

The Two Principal Strands of the Plot of *Twelfth Night*

Love interests of the Duke Orsino,
Viola, the Countess Olivia, and
Sebastian (Viola's twin brother)

Festivity interests of Sir Toby, Maria,
Feste the Clown, Malvolio, and others

Act One

1.1. Court of Duke Orsino, where he pines over his unrequited
love for the Countess Olivia

1.2. Surviving shipwreck, Viola decides to don a disguise
as a young boy and go to the court of Orsino;
Viola's twin Sebastian is *thought* to be lost at sea

1.4. At court of Orsino and resembling her brother
Sebastian, Viola assumes the name Cesario;
conversing with Orsino, she/he falls in love with him,
who of course does not know she/he is a woman;
Orsino employs him/her to woo Olivia in his stead

1.5. Viola/Cesario is at the house of the Countess Olivia and
converses with her; not recognizing that Viola/Cesario
is a woman, Olivia falls in love with her/him.

1.3. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria
reveling

Act Two

2.1. Sebastian—also having escaped shipwreck like
his sister Viola—goes to the court of Orsino

2.2. Viola/Cesario discovers Olivia has fallen in love
with her/him

2.4. Viola/Cesario and Orsino are conversing

2.3. While reveling, Sir Toby and others plot
to trick Malvolio into believing
Olivia is in love with him

2.5. Malvolio falls completely for the trick
laid by Sir Toby and Maria.

Act Three

3.1. Viola/Cesario and Olivia are in conversation
and she declares her love for her/him

3.3. Sebastian and one Antonio converse

3.2. Sir Toby arranges a duel between
Sir Andrew and Viola/Cesario

3.4. In an outrageous costume Malvolio woos
Olivia, who thinks he has gone mad.

Act Four

4.1. Olivia mistakes Sebastian for Viola/Cesario

4.3. Sebastian's betrothal to Olivia.

4.2. Further duping of Malvolio, who is
now incarcerated

Act Five

In keeping with tradition of comedy, *Twelfth Night* concludes with restorations, reconciliations,
and most conspicuously unions of lovers, here the betrothals of Viola and Duke Orsino,
Sebastian and the Countess Olivia, and Maria and Toby.

The Three Movements of the Plot of *Twelfth Night*

<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>
Act 1.1—Act 2.3	Act 2.4—Act 4.3	Act 5. 1
Setting of the Action	Unfolding of the Action and Its Complication	Resolution of the Action and Feste's Concluding Song.

Select Passages from *Twelfth Night*

1. 2.1.264- 276

Vio. If I did love you in my master's flame,
With such a suff'ring, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense,
I would not understand it.

Oli. Why, what would you?

Vio. 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!" O you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth
But you should pity me!

Oli. You might do much.

Orsino. Seek him out, and play the tune the while.

[*Exit Curio.*] *Music plays.*

Come hither, boy. If ever thou shalt love,
In the sweet pangs of it remember me;
For such as I am, all true lovers are,
Unstaid and skittish in all motions else,
Save in the constant image of the creature
That is belov'd. How dost thou like this tune?

Vio. It gives a very echo to the seat
Where Love is thron'd.

Orsino. Thou dost spek masterly.
My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye
Hath stay'd upon some favor that it loves.
Hath it not, boy?

Vio. A little, by your favor.

Orsino. What kind of woman is't?

Vio. Of your complexion.

Orsino. She is not worth thee then. What years,
i' faith?

Vio. About your years, my lord.

Orsino. Too old, by heaven. Let still the woman
take

An elder than herself, so wears she to him;
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.

Vio. I think it well, my lord.

Duke. Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
For women are as roses, whose fair flow'r
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.

Vio. And so they are; alas, that they are so!
To die, even when they to perfection grow!

3. 2.4.42-66

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

Clo. Are you ready, sir?

Orsino. Ay, prithee sing. *Music.*

The Song

Clo. 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.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown.
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones
shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

4. 2.4.80-121

Orsino. Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.
Tell her, my love, more noble than the world.

Vio. But if she cannot love you, sir?

Orsino. I cannot be so answered.

Vio. Sooth, but you must

Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,
Hath for you 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 answer'd?

Orsino. There is no woman's sides
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart
Make no compare

Between that love a woman can bear me
And that I owe Olivia.

Vio. Ay, but I know—

Orsino. What dost thou know?

Vio. Too well what love women to men may owe;
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.
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?

Vio. 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 sate like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
We men may say more, swear more, but indeed
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

Orsino. But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

Vio. 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 deny.

5. 2.3.114-116

Sir To. [*Malvolio.*] Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?

Mar. For Monseieur Malvolio, let me alone with him. If I do not gull him into a byword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it.
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I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love wherein by the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expresser of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated. I can write very like my lady your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands.

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

6. 2.5.15

Mar. [*To Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian.*] Get ye all here into the box-tree; Malvolio's coming down this walk. He has been yonder i' they sun practicing behavior to his own shadow this half hour. Observe him, for the love of mockery; for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him.

[*The men hide themselves and Maria throws down a letter.*]

Enter Malvolio.

Mal. 'Tis but fortune, all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me, and I have heard herself come thus near, that should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't?

Sir To. Here's an overweening rogue!

Fab. O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him. How he jets under his advanced plumes!

Sir And. 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue.

Sir To. Peace, I say.

Mal. To be Count Malvolio!

Sir To. Ah, rogue!

Sir And. Pistol him, pistol him!

Sir To. Peace, peace!

Mal. There is example for't: the Lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

Fab. O, peace! now he's deeply in. Look how imagination blows him.

Mal. Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state—

Sir To. O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye!

Mal. Calling my officers about me, in my branch'd velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping—

Sir To. Fire and brimstone!

Fab. O, peace, peace!

Mal. And then to have the humor of state;
after a demure travel of regard—telling them
I know my place as I would they should do
theirs—to ask for my kinsman Toby—

Sir To. Bolts and shackles!

Fab. O, peace, peace, peace! Now, now.

Mal. Seven of my people, with an obedient
start, make out for him. I frown the while,
and perchance wind up my watch, or play
with my—some rich jewel. Toby approaches;
curtsies there to me—

Sir To. Shall this fellow live?

Fab. Though our silence be drawn from
us with cars, yet peace.

Mal. I extend my hand to him thus,
quenching my familiar smile with an austere
regard of control—

Sir To. And does not Toby take you a blow
o' the lips then?

Mal. Saying, "Cousin Toby, my fortunes
having cast me on your niece, give me
this prerogative of speech"—

Sir To. What, what?

Mal. "You must mend your drunkenness."

Conclusion

In the single scene of Act Five virtually all of the characters of the play appear and the overall plot concludes the action in unions, reunions, and reconciliations. Reconciled couples include: Sebastian and Antonio; Viola and Sebastian (her brother); Olivia and Sebastian; Duke Orsino and Viola; Captain and Illyrians; and Sir Toby and Maria.

The notable exception to this series of unions and reunions is Malvolio. He declines Olivia's and the Orsino's offer of reconciliation and exits with the words: "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (5.1.378).

The stage clears, the Clown Feste steps forward to address the audience and sing the concluding song:

7. 5.1.389-408

Clown sings.

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey ho, etc.
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut
their gate,
For the rain, etc.

But when I came, alas, to wive,
With hey ho, etc.
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain, etc.

But when I came unto my beds,
With hey ho, etc.
With toss-pots still had drunken heads
For the rain, etc.

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey ho, etc.
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.
