

"I love it when Malvolio tries to impress
Olivia and she doesn't know what on earth
he's talking about!" Kai, 13



TWELFTH NIGHT

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

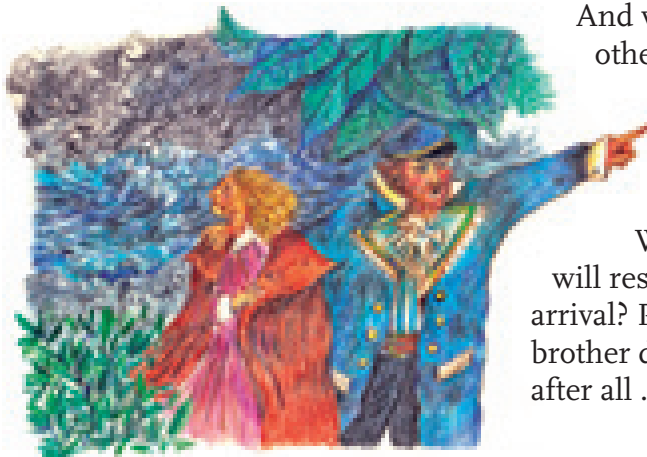


Retold by Helen Street
Illustrated by Charly Cheung

Viola survives a shipwreck, but she thinks her twin
brother Sebastian has died.

Alone in a strange country where it isn't safe to be a
single girl, Viola disguises herself as a boy called Cesario
and finds work as a servant.

But dressing in boy's clothes doesn't stop Viola falling in
love with a man – who is in love with someone else.
Will she ever manage to win his love for herself?



And who is this
other young
man that
appears,
looking so
like Cesario?
What confusion
will result from his
arrival? Perhaps Viola's
brother didn't drown
after all ...

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William Shakespeare

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THE CHARACTERS

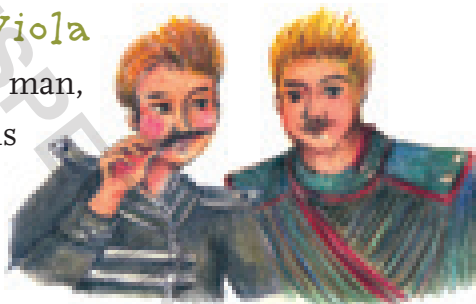


**Duke Orsino
and Olivia**

Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, loves the rich young Countess, Olivia, but she doesn't love him. There will be a wedding – but who will marry whom?

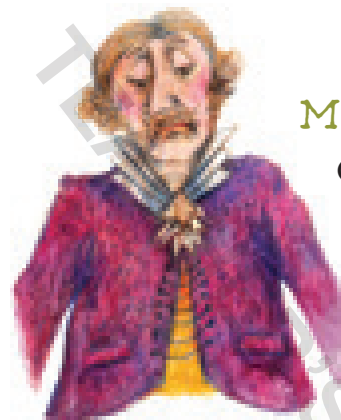
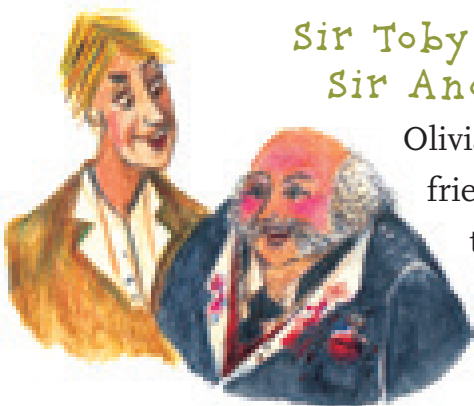
Sebastian and Viola

When Viola dresses as a man, no one can tell these twins apart. What confusion will they cause amongst the people of Illyria?



**Sir Toby Belch and
Sir Andrew Aguecheek**

Olivia's uncle Toby has a foolish friend, Sir Andrew, who wants to marry Olivia. But all Sir Toby wants is to get him drunk and make money out of him.



Malvolio

Olivia's pompous steward forgets he is only a servant. Can the other servants make a lovesick fool out of him?

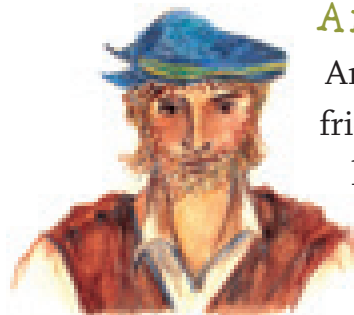
Feste the Clown, Fabian, and Maria

The servants are all willing to help Sir Toby get his own back on Malvolio. But do they go too far?



Antonio

Antonio is Sebastian's devoted friend. He is willing to follow him anywhere, but will this lead him into danger?





TWELFTH NIGHT

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE THE DUKE ORSINO'S PALACE

Orsino

If music be the food of love, play on
Till I have had enough and want no more.
That tune again! It had such soft sad notes.
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets.
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
My heart became tormented with my love.

Messenger enters.

How now, what news from her?

Messenger

So please my lord, she would not let me in.
Her maid gave me this message in reply:
The lady shall, for her dead brother's sake,
In mourning stay for all of seven years.

Orsino

O she that hath a heart so fine to make
This sacrifice, should have abundant love
For me when I have won her precious heart.
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers:
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO
THE SEA COAST

Viola

What country, friend, is this?

Captain

This is Illyria, lady.

Viola

And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother is in heaven.

Perhaps he is not drowned: what think you, sailor?

Captain

'Twas only chance that you yourself were saved.

Viola

O my poor brother! Would he were alive.

Captain

When you and those poor number saved with you
Hung on our rescue boat, I saw your brother
Cling to a mast that floated on the waves
So long as I could see.



Viola

I thank thee for that hope. Who governs here?

Captain

A noble duke, in nature as in name,
Orsino, is he.

Some very important people even had a seat on the stage itself. Unlike today's theatre-goers, Elizabethan audiences were noisy and sometimes fighting broke out.

There were no sets or scene changes in these plays. It was up to the playwright's skill with words to create thunderstorms or forests or Egyptian queens in the imagination of the audience.

Shakespeare wrote mostly in blank verse, in unrhymed lines of ten syllables with a *te-tum te-tum* rhythm (though *Twelfth Night* contains more variety of style than most of Shakespeare's plays). But unlike most writers of his time, he tried to make his actors' lines closer to the rhythms of everyday speech, in order to make it sound more naturalistic. He used poetic imagery, and even invented words that we still use today.

His plays are mostly based on stories or old plays that he improved. It is thought that *Twelfth Night* was performed on the twelfth day after Christmas in front of Queen Elizabeth and her guest, an Italian nobleman called Orsino.

Finding out more

We recommend the following books and websites to gain a greater understanding of William Shakespeare and Elizabethan England:

Books

- Marcia Williams, *Mr William Shakespeare's Plays*, Walker Books, 2009.
- Leon Garfield, *Shakespeare Stories*, Victor Gollanz, 1985.
- Stewart Ross, *William Shakespeare*, Writers in Britain series, Evans, 1999.
- Felicity Hebditch, *Tudors*, Britain through the Ages series, Evans, 2003.
- Dereen Taylor, *The Tudors and the Stuarts*, Wayland, 2007.