour and 45 minutes. If you want to do the hour version, you leave the text as it is. If you want the 45 minute version, the cuts are highlighted by wavy lines under the text. All you have to do is cross out the marked text like so:

Before

SIR TOBY: What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care’s an enemy to life.

MARIA: Sir Toby, you must come in earlier a’ nights: your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours. That drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it; and of a foolish knight that you brought in to be her wooer.

After

SIR TOBY: What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care’s an enemy to life.

MARIA: Sir Toby, you must come in earlier a’ nights: your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours. That drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it; and of a foolish knight that you brought in to be her wooer.
Scene 1. Illyria. The DUKE's palace.

Enter DUKE, CURIO, MUSICIANS.

ORSINO: If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor! Enough; no more:
’Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
0, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence!

Enter VALENTINE.

What news from her?

VALENTINE: I from her handmaid do return this answer:
The element itself, till seven years' heat,
Shall not behold her face at ample view;
All this to season a brother's dead love.

ORSINO: Away before me to sweet beds of flowers:
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bower.

They exit.

SCENE 2. The sea-coast.

Enter VIOLA, a CAPTAIN, and SAILORS.

VIOLA: What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN: This is Illyria, lady.

VIOLA: And what should I do in Illyria?
My brother he is in Elysium.
Perchance he is not drowned: what think you?

CAPTAIN: Madam: to comfort you with chance,
Assure yourself, I saw your brother,
Bind himself to a strong mast.
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.

VIOLA: For saying so, there's gold:
Know'st thou this country?

CAPTAIN: Ay, madam, well.
VIOLA: Who governs here?

CAPTAIN: A noble duke. Orsino.

VIOLA: Orsino! I have heard my father name him: He was a bachelor then.

CAPTAIN: And so is now. A month ago I went from hence, And then 'twas fresh in murmur
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.


CAPTAIN: And so is now. A month ago I went from hence, And then 'twas fresh in murmur
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

VIOLA: What's she?

CAPTAIN: A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
In the protection of his son, her brother, Who shortly also died: for whose dear love, They say, she hath abjured the company
And sight of men.

VIOLA: O that I served that lady!

CAPTAIN: That were hard to compass.

VIOLA: Captain, conceal what I am, and be my aid For such disguise as haply shall become The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke: Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him.

CAPTAIN: Be you his eunuch, and your mute I'll be: When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

VIOLA: I thank thee: lead me on.

They exit.

SCENE 3. Olivia's house.

Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA.

SIR TOBY: What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.

MARIA: Sir Toby, you must come in earlier a' nights: your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours. That drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it; and of a foolish knight that you brought in to be her wooer.

SIR TOBY: Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA: He's a very fool. Moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

SIR TOBY: With drinking healths to my niece. Castiliano vulgo! For here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

Enter SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK.

SIR ANDREW: How now, Sir Toby Belch!
SIR TOBY: Sweet Sir Andrew!

SIR ANDREW: Bless you, fair shrew.

SIR TOBY: Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

SIR ANDREW: What’s that?

SIR TOBY: My niece’s chambermaid.

SIR ANDREW: Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

MARIA: My name is Mary, sir.

SIR ANDREW: Good Mistress Mary Accost...

SIR TOBY: You mistake, knight; “accost” is board her, woo her.

SIR ANDREW: Is that the meaning of “accost”?

MARIA: Fare you well, gentlemen. 

Exit MARIA.

SIR TOBY: O knight, when did I see thee so put down?

SIR ANDREW: I am a great eater of beef and I believe that does harm to my wit. Sir Toby, your niece will none of me: the count himself woos her.

SIR TOBY: She’ll none o’ the count: I have heard her swear it. There’s life in it, man.

SIR ANDREW: I’ll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o’ the strangest mind in the world; I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.

SIR TOBY: Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?

SIR ANDREW: And I think I have the back-trick as strong as any man in Illyria.

SIR TOBY: Wherefore are these things hid? Let me see thee caper: ha! higher: ha, ha! excellent!

They exit.

SCENE 4. The DUKE’s palace.

Enter ORSINO, and VIOLA in man’s attire.

ORSINO: Cesario?

VIOLA: My lord.

ORSINO: Cesario, address thy gait unto her; Be not denied access, stand at her doors, Till thou have audience.

VIOLA: Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

ORSINO: O, then unfold the passion of my love,
She will attend it better in thy youth
Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect.

VIOLA: I think not so, my lord.

ORSINO: Dear lad, believe it;
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ,
And all is semblative a woman's part.
Prosper well in this.

VIOLA: I'll do my best
To woo your lady: (aside) yet, a barful strife!
Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.

They exit.

SCENE 5. OLIVIA's house.

Enter MARIA and FESTE.

MARIA: Tell me where thou hast been. My lady will hang thee for thy absence.

FESTE: Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colours. If Sir Toby would leave drinking, thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria.

MARIA: Peace, you rogue, no more o' that. Here comes my lady: make your excuse wisely.

Exit MARIA. Enter OLIVIA with MALVOLIO.

OLIVIA: Take the fool away.

FESTE: Do you not hear, fellow? Take away the lady.

OLIVIA: Sir, I bade them take away you.

FESTE: Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, give me leave to prove you a fool.

OLIVIA: Make your proof.

FESTE: Good madonna, why mournest thou?

OLIVIA: Good fool, for my brother'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 brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentleman.

OLIVIA: What think you of this fool, Malvolio? Doth he not mend?
MALVOLIO: I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a rascal. Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged.

OLIVIA: O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio. There is no slander in an allowed fool.

Re-enter MARIA.

MARIA: Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires to speak with you.

OLIVIA: From the Count Orsino. Who of my people hold him in delay?

MARIA: Sir Toby.

OLIVIA: Fetch him off. He speaks nothing but madman.

Exit MARIA.

Go you, Malvolio: if it be a suit from the count, dismiss it.

Exit MALVOLIO. Enter SIR TOBY.

OLIVIA: By mine honour, half drunk. What is he at the gate, cousin?

SIR TOBY: 'Tis a gentleman here—a plague o' these pickle-herring!

OLIVIA: Cousin, how have you come so early by this lethargy?

SIR TOBY: Lechery! I defy lechery. There's one at the gate.

Exit SIR TOBY.

OLIVIA: Fool, go look after him.

FESTE: The fool shall look to the madman.

Exit FESTE. Re-enter MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO: Madam, yond fellow swears he will speak with you. I told him you were sick; he takes on him to understand so much, and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and therefore comes to speak with you. What is to be said to him?

OLIVIA: Let him approach: call in my gentlewoman.

MALVOLIO: Gentlewoman, my lady calls.

Exit MALVOLIO. Re-enter MARIA.

OLIVIA: Give me my veil: come, throw it o'er my face. We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

Enter VIOLA.

VIOLA: The lady of the house, which is she?

OLIVIA: Speak to me; I shall answer for her.

VIOLA: “Most radiant, exquisite and unmatchable beauty…” I pray you, give me modest assurance if you be the lady of the house, that

minister occasion: do as he wishes

There is no slander in an allowed fool: Because of his accepted position as fool, any slanderous statements Feste makes can be forgiven.

speaks nothing but madman: speaks like an insane person

If playing the 45 minute version, Maria stays on stage here and therefore will not “re-enter” later.

suit: request

cousin: a general term for any relative

The “pickle-herring” comment is because, true to his name, Sir Toby belches in the middle of the line.

lethargy: usually slowness caused by exhaustion, but, here by Sir Toby’s drunkenness

Lechery: Sir Toby is too drunk to hear clearly. Lechery is sexual impropriety.

I defy lechery: I deny the charge of being lecherous.

Malvolio has been unable to get rid of Cesario at Olivia’s gate. His report to Olivia seems to get her interested in the visitor.

Olivia has Maria and any other female attendants veil themselves to confuse Viola/Cesario, who has proven difficult to get rid of at the gate.

How does Viola, who has gotten past Malvolio, react to the veiled women?

How “male” does she try to appear in delivering Orsino’s message?

Viola begins the love poem Orsino has asked Cesario to deliver, but stops until the “lady of the house” reveals herself.
I may proceed in my speech.

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. I heard you were saucy at my gates. What are you? What would you?

VIOLA: The rudeness that hath appeared in me have I learned from my entertainment. What I am, and what I would, are to your ears, divinity; to any other’s, profanation.

OLIVIA: Give us the place alone; we will hear this divinity.

MARIA and ATTENDANTS exit.

VIOLA: Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA: Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? But we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, is’t not well done?

VIOLA: Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA: 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA: 'Tis beauty 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.

OLIVIA: O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; my beauty shall be inventoried, and every particle labeled.

VIOLA: I see you what you are, you are too proud; But, my lord and master loves you.

OLIVIA: Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him.

VIOLA: If I did love you in my master’s flame, In your denial I would find no sense.

OLIVIA: Why, what would you?

VIOLA: Make me a willow cabin at your gate, And call upon my soul within the house; Write loyal cantons of contemned love And sing them loud even in the dead of night; Hallow your name to the reverberate hills And make the babbling gossip of the air Cry out “Olivia!”

OLIVIA: You might do much. What is your parentage?

VIOLA: 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, To tell me how he takes it. Spend this for me.

VIOLA: I am no fee’d post, lady; keep your purse: My master, not myself, lacks recompense. Farewell, fair cruelty.

Exit VIOLA.

OLIVIA: Methinks I feel this youth’s perfections To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be. What ho, Malvolio!

Re-enter MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO: Here, madam, at your service.

OLIVIA: Run after that messenger. He left this ring behind him. Tell him I’ll none of it. If that the youth will come this way to-morrow, I’ll give him reasons for’t.

MALVOLIO: Madam, I will.

Exit MALVOLIO.

OLIVIA: I do I know not what. Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe; What is decreed must be, and be this so.

Exit OLIVIA.

SCENE 6. The sea-coast.

Enter ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN.

ANTONIO: Will you stay no longer? Nor will you not that I go with you?

SEBASTIAN: No. My stars shine darkly over me: therefore I shall crave your leave that I may bear my evils alone. You must know of me, Antonio, my name is Sebastian, which I called Roderigo. My father left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour: but some hour before you took me from the sea was my sister drowned.

ANTONIO: Alas the day!

SEBASTIAN: A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful. She is drowned already, sir, with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance again with more.

ANTONIO: If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant.

SEBASTIAN: Desire it not. Fare ye well at once. I am bound to the Duke Orsino’s court: farewell.

Moved by Viola’s poetic description, Olivia wants to know more about her “male” visitor. Olivia gives Cesario money for delivering the letter, but Viola objects. She is loyal to Orsino, not an independent messenger—and she will not take a tip when Olivia returns nothing to Orsino.

fee’d post: messenger who accepts tips on delivery
recompense: payment for what has been delivered

Methinks: I think

What does Olivia’s quick transformation tell us about her? Is her “let it be” statement at odds with the impression she has given before?

Olivia sends Malvolio to give a ring “back” to Cesario, though Cesario gave her none. It is a way to make Cesario’s return to her more likely.

for’t: for it

How does Malvolio feel about this mission?

Olivia’s final speech gives control of her life up to the forces of Fate.

owe: own

Antonio rescued Sebastian from the wreck of his ship, but Sebastian feels it is time to leave his friend. Suspicious of Antonio, Sebastian had told him his name was Roderigo. Now, he tells the truth, and tells Antonio that he feels his twin sister has drowned.

Sebastian is dressed like Cesario, and it should be difficult to tell the two apart. The audience should immediately sense the mistaken identity confusion to follow.

Alas: an expression of sorrow

What are Antonio’s feelings for Sebastian? He is a brave and possibly dangerous sailor—regarded as a pirate by Orsino’s men—yet he has strong affection for and a desire to protect Sebastian. How does Sebastian feel about Antonio, the man who saved his life?
Shakespeare gives several indications of tension between Antonio and Orsino's men, but the director and actors will have to determine the specific background and reasons for the tension.

Viola is quick-witted enough to let Malvolio deliver his message and "return" the ring and then try to figure out what has happened. In some productions, Malvolio sees Sebastian exit one side of the stage as "Cesario" enters on the other side and is briefly confused by the "doubles." Such a comic moment can foreshadow the plot elements to come.

Is Viola a good liar here? How does she feel about Malvolio? Malvolio drops or throws the ring to the ground.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew arrive home drunk after a night of carousing. The atmosphere of this scene should be celebratory, even wild at times, until Maria's warnings and Malvolio's entrance.

Sir Toby: Not to be a-bed after midnight is to be up betimes.
Sir Andrew: A false conclusion: I hate it as an unfilled can. To be up after midnight and to go to bed then, is early: so that to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes.

Enter FESTE.
SIR ANDREW: Here comes the fool.
FESTE: How now, my hearts!
SIR TOBY: Welcome, ass. Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch?
SIR ANDREW: Begin, fool: it begins “Hold thy peace.”
FESTE: I shall never begin if I hold my peace.
SIR ANDREW: Good, i’ faith. Come, begin.

They sing a round. Enter MARIA.

MARIA: What a caterwauling! If my lady have not called Malvolio, never trust me.
SIR TOBY: Am not I consanguineous? Am I not of her blood? Tillyvally. Lady!

SIR TOBY sings.
“There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady!”

FESTE: The knight’s in admirable fooling.
SIR TOBY: Ay, he does well enough, but I do it more natural.
SIR TOBY: (singing) “On the twelfth day of December...”
MARIA: For the love o’ God, peace!

Enter MALVOLIO.
MALVOLIO: My masters, are you mad? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you?
SIR TOBY: We did keep time, sir, in our catches.
MALVOLIO: Sir Toby, my lady bade me tell you, if you can separate yourself and your misdemeanours, you are welcome to the house; if not, she is very willing to bid you farewell.
SIR TOBY: (singing) “Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.”
MARIA: Nay, good Sir Toby.
FESTE: (joining SIR TOBY’s song) “His eyes do show his days are almost done.”
SIR TOBY: “But I will never die.”
FESTE: Sir Toby, there you lie.
MALVOLIO: (to MARIA) This is much credit to you.
SIR TOBY: (to MALVOLIO) Art any more than a steward? Go, sir, rub your chain with crumbs. A stoup of wine, Maria!
MALVOLIO: Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady’s favour, you would not give means for this uncivil rule: she shall know of it.

Exit MALVOLIO.
MARIA: (to MALVOLIO) Go shake your ears. Sweet Sir Toby, be patient. For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him: if I do not make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed.

SIR TOBY: Possess us.

MARIA: It is his faith that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find cause to work.

SIR TOBY: What wilt thou do?

MARIA: I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love. I can write very like my lady your niece.

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.

SIR ANDREW: O, ’twill be admirable!

MARIA: For this night, to bed, and dream on the event. Farewell.

Exit MARIA.

SIR ANDREW: Before me, she’s a good wench.

SIR TOBY: She’s a beagle, true-bred, and one that adores me.

SIR ANDREW: I was adored once too.

SIR TOBY: Come, come, I’ll go burn some sack; ’tis too late to go to bed now; come, knight; come, knight.

They exit.

SCENE 9. The DUKE's palace.

Enter DUKE, VIOLA, CURIO and ATTENDANTS.

ORSINO: Give me some music. Now, that piece of song, That old and antique song we heard last night.

CURIO: He is not here that should sing it.

ORSINO: Who was it?

CURIO: Feste, the jester, my lord.

ORSINO: Seek him out, and play the tune the while.

Exit CURIO. Music plays.

How dost thou like this tune?

VIOLA: It gives a very echo to the seat Where Love is throned.

ORSINO: Thou dost speak masterly: thine eye Hath stayed upon some favour that it loves: Hath it not, boy? What kind of woman is’t?

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

VIOLA: About your years, my lord.

ORSINO: Too old: let the woman take
An elder than herself: so wears she to him,
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
Than women’s are.

Re-enter CURIO with FESTE.

O, fellow, come, the song we had last night.

Mark it, Cesario.

FESTE: Are you ready, sir?

ORSINO: Ay; prithee, sing.

Music.

FESTE: (singing) Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

ORSINO: There’s for thy pains.

FESTE: No pains; I take pleasure in singing, sir.

Now, the melancholy god protect thee. Farewell.

Exit FESTE.

ORSINO: Once more, Cesario,
Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.

VIOLA: But if she cannot love you, sir?

ORSINO: I cannot be so answered.

VIOLA: Say that some lady,
Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
As you have for Olivia: you cannot love her;
You tell her so; must she not then be answered?

ORSINO: There is no woman’s sides
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart; they lack retention.

VIOLA: Ay, but I know
Too well what love women to men may owe:
My father had a daughter loved 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. She sat like patience on a monument, smiling at grief. Was not this 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, that's the theme. To her in haste; give her this jewel; say, My love can give no place, bide no denay.

They exit.

SCENE 10. OLIVIA’s garden.

Enter SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN.

SIR TOBY: Come thy ways, Signior Fabian. Wouldst thou not be glad to have the rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?

FABIAN: I would exult, man.

SIR TOBY: We will fool him black and blue. Here comes the little villain.

Enter MARIA.

MARIA: Malvolio’s coming down this walk: observe him, for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Lie thou there.

MARIA puts down the letter and exits. SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW and FABIAN hide. Enter MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO: ’Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me.

SIR TOBY: Here’s an overweening rogue!

MALVOLIO: To be Count Malvolio!

SIR ANDREW: Pistol him, pistol him.

SIR TOBY: Peace, peace!

MALVOLIO: There is example for’t; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

SIR ANDREW: Fie on him, Jezebel!

MALVOLIO: What employment have we here?

MALVOLIO picks up the letter.
By my life, this is my lady's hand.

He reads.

“To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes:
To whom should this be?

FABIAN: This wins him, liver and all.

MALVOLIO: (reading) “Jove knows I love: But who?
No man must know.”
If this should be thee, Malvolio?

SIR TOBY: Marry, hang thee!

MALVOLIO: (reading) “I may command where I adore:
M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.”

FABIAN: A fustian riddle!

MALVOLIO: Nay, but let me see. “I may command where I adore.” Why, she
may command me: there is no obstruction in this: and the end—
what should that alphabetical position portend? “M, O, A, I…”
M—Malvolio; why, that begins my name.

FABIAN: Did not I say he would work it out?

MALVOLIO: M, O, A, I; to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every
one of these letters are in my name. Soft! here follows prose.

Reads.

“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. Be opposite with a
kinsman, surly with servants; she thus advises thee that
sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow
stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say,
remember. Thou art made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let
me see thee a steward still. Farewell. She that would
alter services with thee. THE FORTUNATE-UNHAPPY.”

This is open. I will be proud, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will be
point-devise the very man. For my lady loves me. I thank my
stars, I am happy. I will be strange, in yellow stockings, and
cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Here is
yet a postscript.

Continuing to read.

“Thy smiles become thee well; therefore in my presence smile.”
Jove, I thank thee: I will smile; I will do every thing that thou
wilt have me.

Exit MALVOLIO.
SIR TOBY: I could marry this wench for this device.
SIR ANDREW: So could I too.
SIR TOBY: And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.
SIR ANDREW: Nor I neither.
FABIAN: Here comes my noble gull-catcher.

Re-enter MARIA.

MARIA: Say true; does it work upon him?
SIR TOBY: Like aqua-vitae with a midwife.
MARIA: 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 will now be so unsuitable to her disposition that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt. Follow me.

SIR TOBY: To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit!
SIR ANDREW: I'll make one too.

They exit.

SCENE 11. OLIVIA's house.

Enter VIOLA, and FESTE with a drum.

VIOLA: Save thee, friend, and thy music: dost thou live by thy tabor?
FESTE: No, sir, I live by the church.
VIOLA: Art thou a churchman?
FESTE: No: I do live by the church; for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church. My lady is within, sir. I will construe to them whence you come.

Exit FESTE. Enter SIR TOBY and SIR ANDREW.

SIR TOBY: Will you encounter the house? My niece is desirous you should enter.
VIOLA: I am bound to your niece, sir. But we are prevented.

Enter OLIVIA and MARIA.

OLIVIA: Let the garden door be shut, and leave me to my hearing.

SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and MARIA exit.

Sir, what is your name?
VIOLA: Cesario.
OLIVIA: I did send a ring in chase of you
Which you knew none of yours.
To one of your receiving
Enough is shown. So, let me hear you speak.

VIOLA: I pity you.

OLIVIA: That's a degree to love.

VIOLA: Why, then, methinks 'tis time to smile again. There lies your way, due west.

OLIVIA: Then westward-ho! You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?

VIOLA: Tell me what thou think'st of me.

OLIVIA: That you do think you are not what you are.

VIOLA: If I think so, I think the same of you.

OLIVIA: Then think you right: I am not what I am.

VIOLA: I would you were as I would have you be!

OLIVIA: Would it be better, madam, than I am? I wish it might, for now I am your fool.

VIOLA: I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride, Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.

OLIVIA: By innocence I swear, and by my youth, I have one heart, one bosom and one truth, And that no woman has; nor never none Shall mistress be of it, save I alone. And so adieu, good madam: never more Will I my master's tears to you deplore.

OLIVIA: Yet come again.

They exit.

SCENE 12. OLIVIA's house.

Enter SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN.

SIR ANDREW: I'll not stay a jot longer. I saw your niece do more favours to the count's servingman than ever she bestowed upon me; I saw't i' the orchard.

SIR TOBY: Did she see thee, old boy?

SIR ANDREW: As plain as I see you now.

FABIAN: This was a great argument of love in her toward you.

SIR ANDREW: Will you make an ass o' me?

FABIAN: She did show favour to the youth only to exasperate you. You should have banged the youth into dumbness.

SIR TOBY: Challenge the count's youth to fight with him; hurt him in
eleven places: my niece shall take note of it; there is no love-broker in the world can more prevail than report of valour.

SIR ANDREW: Will you bear me a challenge to him?
SIR TOBY: Go, write it in a martial hand; be curst and Brief.
SIR ANDREW: Where shall I find you?
SIR TOBY: We'll call thee at the cubiculo: go.

Exit SIR ANDREW.

FABIAN: This is a dear manakin to you, Sir Toby.
SIR TOBY: I have been dear to him, lad, some two thousand strong, or so.
FABIAN: We shall have a rare letter from him: but you'll not deliver't?
SIR TOBY: Never trust me, then; and stir on the youth to an answer.

Enter MARIA.

MARIA: If you will laugh yourselves into stitches, follow me. Malvolio is turned heathen. He's in yellow stockings.
SIR TOBY: And cross-gartered?
MARIA: Most villainously; you have not seen such a thing. I can hardly forbear hurling things at him. I know my lady will strike him: if she do, he'll smile and take't for a great favour.

SIR TOBY: Come, bring us where he is.

They exit.


Enter SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO.

ANTONIO: I could not stay behind you: my desire, More sharp than filed steel, did spur me forth
SEBASTIAN: My kind Antonio, I can no other answer make but thanks. What's to do? I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes With the memorials and the things of fame That do renown this city.

ANTONIO: Would you'd pardon me; I do not without danger walk these streets: Once, in a sea-fight, 'gainst the count his galleys I did some service; of such note indeed, That were I ta'en here it would scarce be answered.

SEBASTIAN: Belike you slew great number of his people.
ANTONIO: The offence is not of such a bloody nature. Hold, sir, here's my purse.
In the south suburbs, at the Elephant,
Is best to lodge.

SEBASTIAN: Why I your purse?
ANTONIO: Haply your eye shall light upon some toy
You have desire to purchase; and your store,
I think, is not for idle markets, sir.

SEBASTIAN: I’ll be your purse-bearer and leave you
For an hour.

ANTONIO: To the Elephant.
SEBASTIAN: I do remember.

They exit.

SCENE 14. OLIVIA’s garden.

Enter OLIVIA and MARIA.

OLIVIA: I have sent after him; he says he’ll come;
I speak too loud. Where’s Malvolio?

MARIA: He’s coming, madam; but he does nothing but smile. Sure, the
man is tainted in’s wits.

OLIVIA: Go call him hither.

Exit MARIA.

I am as mad as he,
If sad and merry madness equal be.

Re-enter MARIA, with MALVOLIO.

How now, Malvolio!

MALVOLIO: Sweet lady, ho, ho.

OLIVIA: Smilest thou? I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

MALVOLIO: I could be sad: this does make some obstruction in the blood,
this cross-gartering. It did come to his hands, and commands
shall be executed.

OLIVIA: Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO: To bed! Ay, sweet heart, and I’ll come to thee.

OLIVIA: God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so and kiss thy hand
so oft?

MALVOLIO: “Be not afraid of greatness:” ’twas well writ.

OLIVIA: What meanest thou by that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO: “Some are born great…”

OLIVIA: Ha!

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MALVOLIO: “Some achieve greatness…”
OLIVIA: What sayest thou?
MALVOLIO: “And some have greatness thrust upon them.”
OLIVIA: Heaven restore thee!

Enter ATTENDANT.
ATTENDANT: Madam, the young gentleman of the Count Orsino’s is returned.
OLIVIA: I’ll come to him.

Exit ATTENDANT.

Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where’s Toby? Let some of my people have a special care of him.

OLIVIA and MARIA exit.

MALVOLIO: O, ho! Sir Toby. She sends him on purpose, that I may appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in the letter. “Be opposite with a kinsman.” And when she went away now, “Let this fellow be looked to.” Fellow! Not Malvolio, nor after my degree, but fellow. Why, every thing adheres together.

Re-enter MARIA, SIR TOBY and FABIAN.

SIR TOBY: Which way is he, in the name of sanctity? I’ll speak to him.
FABIAN: Here he is. How is’t with you, man?
MALVOLIO: Go off; I discard you.
MARIA: Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him!
SIR TOBY: How do you, Malvolio? What, man, defy the devil.
MALVOLIO: Do you know what you say?
MARIA: An you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart!
MALVOLIO: How now, mistress!
MARIA: O Lord!
SIR TOBY: Prithee, hold thy peace; do you not see you move him?
MARIA
Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby.
MALVOLIO: My prayers, minx!
MARIA: No, he will not hear of godliness.
MALVOLIO: Go, hang yourselves all!

Exit MALVOLIO.

FABIAN: If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.
SIR TOBY: Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound.  

Enter SIR ANDREW.

FABIAN: More matter for a May morning.

SIR ANDREW: Here's the challenge: do but read.

SIR TOBY: Give me. (reading) "Youth, whatsoever thou art, thou art but a scurvy fellow."

FABIAN: Good, and valiant.

SIR TOBY: "Thou comest to the lady Olivia, and in my sight she uses thee kindly: but thou liest in thy throat; that is not the matter I challenge thee for."

FABIAN: Very brief, and to exceeding good sense—less.

SIR TOBY: "I will waylay thee going home; where if it be thy chance to kill me, thou kill'st me like a villain."

FABIAN: Good.

SIR TOBY: "Fare thee well; and God have mercy upon one of our souls! Thy friend and thy sworn enemy, ANDREW AGUECHEEK" I'll give't him. Go, Sir Andrew: scout for him: so soon as thou seest him, draw; and, as thou draw'st, swear horrible. Away!

SIR ANDREW: Nay, let me alone for swearing.

Exit SIR ANDREW.

SIR TOBY: Now will not I deliver his letter. The young gentleman will find it comes from a clotpoll. But I will deliver his challenge by word of mouth, and drive the youth into a most hideous opinion of his rage, skill, and impetuosity. This will so fright them both that they will kill one another by the look, like cockatrices.

Re-enter OLIVIA, with VIOLA.

FABIAN: Here he comes with your niece.

Exit SIR TOBY, FABIAN, and MARIA.

OLIVIA: I have said too much unto a heart of stone.  
What shall you ask of me that I'll deny?

VIOLA: Your true love for my master.

OLIVIA: How may I give him that Which I have given to you? Well, fare thee well:  
A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell.

Exit OLIVIA. Re-enter SIR TOBY and FABIAN.

SIR TOBY: That defense thou hast, betake thee to't: thy intercepter, bloody as the hunter, attends thee at the orchard-end.

VIOLA: You mistake, sir; I am sure no man hath any quarrel to me.
Betake yourself to your guard; for your opposite is a devil: souls and bodies hath he divorced three.

VIOLA: I will return again into the house.

SIR TOBY: Back you shall not to the house, unless you undertake that with me which with as much safety you might answer him.

_SIR TOBY draws his sword._

VIOLA: Do me this courteous office, as to know of the knight what my offence to him is.

SIR TOBY: I will do so.

_Exit SIR TOBY._

VIOLA: I beseech you, what manner of man is he?

FABIAN: He is the most skilful, bloody and fatal opposite that you could possibly have found. Will you walk towards him? I will make your peace with him if I can.

VIOLA: I shall be much bound to you for't.

_They exit. Re-enter SIR TOBY, with SIR ANDREW._

SIR TOBY: Why, man, he's a very devil.

SIR ANDREW: I'll not meddle with him.

SIR TOBY: He will not now be pacified: Fabian can scarce hold him yonder. _Plague on't._ Let him let the matter slip, and I'll give him my horse, grey Capilet.

SIR TOBY: I'll make the motion. (_aside_) Marry, I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you.

_Exit FABIAN and VIOLA._

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SIR TOBY: I'll make the motion. (_aside_) Marry, I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you.

_Exit FABIAN and VIOLA._

(to FABIAN) I have his horse to take up the quarrel: I have persuaded him the youth's a devil.

FABIAN: He pants and looks pale, as if a bear were at his heels.

SIR TOBY: (to VIOLA) There's no remedy, sir; he will fight with you for's oath sake; he protests he will not hurt you.

VIOLA: (_aside_) God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man.

SIR TOBY: (to SIR ANDREW) The gentleman will, for his honour's sake, have one bout with you; but he has promised me, he will not hurt you. Come on; to't.

_VIOLA and SIR ANDREW prepare to fight._

Enter ANTONIO.

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Betake ... guard: Prepare yourself for the duel.

souls ... three: he has killed three people.

unless ... him: unless you're prepared to fight me instead of him.

beseech: beg of.

How does Viola's terror at the prospect of fighting a duel show? There is a comic potential in her physical and vocal response.

for't: for it.

meddle: interfere; fight.

In this scene, Viola and Sir Andrew are on opposite sides of the stage. Sir Toby and Fabian cross between them several times, getting the "competitors" increasingly terrified about the upcoming duel. There is comic potential in playing the "pantomimed scenes" happening opposite the dialogue. For example, while Sir Toby tells Sir Andrew "Fabian can scarce hold him yonder," we might see Fabian scarcely able to hold Viola on stage, rather than hold her back.

_Plague on't:_ a mild oath. _let ... slip:_ let him forget about it.

_Marry ... you:_ because Viola will not need Sir Andrew's horse to persuade her not to fight, Sir Toby plans to keep the horse himself.

He: referring to Cesario.

_Sir Toby tells the duelists that they are not in danger—that each has sworn not to hurt the other—Sir Toby and Fabian merely want the entertainment of seeing a duel between the terrified._

_for's:_ for his. _a little thing:_ "thing" was often sexual slang—Viola lacks the "thing" that would make her male.

There is no need for any actual fight between Sir Andrew and Viola. Instead, you might explore the comic potential and tension of, after a few attempts at retreating, slowly bringing the swords of Sir Andrew and Viola to touch gently, just at the moment of Antonio's dramatic entrance. From that moment, the action moves swiftly, with Antonio's challenge, Sir Toby's aggression and the arrest of Antonio. How do Viola and Sir Andrew react?
ANTONIO: Put up your sword. If this young gentleman Have done offence, I take the fault on me: If you offend him, I for him defy you.

SIR TOBY: Why, what are you?

ANTONIO: One, sir, that for his love dares yet do more Than you have heard him brag to you he will.

SIR TOBY: Nay, if you be an undertaker, I am for you.

SIR TOBY and ANTONIO draw swords.

Enter OFFICERS.

FIRST OFFICER: This is the man; do thy office.

SECOND OFFICER: Antonio, I arrest thee at the suit of Count Orsino.

ANTONIO: You do mistake me, sir.

FIRST OFFICER: I know your favour well. Take him away.

ANTONIO: I must obey. (to VIOLA) This comes with seeking you: Now my necessity makes me to ask you for my purse.

SECOND OFFICER: Come, sir, away.

ANTONIO: I must entreat of you some of that money.

VIOLA: What money, sir?

ANTONIO: Will you deny me now? Do not tempt my misery, Lest that it make me so unsound a man As to upbraid you with those kindnesses That I have done for you.

VIOLA: I know of none; Nor know I you by voice or any feature.

SECOND OFFICER: Come, sir, I pray you, go.

ANTONIO: This youth that you see here I snatched one half out of the jaws of death. But O how vile an idol proves this god. Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.

FIRST OFFICER: The man grows mad: away with him!

ANTONIO: Lead me on.

Exit ANTONIO with OFFICERS.

SIR TOBY: Come hither, knight; come hither, Fabian: we'll whisper o'er a couplet or two of most sage saws.

VIOLA: He named Sebastian: I my brother know Yet living in my glass, For him I imitate: O, if it prove,
Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love.

Exit VIOLA.

SIR TOBY: A coward: his dishonesty appears in leaving his friend here in necessity and denying him; ask Fabian.

FABIAN: A most devout coward, religious in it.

SIR ANDREW: I'll after him again and beat him.

SIR TOBY: Cuff him soundly, but never draw thy sword.

SIR ANDREW: An I do not...

Exit SIR ANDREW.

FABIAN: Come, let's see the event.

SIR TOBY: I dare lay any money 'twill be nothing yet.

They exit.

SCENE 15. Before OLIVIA's house.

Enter SEBASTIAN and FESTE.

FESTE: Will you make me believe that I am not sent for you?

SEBASTIAN: Let me be clear of thee.

FESTE: No, I do not know you; nor I am not sent to you by my lady; nor your name is not Cesario; nor this is not my nose neither.

SEBASTIAN: Vent thy folly somewhere else: Thou know'st not me.

FESTE: Vent my folly; he has heard that word of some great man and now applies it to a fool. Vent my folly! Tell me what I shall vent to my lady: shall I vent to her that thou art coming?

SEBASTIAN: Depart from me: There's money: if you tarry longer, I shall give worse payment.

FESTE: Thou hast an open hand.

Enter SIR ANDREW, SIR TOBY, and FABIAN.

SIR ANDREW: Now, have I met you again? there's for you.

SEBASTIAN: Why, there's for thee, and there, and there. Are all the people mad?

SIR TOBY: Hold, sir.

FESTE: This will I tell my lady straight: I would not be in some of your coats for twopence.

Exit FESTE.

SIR ANDREW: I'll have an action of battery against him: though I struck him first, yet it's no matter for that.
SEBASTIAN: I will be free from thee. If thou darest tempt me further, draw thy sword.

SIR TOBY: What? I must have an ounce or two of this malapert blood from you.

Enter OLIVIA.

OLIVIA: Hold, Toby; on thy life I charge thee, hold!

SIR TOBY: Madam!

OLIVIA: Ungracious wretch, Fit for the mountains and the barbarous caves! Be not offended, dear Cesario. Rudesby, be gone!

SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN exit.

SEBASTIAN: (aside) What relish is in this? How runs the stream? Or I am mad, or else this is a dream: If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!

OLIVIA: Nay, come, I prithee; would thou’ldst be ruled by me!

SEBASTIAN: Madam, I will.

OLIVIA: O, say so, and so be! They exit.


Enter MARIA and FESTE.

MARIA: Put on this gown and this beard; make him believe thou art Sir Topas the curate. I'll call Sir Toby.

Exit MARIA.

FESTE: Well, I will dissemble myself in’t; and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown. The competitors enter.

Enter SIR TOBY and MARIA.

SIR TOBY: Jove bless thee, master Parson.

FESTE: Bonos dies, Sir Toby.

SIR TOBY: To him, Sir Topas.

FESTE: What, ho, I say! Peace in this prison!

SIR TOBY: The knave counterfeits well.

MALVOLIO: (within) Who calls there?
Pythagoras: Greek philosopher and mathematician who believed in reincarnation— that we can return from death as animals

grandam: grandmother  happily: haply, by chance

er ... wits: before I declare you sane

woodcock: a notoriously stupid bird

delivered: freed

I ... upshot: I can’t continue the joke to its conclusion

This is a key moment for Sir Toby. He finally realizes how greatly his rowdy behaviour has offended his niece Olivia and begins to reform. We will learn in the final scene that his reformation includes marrying Maria, who, from their first interaction, advised Sir Toby to change his ways.

Sebastian enters after his visit with Olivia. She has given him gifts and affection, but he can’t understand why, or what has happened.

feel’t: feel it see’t: see it

wrangle: argue

26 TWELFTH NIGHT, OR WHAT YOU WILL

FESTE: Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

MALVOLIO: Sir Topas, do not think I am mad. I am no more mad than you are: make the trial of it in any question.

FESTE: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?

MALVOLIO: That the soul of our grandam might happily inhabit a bird.

FESTE: What thinkest thou of his opinion?

MALVOLIO: I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

FESTE: Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well.

MALVOLIO: Sir Topas, Sir Topas!

SIR TOBY: To him in thine own voice: I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be delivered, I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot.

SIR TOBY and MARIA exit.

FESTE: (singing) “Hey, Robin, jolly Robin, Tell me how thy lady does.”

MALVOLIO: Fool!

FESTE: “My lady is unkind, perdy.”

Who calls?

MALVOLIO: Good fool, help me to a candle, and pen, ink and paper.

FESTE: Master Malvolio?

MALVOLIO: Good fool, some ink, paper and light; and convey what I will set down to my lady.

FESTE: I will help you to’t.

They exit.

SCENE 17. OLIVIA’s garden.

Enter SEBASTIAN.

SEBASTIAN: This is the air; that is the glorious sun; This pearl she gave me, I do feel’t and see’t; And though ’tis wonder that environs me thus, Yet ’tis not madness. Where’s Antonio, then? I could not find him at the Elephant; His counsel now might do me golden service; For I am ready to distrust mine eyes And wrangle with my reason that persuades me That I am mad.
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