

Twelfth Night, or What You Will Study Guide

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Monmouth College
Theatre

Shakespeare's
**TWELFTH
NIGHT**

OR WHAT YOU WILL

April 24-26 7:30 pm
April 27 2:00 pm
Wells Theater
ONLY \$4 with MC ID!

It's Shakespeare in a
Steampunk World!
department.monm.edu/theatre



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What is *Twelfth Night* About?

Viola, a noblewoman, and her twin brother, Sebastian, are separated in a shipwreck when their ship is overtaken by a storm. Viola wakes to find herself on the shore of a country called Illyria, and with the help of the ship's captain she decides to disguise herself as a young boy and work for a nobleman named Count Orsino. The Count is madly in love with an Illyrian noblewoman named Olivia, whose brother and father have both recently died. Orsino is not her only suitor, however, for Olivia's uncle Toby Belch has brought the foppish Sir Andrew Aguecheek to Illyria to woo Olivia. Olivia will have none of any man's suit, telling everyone that she will stay in mourning for her father and brother for seven years. Other members of Olivia's household include: Maria, Olivia's lady; Feste a fool and musician; Fabian another servant, and Malvolio, Olivia's pretentious steward who also admires Olivia.

While disguised as a man, Viola calls herself Cesario, and she quickly becomes part of Orsino's household. Orsino begins sending Cesario to Olivia's house with messages of love in hopes that the younger man will woo her better than the other servants. Olivia is indeed wooed by Cesario, but not in Orsino's favor. She falls in love with Cesario, despite the fact that Cesario (or Viola) herself loves Orsino.

Meanwhile, Sir Toby, Maria, and Andrew decide to have some fun with Malvolio, who disapproves Toby and Andrew's drinking and revelry. Maria has handwriting much like Olivia's, so she decides to write a letter to Malvolio from Olivia stating that Olivia is in love with him and requesting that he show his love by complying with several ridiculous requests to show. When Malvolio fulfills all the letter's demands (not knowing that every requirement

is something Olivia hates) Olivia quickly believes him to be crazy and has Sir Toby take care of him. Toby, in turn, places him in a dark room to take the joke a bit further.

In the meantime, Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, was rescued from the shipwreck by Antonio, a pirate. Antonio has spent three months bringing Sebastian back to health, during this time he has started to develop a fondness for his patient. The duo travels to Illyria, at great risk for Antonio who has made enemies in Orsino's court. Upon arriving in Illyria, many people begin confusing Sebastian for Cesario. Even Antonio mistakes Cesario for Sebastian.

Upon seeing how much attention Olivia is gives on Cesario Sir Andrew becomes enraged and threatens to leave. In an attempt to keep Sir Andrew from leaving Sir Toby and Fabian, another of Olivia's servants, suggests the only way for Andrew to be viewed kindly by Olivia is to challenge Cesario to a duel. Seeing this as a form of entertainment, Sir Toby brings a verbal message to Cesario exaggerating Andrew's strength. When Cesario and Sir Andrew neither can bring themselves to fight. Antonio then bursts onto the scene, and believing Cesario is Sebastian, he offers to fight in his stead. Officers arrive to break up the fight and take Antonio away for past indiscretions.

Shortly thereafter, Olivia finds Sebastian, and mistaking him for Cesario, she begs him to marry her. Overwhelmed by her beauty, and Sebastian accepts eagerly, and the two hurry off with a priest to marry. The play's action comes to a head when Olivia, now married to Sebastian, happens across Cesario, Orsino, Antonio, and the officers. Orsino attempts to woo Oliva, but she will have none of it and goes to her "husband," Cesario. At the moment, Sebastian enters the scene. With both Cesario and Sebastian together, the crowd that is

gathered marvels at the fact that they are identical. The twins realize that neither died in the shipwreck and are reunited. Once Orsino realizes that Cesario is really a woman he asks for her hand in marriage. During this merriment, Malvolio appears from his cell, and Fabian tells about the horrible prank that was pulled on Malvolio. It is also told that Sir Toby and Maria have run away together to get married. Malvolio departs, telling all that he will seek revenge on all of them. To ensure a happy ending, Orsino sends his servants to make peace with Malvolio, and he guarantees wedding festivities to come as Feste sings one last song to end the play.



(Source: <http://www.geekalerts.com/u/steampunk-wall-clock.jpg>)

When Do the Events Happen?

The following is a rough timeline on the events of *Twelfth Night* to help you understand the length of time that happens between scenes. Source Dr. Emily Rollie.

One Day

- Shipwreck
- Sea shore rescue

3 days pass once Viola gets into Orsino's court (but could be some time longer before she gets into his court)

One Day

- Orsino's court- Orsino sends Cesario to Olivia
- Olivia's house- Viola woos Olivia for the first time
- Street- Sebastian and Antonio arrive to Illyria
- Street- Malvolio "returns" ring to Cesario
- Kitchen- Feste sings for Ander and Toby (night)

Some time passes- maybe a day, overnight

One Day

- Orsino's court- Orsino sends Cesario to Olivia's house again
- Street- Sebastian and Antonio
- Garden- Malvolio finds the letter "from Olivia"
- Garden- Cesario comes to woo Olivia again
- Olivia's house- Andrew threatens to leave but is convinced to stay

Some time may pass, but no more than a day.

- Garden- Malvolio enters in yellow stockings and Andrew duels Cesario
- Malvolio's cell- Sir Topas' visit (night)

One Day

- Garden- Sebastian and Olivia pre-marriage
- In front of Olivia's house- Orsino himself comes to woo Olivia himself and everyone arrive

Who's Who in *Twelfth Night*?

Viola- A young gentlewoman, who loses her brother, Sebastian, in a storm at sea. She washes up on the shore of Illyria and, thinking she is alone in the world, -decides to disguise herself as a man and become a servant for Count Orsino. Calling herself "Cesario," she falls in love with Orsino but is required by Orsino to woo Olivia in his stead.

Sebastian- The brother of Viola, who was also lost at sea. He is rescued by Antonio. The two travel to Illyria, as Sebastian is going through the town, many people mistake him for Cesario, including Olivia who proposes to him, thinking he is Cesario.

Orsino- A nobleman in Illyria, he is lovesick for Lady Olivia. Although he sends Cesario to woo Olivia in his stead, he starts to develop a fondness for Cesario. He loves excess, being in love, and having the best parts of life.

Olivia- A noblewoman of Illyria, who, when the play begins she is in a seven year mourning for her father and brother. She is being unsuccessfully courted by both Orsino and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. When Cesario comes to her in hopes of wooing her for Orsino, she falls madly in love with Cesario.

Malvolio- A steward of the Lady Olivia. He is very strict when it comes to rules and how things should be. He longs for a higher social class and when he starts to believe that Olivia loves him, he would do almost anything to marry her.

Feste- A fool and entertainer who freely moves between the houses of Orsino and Olivia. He is thought to be the wisest character of the play. He offers good advice to the other characters hidden in jokes, puns, and foolishness.

Sir Toby Belch- The uncle of Lady Olivia. He is currently living with her, but she doesn't approve of his rowdy ways. He makes friends with Sir Andrew, Fabian, and Maria who help him play pranks on many of the other characters. The main target is Malvolio who has affected all of them in different ways.

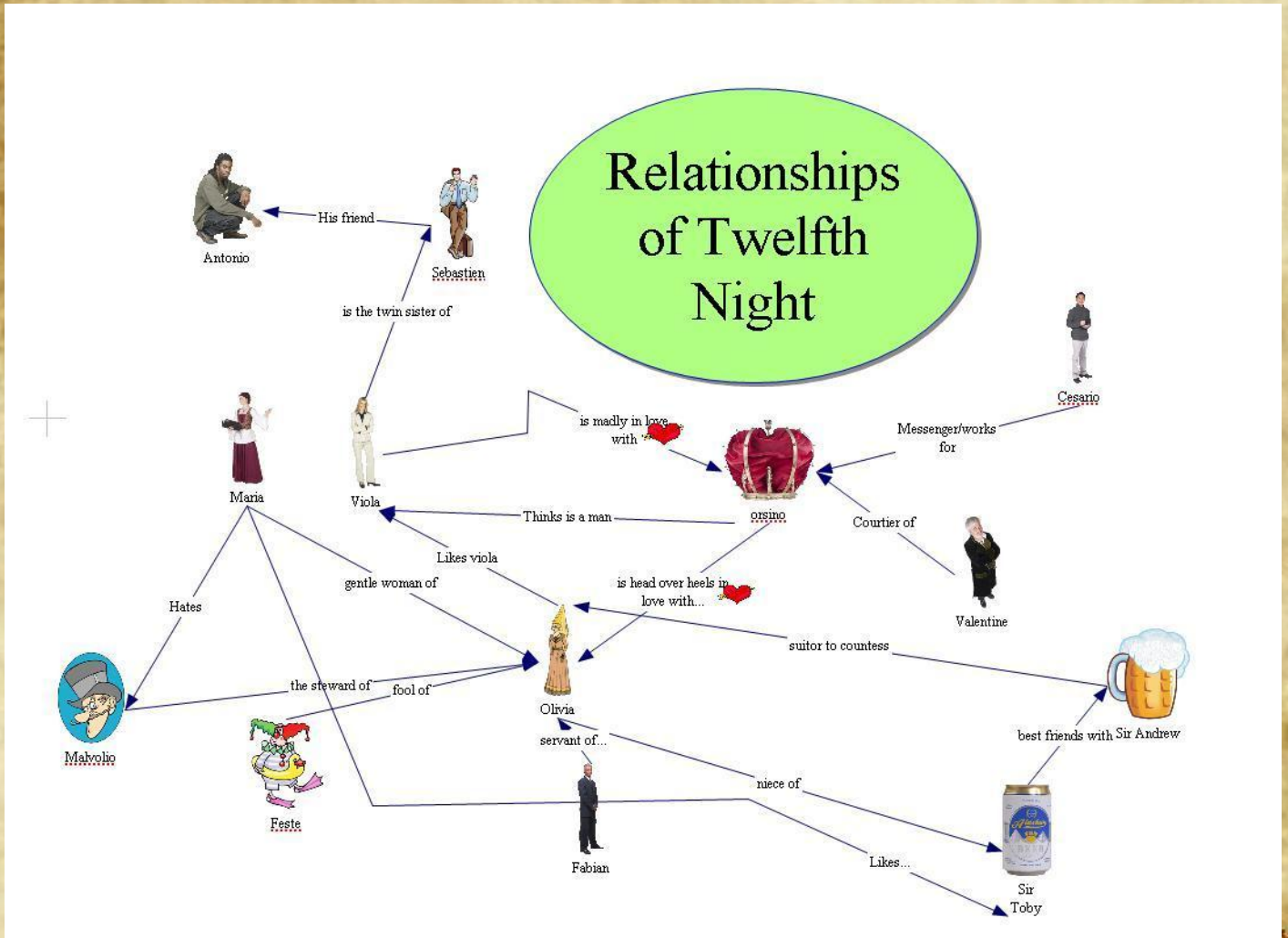
Maria- A lady's maid for Lady Olivia, she is very smart and helps Sir Toby pull a major trick on Malvolio. Eventually Maria and Sir Toby run away together to get married.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek- A nobleman who is trying to court Olivia, he is a friend of Sir Toby. He believes himself to be witty, brave, and intellectual, but he is really rather naïve and flamboyant.

Antonio- A reformed pirate who rescued Sebastian from the shipwreck. He becomes very fond of Sebastian; they travel to Illyria even though it is very dangerous for him. Some believe they have a much closer relationship than just friends.

Fabian- A servant of Olivia's who helps Sir Toby with many of his pranks.

What are the Connections between Characters?



(Source: <http://kdane95.edublogs.org/files/2009/02/relationships.jpg>)

Steampunk?

Steampunk is a subgenre of science fiction. While the term was not recognized until the late 1980's the genre's inspirations come the Victorian era the book *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells, and the film *Metropolis*. The style of Steampunk is often described as a rustic fantasy world where most technology is steam powered. Famous works of Steampunk include *Soulless*, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, *Leviathan*, *Boneshaker* and so on.

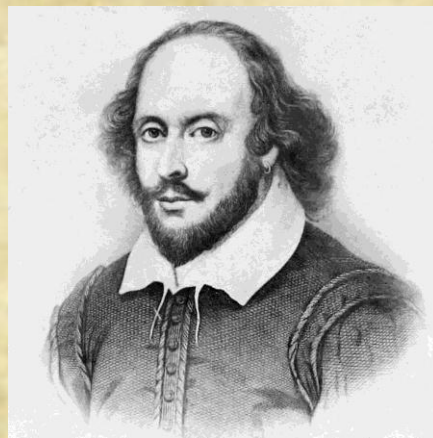


(Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/SteampunkPendant.jpg>)

Who is Shakespeare?

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564 to a wealthy merchant and heiress; he was the third of eight children, 3 of whom died during his childhood. At the age of 18 married an older woman named Anne Hathaway, and over the course of their life together had three daughters (Judith, Hamnet, and Susana). In 1588 Shakespeare moved to London to establish himself as a writer and as an actor, and in 1594 he joined Lord Chamberlin's Men which was considered the best and most popular actor troupe in London during that time. After spending a marvelous career with Lord Chamberlin's Men Shakespeare bought a house in his hometown of Stratford in 1611, where he retired comfortably and died. In his final will, Shakespeare left his possessions to his daughter Susana, a sum of £ 300 to his surviving daughter Judith (Hamnet had died at the age of 11), and his "second best bed" to his wife Anne; some have speculated this referred to his house as he apparently considered the guest room's bed the best bed in the house, and the second to be he and Anne's marriage bed.

(Source: http://jeweell.com/data_images/out/12/1125910-william-shakespeare.jpg)



What is Twelfth Night?

In addition to being the title of this play, Twelfth Night was a celebration and cultural reference point for Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The Twelfth Night celebration changed like many holidays have changed. It started as a pagan ritual, and was later brought into Christianity. The Twelfth Night is January 5th or the evening of the fifth of January, preceding the Twelfth Day and the eve of the Epiphany. In Christianity, it is known as the day that the magi (or the three wise men) presented gifts to the newborn Jesus.

The general atmosphere of the celebration is like Mardi Gras today; it is a chance to blow off steam and let loose. During the festivities the social world would flip upside down; the nobles would become peasants and vice versa. When the midnight arrived, the party was over and social order would be restored. At the beginning of the festival there would be a cake, much like a fruitcake, that would be eaten, and inside of it there would be little items that would mean different things. If you had a bean in your slice of cake, for instance then you would be the Lord of Misrule or King of the Festival. A pea meant you would be the Queen. With these titles you become in charge of the entire feast and have the ability to order around anyone at the celebration. To find a clove meant that you were a villain, a twig meant you were a fool, and a rag meant you were a tarty girl.

We also get our tradition of the Yule Log from this festival. During Elizabethan times you would start burning the log on Christmas Day and if it continued to burn until the Twelfth Night, then your house would have good fortune for the upcoming year. You would also keep

the remains of the log to kindle the next year's Yule Log and to protect the house from fire and lightning.

In conclusion there have been other forms of the Twelfth Night festival. For example in the late 19th century, British aristocrats would have celebration and during the dancing portion the lady of the house would dance with the butler and the man of the house would dance with the housekeeper. This may not be a full swapping of roles, but aristocrat family would serve themselves lunch for the day and give the servants most of the day off. What do you think would happen if we had a full Twelfth Night celebration today?



Example of the cake eaten during a festival.

(Source: <http://whydyoueatthat.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/pithivier01.jpg>)

How Do I Act When Going to a Play?

The following are a couple tips and tricks for a successful theatre-going experience.

This may be your first or fiftieth time going to a play, either way it is good to brush up on how to act during a show.

- Arrive early. Usually the “house,” or the seating area of the theatre opens approximately 30 minutes before the play begins, so you should plan to arrive early enough that you can find your seat, peruse the program, and settle in.
- If you cannot avoid arriving late, see an usher or house manager in the lobby, he or she will wait for a pause in the action and help you find your seat.
- Please turn off cell phones, and please do not text during performances. Extra sounds and lights are distracting to the actors on stage and the people sitting around you.
- Be considerate of the people around you. Will your whispering prevent other people from hearing the show? Also, be careful not to rattle your program or other objects during the show.
- Intermission is the time to get a drink of water and to use the restroom. If you must leave during the show, please be quiet as you leave and don't talk or run in the aisles.
- Please remember - the show is not over until after the actors have taken their curtain calls. They have all worked very hard to entertain you and it is rude to leave before they have made their final exit. It is also irritating to other theatre-goers.

Food For Thought

1. What are the possible meanings of the play's second title, "Or What You Will"? Do the meanings have anything to do with the content of the play? If so, how might they relate to the themes and content of *Twelfth Night*?
2. How does *Twelfth Night* portray love? Are there different kinds of love? What are they and which characters demonstrate those kinds of love? Are some forms of love better than others? Why or why not?
3. What is the effect of the music and singing in *Twelfth Night*? Why does Feste sing so many songs? Why doesn't "Cesario" or any of the other characters sing?
4. Why does the play leave Viola in her "Cesario" disguise at the play's end? What are the implications of Viola getting engaged to Duke Orsino while still dressed as a boy?
5. Twelfth Night, the holiday after which the play is named, was celebrated as a festival in which everything was turned topsy-turvy, with traditional social roles and behavior temporarily suspended. Are things similarly turned upside down in Illyria?
6. There are many varying themes for *Twelfth Night*. Which do you see? Are some are more important than others? Why? Here are some examples of themes we found in the play: love, gender, social classes, rules and order, lies and deceit, and foolishness and folly. What others do you see?

How Much Do You Know: A Steampunk *Twelfth Night* Quiz?

This can be a post-show activity to do with students to see how well they understood the show and see if the students were paying attention.

1. What era in Great Britain does Steampunk tend to be set in?
2. How long was the reign of Queen Victoria?
3. What was the nickname of Queen Victoria during her era?
4. How large was the reach of the British Empire during that time?
5. What were some inventions made during the Victorian Era?
6. How do Sir Anthony and Sir Toby know each other?
7. Why is it funny that Malvolio wears yellow stockings to woo Olivia?
8. How long was Viola/Cesario employed by Orsino before she meets Olivia for the first time?
9. Why is Antonio a wanted man by the Count Orsino?
10. Complete this quote: "If music be the food of _____, play on."
11. Where does *Twelfth Night* take place?
12. Why is Olivia refusing to see visitors?
13. Who forges the letter that Malvolio thinks is from Olivia?
14. What disguise does Feste wear when he speaks with Malvolio?
15. What does Malvolio say he is going to do at the end of the play?

Answers:

1. Victorian Era (1837-1901)
2. 64 years
3. Queen Empress
4. A 1/5 of the world and a 1/4 of the world's population.
5. Camera, telephone, radio, razor blades, and toilet. To name a few.
6. They are friends and drinking buddies.
7. She hates, "abhors," that color.
8. 3 days
9. He killed a lot of his men and stole goods.
10. "If music be the food of **love**, play on."
11. Illyria
12. She is in mourning for her brother and father.
13. Maria
14. Sir Topas, a curate
15. He will seek revenge on all of them.