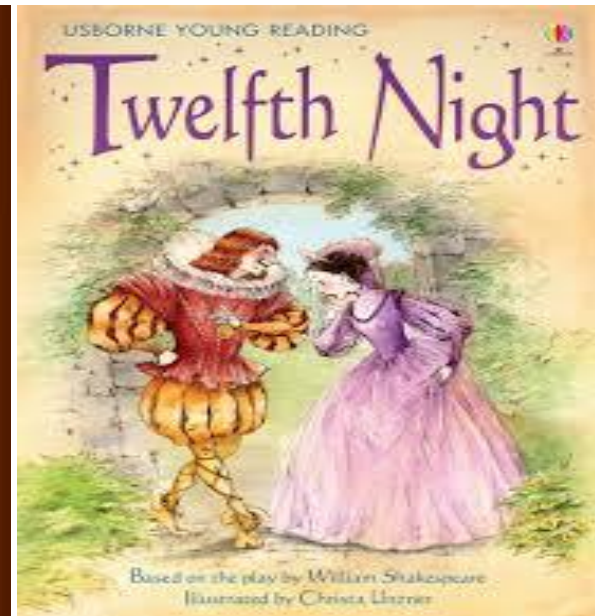


*Twelfth Night* by William  
Shakespeare



- The play was written as a Christmas season production for presentation on Epiphany – the twelfth night after Christmas, when, according to religious tradition, Jesus was introduced to the world.
- It is a time for celebrating, gifts are exchanged, and parties and other celebrations occur.
- The full title of the play is *Twelfth Night, or, What You Will* – i.e. "Call it anything you choose."
- Type of work: play
- Genre: comedy
- Time written: between 1600-1602
- Place written: England

- Setting (time): Unknown
- Setting (place): The mythical land of Illyria (Illyria is a real place, corresponding to the coast of present-day Yugoslavia, but *Twelfth Night* is clearly set in a fictional kingdom rather than a real one.)

## Setting to the Play

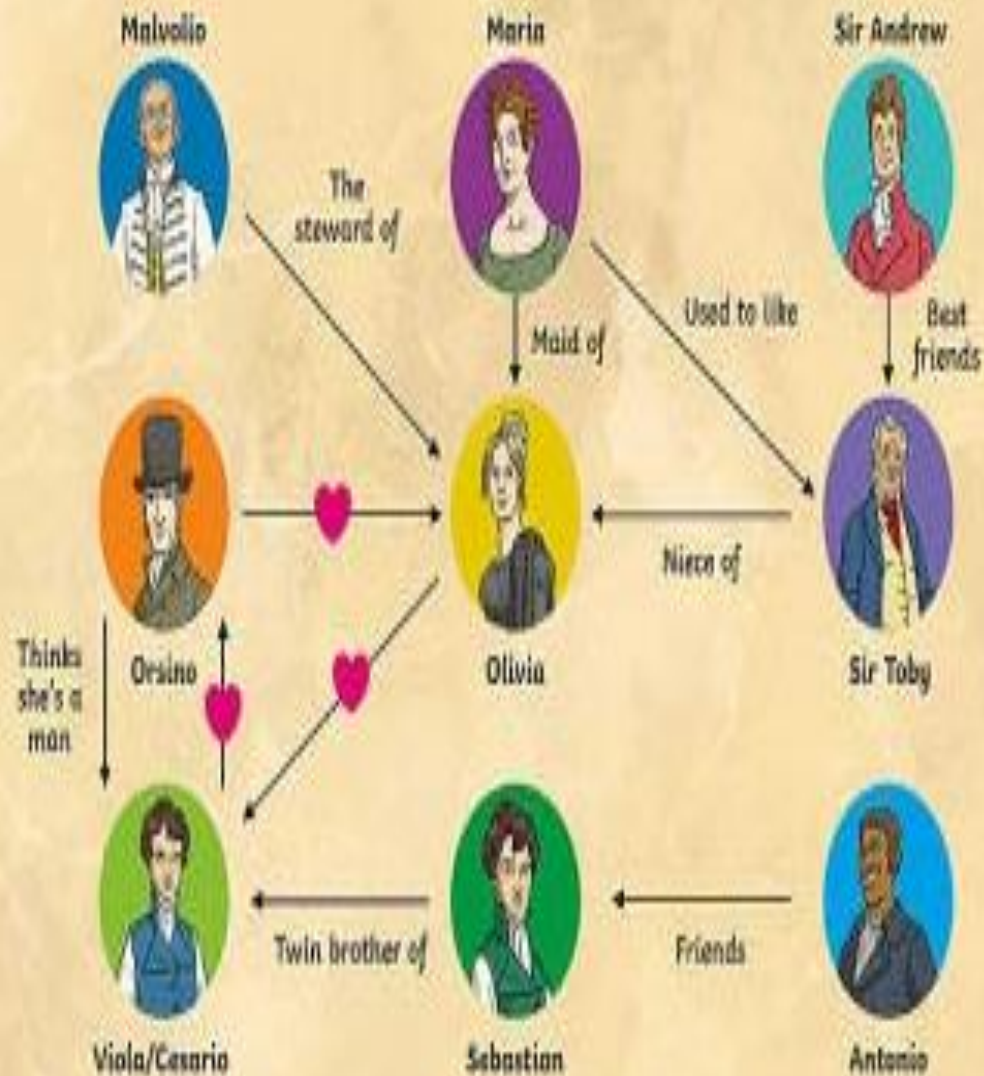
- Very romantic and exotic
- Called Illyria
- Ancient region
  - Found near Italy
  - Today: Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Regusa



**Dramatis Personae: Olivia is mourning for the death of her brother**

1. Viola, the twin sister of Sebastian. Also, Cesario.
2. Orsino, Duke of Illyria
3. Olivia, the Countess
4. Sebastian, brother of Viola, a young nobleman
5. Sir Toby Belch, a blood relative of Olivia, her uncle
6. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, companion of Sir Toby, suitor to Olivia
7. Fest, clown
8. Antonio, captain, friend to Sebastian and Viola
9. The priest

# Characters in the Twelfth Night



# TWELFTH NIGHT: Dramatis Personae



**VIOLA**  
- a.k.a. "Cesario"  
- Twin sister of Sebastian  
- Surprisingly effective cross-dresser



**SEBASTIAN**  
- a.k.a. "Roderigo"  
- Twin brother of Viola  
- Good at surviving shipwrecks



**ORSINO**  
- Duke of Illyria  
- In love with Olivia  
- Melodramatic  
- Kind of fancies boys?



**OLIVIA**  
- Capable countess  
- In mourning for her dead brother  
- Kind of fancies girls?



**SIR TOBY**  
- Olivia's cousin  
- Perpetual drunkard  
- Big bully



**MALVOLIO**  
- Olivia's steward  
- Self-important and totally humourless  
- Secretly in love with Olivia



**MARIA**  
- Olivia's gentlewoman  
- Quite ingenious  
- In love with Sir Toby, for some reason



**FESTE**  
- Olivia's fool  
- Sings a lot  
- Probably smarter than anyone else



**SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK**  
- Olivia's suitor  
- Sir Toby's "friend" and piggy bank  
- Amiable idiot



**FABIAN**  
- Works for Olivia  
- Into bear-baiting  
- Hangs around with the cooler kids



**ANTONIO**  
- Sea captain  
- Outlaw in Ilyria  
- Besotted with Sebastian



**SEA CAPTAIN**  
- Captain of Viola and Sebastian's ship  
- Promptly sinks it



**CURIO & VALENTINE**  
- Orsino's courtiers  
- Go around delivering messages



**OFFICERS**  
- Orsino's officers  
- Go around arresting outlaw sea captains



**PRIEST**  
- Almost responsible for Ilyria's first ever same-sex marriage

# *Twelfth Night, or what you will*

*Olivia*

*Fabian*

*Feste*

*Maria*



*Sir Toby Belch Sir Andrew Aguecheek*

*Orsino*

*Malvolio*

*Curio*



*Valentine*

# TWELFTH NIGHT

“If music be the food of love, play on.”

Viola Sebastian

Maholio

Sir Toby

Sir Andrew

Maria

Feste

Viola (Cesario)

Olivia Orsino

“Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.”

## The Love Triangle



Viola dresses as a boy to work as Orsino's servant.



Orsino is madly in love with Olivia.



Olivia, however, falls in love with Viola (disguised as Cesario).



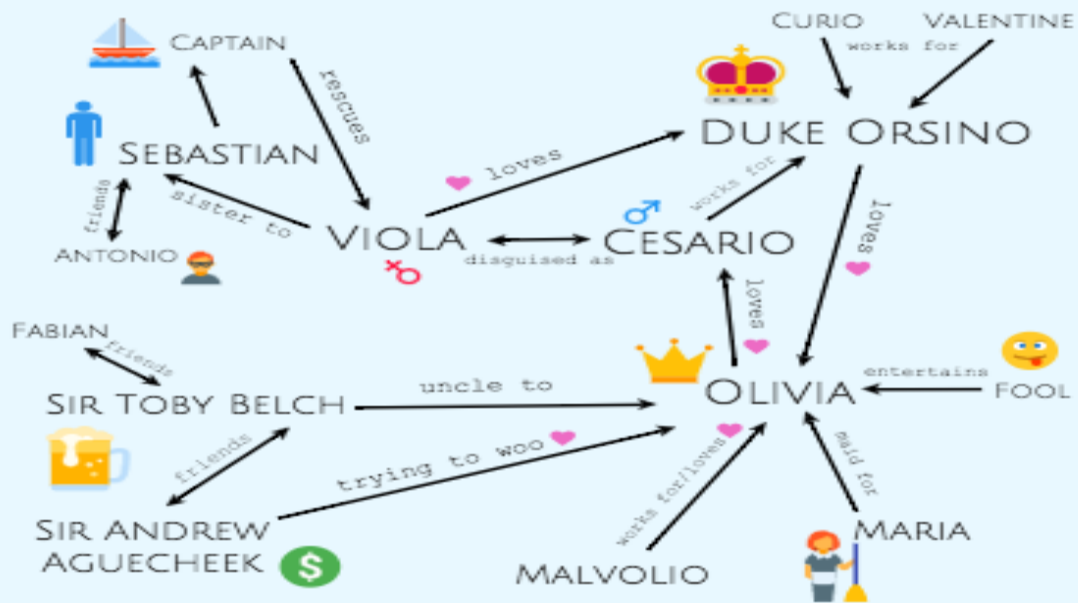
Meanwhile, Viola falls in love with Orsino.

Then, Viola's twin brother shows up—



# Twelfth Night

by William Shakespeare

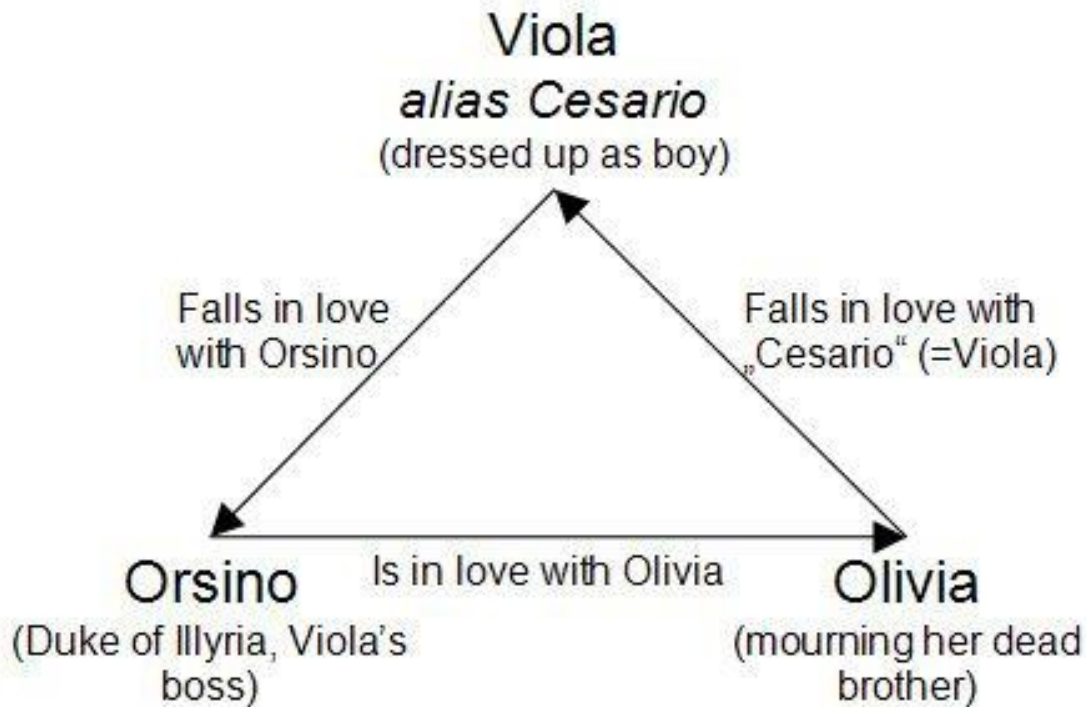


If music be the food of love,  
play on.





## Love triangle in Twelfth Night or What you will



### Character Sketches:

**Viola (Cesario)** : At the start of the play, Viola finds herself alone: her father died when she was 13 years old and now she has lost her brother. She is the protagonist of *Twelfth Night*. An aristocratic woman, she is tossed up on the coast of Illyria by a shipwreck at the beginning of the play and disguises herself as the pageboy, Cesario, to make her way. Throughout the play, Viola exhibits strength of character, quick wit, and resourcefulness. Although her disguise puts her in an impossible position, she maintains self-control and a quiet dignity that contrast with the over-the-top emotional performances of love and mourning by the other main characters, Orsino and Olivia. While those two characters seem almost to be play-acting, Viola truly feels pain when she believes that her brother Sebastian died in the shipwreck and when her love for Orsino seems impossible.

She is in a similar situation to Olivia and she tells the Captain 'O, that I served that lady' when she hears about Olivia's situation. When the Captain replies that Olivia 'will admit no kind of suit', Viola decides to serve Orsino instead, asking the Captain to help disguise her as a young man.

**Olivia** : A beautiful noblewoman in Illyria. At the beginning of the play, she has rejected both Orsino and her ridiculous suitor, Sir Andrew Aguecheek. In mourning for her recently deceased brother, she has vowed not to receive any man, or to go outside, for seven years. However, when she meets Cesario (Viola in her male costume) she falls in love and forgets these oaths. Olivia's mourning for her brother therefore resembles Orsino's love-melancholy: it seems more like a

performance than a real, deeply felt emotion. Like Orsino, she seems to enjoy indulging in misery, and also has no problem shifting the object of love from one person to the next.

**Orsino :** The Duke and ruler of Illyria. At the beginning of the play Orsino is obsessed by his unrequited love for Olivia . However, in the final scene, when Orsino discovers that Cesario is in fact the woman, Viola—and that Olivia has already married Viola's twin brother, Sebastian—he quickly proposes to Viola. Because the language and gestures he uses to talk about love are so melodramatic, and because he switches from Olivia to Viola so quickly, Orsino seems more in love with the idea of love and his own role as a spurned lover, than to actually be in love. His constant self-indulgent complaints about his lovesickness also display his extreme self-centeredness. Critics have also noted that, in the final scene, he seems to be attracted to Cesario as Cesario—that is, to Viola in her male persona.

**Sebastian :** Viola's twin brother, whom she believes is lost at sea, and who likewise thinks she's dead. Sebastian is noble and capable of strong, deeply felt emotion, just like his sister. The constant powerful love he shows while grieving and when reunited with Viola contrasts Orsino's and Olivia's relatively frivolous emotions. He is also the only major character in the play who never engages in deception. He can be pragmatic, though: when the beautiful, wealthy Olivia proposes to him, he accepts despite the fact that he has never met her before.

**Malvolio :** The steward in charge of the servants at Olivia's house. A stuck-up killjoy, Malvolio annoys the other members of the household by constantly condescending to and scolding them. In revenge, Maria, Sir Toby, and others play a prank on Malvolio that adds comic relief to Twelfth Night, but also reveals Malvolio's ambition, arrogance, and self-love. The play provides a happy ending for all of the characters except Malvolio, reminding the audience that not all love is fulfilled.

**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 behavior, 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 harbors 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.