

Shakespeare's **Twelfth Night**  
(Modern text)

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### Act 1, Scene 1

**ORSINO**, **CURIO**, and other lords enter with musicians playing for them.

**ORSINO**

If it's true that music makes people more in love, keep playing. Give me too much of it, so I'll get sick of it and stop loving. Play that part again! It sounded sad. Oh, it sounded like a sweet breeze blowing gently over a bank of violets, taking their scent with it. That's enough. Stop. It doesn't sound as sweet as it did before. Oh, love is so restless! It makes you want everything, but it makes you sick of things a minute later, no matter how good they are. Love is so vivid and fantastical that nothing compares to it.

**CURIO**

Do you want to go hunting, my lord?

**ORSINO**

Hunting what, Curio?

**CURIO**

The hart.

**ORSINO**

That's what I'm doing—only it's *my* heart that's being hunted. Oh, when I first saw Olivia, it seemed like she made the air around her sweeter and purer. In that instant I was transformed into a hart, and my desire for her has hounded me like a pack of vicious dogs.

What's going on? What have you heard from her?

**VALENTINE**

I'm sorry, but they wouldn't let me in. But I got the following answer from her handmaid. Olivia's not going to show her face for the next seven years—not even to the sky itself. Instead, she'll go around veiled like a nun, and once a day she'll water her room with tears. She's doing this out of love for her dead brother, whom she wants to keep fresh in her memory forever.

**ORSINO**

Oh, if she loves her brother this much, think how she'll love me when I finally win her over and make her forget all her other attachments! Her mind and heart will be ruled by one man alone—me! Take me to the garden. I need a beautiful place to sit and think about love.

They exit.

### Act1, Scene 2

**VIOLA**, a **CAPTAIN**, and sailors enter.

**VIOLA**

What country is this, friends?

**CAPTAIN**

This is Illyria, lady.

**VIOLA**

And what am I supposed to do in Illyria? My brother is in heaven. Or maybe there's a chance he didn't drown.—What do you think, sailors?

**CAPTAIN**

It was a total fluke that you yourself were saved.

**VIOLA**

Oh, my poor brother! But maybe by some fluke he was saved too.

**CAPTAIN**

It's possible, ma'am. Don't give up yet. When our ship was wrecked and you and a few other survivors were clinging onto our lifeboat, I saw your brother tie himself to a big mast floating in the sea. He was acting resourcefully and courageously in a dangerous situation. For as long as I could see him, he stayed afloat on the waves like Arion on the dolphin's back.

**VIOLA**

*(giving him money)* Thank you for saying that—here's some money to express my gratitude. Since I survived, it's easier for me to imagine he survived too, and what you say gives me a reason to hope for the best. Do you know this area we're in?

**CAPTAIN**

Yes, ma'am, I know it well. I was born and raised less than three hours from here.

**VIOLA**

Who's the ruler here?

**CAPTAIN**

A duke who is noble in name and character.

**VIOLA**

What's his name?

**CAPTAIN**

Orsino.

**VIOLA**

Orsino. I've heard my father mention him. When I first heard about him, he was still a bachelor.

**CAPTAIN**

He's still a bachelor, or at least he was a month ago, when I left. But there was a rumor—you know, people always gossip about royalty—that he was in love with the beautiful Olivia.

**VIOLA**

Who's she?

**CAPTAIN**

A virtuous young woman, the daughter of a count who died last year. Her brother had custody of her for a while, but then he died too. They say she's totally sworn off men now, in memory of her brother.

**VIOLA**

I wish I could work for that lady! It'd be a good way to hide from the world until the time was right to identify myself.

**CAPTAIN**

That would be hard to do. She won't allow anyone in to see her, not even the duke's messengers.

**VIOLA**

You seem to be a good person, captain, and although people who look beautiful are often corrupt inside, I believe that you have a beautiful mind to go with your good looks and manners.

Please—and I'll pay you plenty for this—help me conceal my identity, and find me the right disguise so I can look the way I want. I want to be this Duke's servant. You'll introduce me to him as a eunuch. You won't be wasting your time, because I really can sing and talk to him about many different kinds of music, so he'll be happy to have me in his service. Only time will tell what will happen after that—just please keep quiet about what I'm trying to do.

**CAPTAIN**

I won't say a word. You can be a eunuch, but I'll be mute. I swear on my life I won't tell your secret.

**VIOLA**

Thank you. Show me the way.  
They exit.

**Act 1, Scene 3**

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **MARIA** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What's wrong with my niece? Why is she reacting so strangely to her brother's death? Grief is bad for people's health.

**MARIA**

For God's sake, Sir Toby, you've got to come home earlier at night. My lady Olivia, your niece, disapproves of your late-night partying.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Well, she can get used to it.

**MARIA**

Yes, but you need to keep yourself within the limits of order and decency.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Keep myself? The only thing I'm keeping myself in is the clothes I'm wearing. They're good enough to drink in, and so are these boots. If they aren't, they can go hang themselves by their own laces!

**MARIA**

You're going to destroy yourself with all this drinking. Lady Olivia said so yesterday. She also mentioned some stupid knight you brought in one night as a possible husband for her.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

**MARIA**

Yes, that's the one.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He's as tall as a man in Illyria.

**MARIA**

What does his height have to do with anything?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, he has an income of three thousand ducats a year.

**MARIA**

I bet he'll spend his whole inheritance in a year. He's a fool and a spendthrift.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You shouldn't talk about him like that! He plays the violin and speaks three or four languages word for word without a dictionary. He has all of nature's best gifts.

**MARIA**

Right—he's a natural-born idiot. Besides being a fool, he's argumentative. If he didn't have the coward's gift for backing down from a fight, they say he'd be dead by now.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Anyone who says that is a lying piece of garbage. Who said that?

**MARIA**

The same people who say he gets drunk with you every night.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

We only drink toasts to my niece. I'll drink to her as long as there's a hole in my throat and booze in Illyria. Anyone who refuses to drink to my niece until his brain spins around like a merry-go-round is scum. But speak of the devil, here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

**SIR ANDREW** enters.

**SIR ANDREW**

Sir Toby Belch! How are you, Sir Toby Belch?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Sweet Sir Andrew!

**SIR ANDREW**

*(to MARIA)* And hello to you, my little wench.

**MARIA**

Hello, sir.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Chat her up, Sir Andrew. Chat her up.

**SIR ANDREW**

What?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

This is my niece's maid.

**SIR ANDREW**

My dear Miss Chat-her-up, I look forward to getting to know you better.

**MARIA**

My name is Mary, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Miss Mary Chat-her-up—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No, you've got it wrong. When I said "chat her up," I wasn't saying her name. I was telling you to go after her, woo her, confront her.

**SIR ANDREW**

Good heavens, I'd never do that with people watching. Is that really what you meant?

**MARIA**

Goodbye, gentlemen. *(she starts to exit)*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

She's leaving. If you let her go this easily, Sir Andrew, you don't deserve to ever use your sword again.

**SIR ANDREW**

If you leave like this, my dear, I won't ever use my sword again. I'm not just talking nonsense to you, I mean everything I say. Do you think you've got a couple of fools on your hands here?

**MARIA**

I'm not holding your hand, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

But you will. Here's my hand. *(he offers her his hand)*

**MARIA**

*(taking his hand)* A girl's got a right to her opinions. Take your hand to a bar and put a drink in it.

**SIR ANDREW**

Why, sweetheart? Is there a hidden meaning in this?

**MARIA**

You're not holding a glass. Your hand is dry, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Well, I hope so. I'm not such an idiot that I can't keep my hands dry. But I don't get it—what's the joke?

**MARIA**

Just a bit of my dry humor, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Are you always so funny?

**MARIA**

Yes, I've got a handful of jokes. But oops, when I let go of your hand, I let go of the biggest joke of all.

**MARIA** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Sir, you need a drink. When has anyone ever put you down like that.

**SIR ANDREW**

Never. I've only been that far down when I've drunk myself under the table. Sometimes I think I'm no smarter than average. I eat a lot of red meat, and maybe that makes me stupid.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Absolutely.

**SIR ANDREW**

If I really believed that, I'd give up red meat totally. By the way, I'm going home tomorrow, Sir Toby.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Pourquoi, my friend?

**SIR ANDREW**

What does "*pourquoi*" mean? Does it mean I will or I won't? Oh, I wish I'd spent as much time learning languages as I spent on fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting! If only I'd taken school more seriously!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You'd have a great hairstyle if you had.

**SIR ANDREW**

Why, would that have fixed my hair?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Oh, no question—it won't style itself.

**SIR ANDREW**

But my hair looks good anyway, doesn't it?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

It looks great. It hangs like an old worn-out mop. Some woman should give you syphilis so you go bald.

**SIR ANDREW**

Listen, I'm going home tomorrow, Sir Toby. Your niece is refusing to see anyone, and even if she saw me, ten to one she'd want nothing to do with me. That duke who lives nearby is courting her.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

She's not interested in the duke. She doesn't want to marry anyone of higher social rank than her, or anyone richer, older, or smarter. I've heard her say that. So cheer up, there's still hope for you, man.

**SIR ANDREW**

All right, I'll stay another month. Ah, I'm an odd kind of guy. Sometimes all I want to do is see plays and go out dancing.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Are you good at those kinds of things?

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, as good as any man in Illyria, except for the ones who are better at it than I am. I'm not as good as someone who's been dancing for years.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

How good are you at those fast dances?

**SIR ANDREW**

Believe me, I can cut a caper.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And I can cut some meat to go with your capers.

**SIR ANDREW**

And I can do that fancy backward step as well as any man in Illyria.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why do you hide these things? Why do you keep these talents behind a curtain? Are they likely to get dusty? Why don't you go off to church dancing one way, and come home dancing another way? If I had your talents, I'd be dancing a jig every time I walked down the street. I wouldn't even pee without dancing a waltz. What are you thinking? Is this the kind of world where we hide our accomplishments? You're a born dancer. Look how shapely your legs are.

**SIR ANDREW**

That's true. They're strong, and they look pretty good in brown tights. Should we throw a little dance party?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why not? Weren't we both born under Taurus?

**SIR ANDREW**

Taurus! That governs the torso and heart, doesn't it?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No, the legs and thighs. Let me see you dance. (SIR ANDREW *dances*) Ha, higher! Ha, ha, excellent!

They exit.

#### **Act 1, Scene 4**

**VALENTINE** enters with **VIOLA**, who is dressed as a young man named Cesario.

**VALENTINE**

If the Duke keeps treating you so well, Cesario, you'll go far. He's only known you for three days, but he's already treating you like a close friend.

**VIOLA**

When you wonder whether he'll keep treating me well, it makes me think his mood might change—or else I'll mess up somehow. Do his feelings toward people change suddenly?

**VALENTINE**

No, not at all.

**VIOLA**

Thanks for telling me. Here comes the Duke now.

**ORSINO, CURIO, and attendants enter.**

**ORSINO**

Has anyone seen Cesario?

**VIOLA**

I'm right here, my lord, at your service.

**ORSINO**

*(to VIOLA and attendants)* We'll need some privacy for a little while. *(to VIOLA)* Cesario, I want a word with you. You know everything about me. I've told you all the secrets of my soul. So please go to her house; if they don't let you in, plant yourself outside her door and tell them you won't leave until they let you see her.

**VIOLA**

But my lord, I'm sure that if she's as depressed as people say, she'll never let me in.

**ORSINO**

Be loud and obnoxious. Do whatever it takes, just get the job done.

**VIOLA**

Well, all right, let's say hypothetically that I do get a chance to speak with her, my lord. What do I do then?

**ORSINO**

Tell her how passionately I love her. Overwhelm her with examples of how faithful I am. The best thing would be to act out my feelings for her. She'll pay more attention to a young guy like you than to an older, more serious man.

**VIOLA**

I don't think so, my lord.

**ORSINO**

My boy, it's true. Anyone who says you're a man must not notice how young you are. Your lips are as smooth and red as the goddess Diana's. Your soft voice is like a young girl's, high and clear, and the rest of you is pretty feminine too. I know you're the right person for this job. *(to CURIO and attendants)* Four or five of you go along with him, or you can all go if you like. I'm most comfortable when I'm alone. *(to VIOLA)* If you succeed at this assignment, I'll reward you well. My whole fortune will be yours.

**VIOLA**

I'll do my best to make this lady love you.—*(to herself)* But what a tough task!—I have to go matchmaking for the man I want to marry myself!

They exit.



**Act 1, Scene 5**

**MARIA** and the **FOOL** enter.

**MARIA**

No. Either tell me where you've been, or I won't make any excuses for you to Lady Olivia. Lady Olivia will have you executed for not showing up.

**FOOL**

So let her execute me. Anyone who's executed doesn't have to be afraid of anything he sees.

**MARIA**

How do you know?

**FOOL**

Well, he'll be dead, so he won't see anything.

**MARIA**

That's a lame answer. By the way, I know where you get all your brave talk about not being afraid of anything.

**FOOL**

Where, good Miss Mary?

**MARIA**

From soldiers. But you'll never see the front lines. It's easy for you to talk about bravery, working as a fool in this palace.

**FOOL**

Well, we all have our special gifts. Some people are born wise; those of us who were meant to be fools should do what they do best.

**MARIA**

But still, she's going to kill you for being gone so long. Or at least fire you. And wouldn't that be as bad for you as being killed?

**FOOL**

Sometimes getting killed is a good way to avoid getting married. And as for being fired, it's summer, so it won't be that bad to be homeless.

**MARIA**

You've made up your mind, then?

**FOOL**

No, but I've made up my mind on two points.

**MARIA**

Ah yes, the two points where your suspenders are attached to your buttons. If one breaks, the other will hold, but if both points break, your pants will fall down.

**FOOL**

Clever, very clever. Well, go along now. You'd be the funniest person in Illyria... if Sir Toby ever stopped drinking.

**MARIA**

Shut up, you troublemaker, no more of that. Here comes my lady. If you know what's good for you, you'll think up some good excuse for being away so long.

**MARIA** exits.

**FOOL**

(to himself) Please, let me think of something funny to say now! Smart people who think they're witty often turn out to be fools, but I know I'm not witty, so I might pass for smart. What did that philosopher Quinapalus say? Ah yes, "A witty fool's better than a foolish wit."

**OLIVIA** enters with **MALVOLIO** and attendants.

Greetings to you, madam!

**OLIVIA**

Get that fool out of here.

**FOOL**

Didn't you hear her, guys? Get the lady out of here.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, go away, you're a boring fool. I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore.

Besides, you've gotten unreliable.

**FOOL**

Madam, those are two character flaws that a little booze and some common sense can fix. If you hand a drink to a sober fool, he won't be thirsty anymore. If you tell a bad man to mend his wicked ways, and he does, he won't be bad anymore. If he cannot, let the tailor mend him. Anything that's mended is only patched up. A good person who does something wrong is only patched up with sin. And a sinner who does something good is only patched up with goodness. If this logic works, that's great. If not, what can you do about it? Since the only real betrayed husband in the world is the one deserted by Lady Luck—because we're all married to her—beauty is a flower. The lady gave orders to take away the fool, so I'm telling you again, take her away.

**OLIVIA**

I told them to take *you* away.

**FOOL**

Oh, what a big mistake! Madam, you can't judge a book by its cover. I mean, I may look like a fool, but my mind's sharp. Please let me prove you're a fool.

**OLIVIA**

Can you do that?

**FOOL**

Easily, madam.

**OLIVIA**

Then go ahead and prove it.

**FOOL**

I'll have to ask you some questions, madam. Please answer, my good little student.

**OLIVIA**

I'm listening to you only because I've got nothing better to do.

**FOOL**

My dear madam, why are you in mourning?

**OLIVIA**

My dear fool, because my brother died.

**FOOL**

I think his soul's in hell, my lady.

**OLIVIA**

I know his soul's in heaven, fool.

**FOOL**

Then you're a fool for being sad that your brother's soul is in heaven. Take away this fool, gentlemen.

**OLIVIA**

What do you think of this fool, Malvolio? Isn't he getting funnier?

**MALVOLIO**

Yes, and he'll keep getting funnier till he dies. Old age always makes people act funny—even wise people, but fools more than anybody.

**FOOL**

I hope you go senile soon, sir, so you can become a more foolish fool! Sir Toby would bet a fortune that I'm not smart, but he wouldn't bet two cents that you're not a fool.

**OLIVIA**

What do you say to that, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

I'm surprised you enjoy the company of this stupid troublemaker. The other day I saw him defeated in a battle of wits by an ordinary jester with no more brains than a rock. Look at him, he's at a loss for words already. Unless he's got somebody laughing at him, he can't think of anything to say. I swear, anyone smart who laughs at these courts jesters is nothing but a jester's apprentice.

**OLIVIA**

Malvolio, your vanity is damaging your good taste. If you were generous, innocent, and good-natured, you wouldn't get so upset by what the fool says. You'd think of his wisecracks as harmless little firecrackers, not hurtful bullets. A court jester isn't really criticizing people, even if he does nothing but make fun of them all day long. And a wise person doesn't make fun of people, even if all he does is criticize them.

**FOOL**

You speak so highly of fools! I hope the god of deception rewards you by making you a wonderful liar.

**MARIA** enters.

**MARIA**

Madam, there's a young gentleman at the gate who really wants to speak to you.

**OLIVIA**

Was he sent by Count Orsino?

**MARIA**

I don't know, madam. He's a good-looking young man, and there are a lot of people with him.

**OLIVIA**

Who's talking to him now?

**MARIA**

Sir Toby, madam, you're relative.

**OLIVIA**

Send Toby away, please. He talks nothing but nonsense.

**MARIA** exits.

Go out and talk to this visitor, Malvolio. If he's got a message from the count, tell him I'm sick, or not home. Tell him anything you want, as long as you make him go away.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

Now you see how your fooling gets boring, and people don't like it.

**FOOL**

Madam, you've spoken so highly of us fools, you'd think your oldest son was going into that line of work. I hope God crams his skull full of brains, because here comes one of your relatives who's pretty weak in the head.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** enters.

**OLIVIA**

I swear, he's half drunk already. Who's that at the gate, uncle?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A gentleman.

**OLIVIA**

A gentleman? What gentleman?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

There's some gentleman out there.—(*belching*) Damn these pickled herring! They upset my stomach. How's it going, fool?

**FOOL**

Good Sir Toby!

**OLIVIA**

Uncle, uncle, how are you already so brain-dead so early in the day?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Brain-dead! Nonsense. I defy brain-death! I told you, someone's at the gate.

**OLIVIA**

Yes, but who is he?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Let him be the devil if he wants to, I don't care. God will protect me. What do I care who it is?

**SIR TOBY BELCH** exits.

**OLIVIA**

Tell me what a drunk is like, fool.

**FOOL**

He's a fool, a madman, and a drowned man. The first drink makes him a fool, the second makes him crazy, and the third drowns him.

**OLIVIA**

Go find the coroner and tell him to perform an inquest on my uncle, because he's in the third degree of drunkenness—he's drowned. Go take care of him.

**FOOL**

He's still only in the crazy phase. The fool will go take care of the madman.

The **FOOL** exits.

**MALVOLIO** enters.

**MALVOLIO**

Madam, that young man out there says he's got to speak to you. I told him you were sick. He claimed he knew that, and that's why he's come to speak with you. I told him you were asleep. He claimed to know that already too, and said that's the reason he's come to speak with you. What can I say to him, lady? He's got an answer for everything.

**OLIVIA**

Tell him he's not going to speak with me.

**MALVOLIO**

I told him that. He says he'll stand at your door like a signpost or a bench until he speaks with you.

**OLIVIA**

What kind of man is he?

**MALVOLIO**

Just a man, like any other.

**OLIVIA**

But what's he like?

**MALVOLIO**

He's very rude. He insists he'll speak with you whether you want him to or not.

**OLIVIA**

What does he look like? How old is he?

**MALVOLIO**

Not old enough to be a man, but not young enough to be a boy. He's like a bud before it becomes a pea pod, or like a little green apple before it gets big and ripe. He's somewhere between boy and man. He's very handsome and speaks well, but he's very young. He looks like he just recently stopped breastfeeding.

**OLIVIA**

Show him in. Call in my maid.

**MALVOLIO**

Maria, our lady wants you.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**MARIA** enters.

**OLIVIA**

Give me my veil. Come, put it over my face. (*OLIVIA puts on her veil*) We're going to hear Orsino's pleas again.

**VIOLA** enters, dressed as **CESARIO**, with attendants.

**VIOLA**

Which one of you is the lady of the house?

**OLIVIA**

You can speak to me. I represent her. What do you want?

**VIOLA**

What stunning, exquisite, and unmatched beauty—but please, tell me if you're the lady of the house, because I've never seen her. I'd hate to waste my speech on the wrong person, because it's very well written and I spent a lot of time and energy memorizing it. Beautiful ladies, please don't treat me badly. I'm very sensitive, and even the smallest bit of rudeness hurts my feelings.

**OLIVIA**

Where do you come from, sir?

**VIOLA**

I'm sorry, but I memorized what I'm supposed to say here today, and that question isn't part of the speech I learned. Please, my lady, just confirm that you're the lady of the house so I can get on with my speech.

**OLIVIA**

Are you an actor?

**VIOLA**

No, madam. But I swear I'm not the person I'm playing. Are you the lady of the house?

**OLIVIA**

I am, unless I somehow stole this role.

**VIOLA**

If you're the lady of the house, then it's true you're stealing your role, because what's yours to give away is not yours to keep for yourself. But that's not part of what I'm supposed to say. I'll go on with my speech praising you, and then I'll get to the point.

**OLIVIA**

Get to the point now. I'll let you get away with skipping the praise.

**VIOLA**

That's too bad, because I spent a long time memorizing it, and it's poetic.

**OLIVIA**

That means it's more likely to be fake. Please, keep it to yourself. I heard you were rude when you were standing outside my gate, and that's the only reason I let you in. I was curious. But I don't necessarily want to listen to you. If you're just insane, then get out of here. If you're in your right mind, get to the point. I've got no patience for lunacy at the moment, and I don't want to waste my time on ridiculous conversations.

**MARIA**

Ready to set sail, sir? The door's right here.

**VIOLA**

No, this boat's docking here a bit longer, little sailor.—My lady, would you mind asking your giant here to back off a bit?

**OLIVIA**

Tell me what you want.

**VIOLA**

I have a message to deliver.

**OLIVIA**

It must be a message about something horrible, since you deliver it so rudely. Tell me what it's about.

**VIOLA**

It's about you. I'm not bringing any declarations of war or demands for cash. I'm coming in peace.

**OLIVIA**

But you began so rudely. Who are you? What do you want?

**VIOLA**

If I seemed rude, it's because of how badly I was treated when I got here. Who I am and what I want are a secret. You're the only one I can share the secret with. It's sacred, just for you. It's not for anyone else to hear.

**OLIVIA**

Everyone, please leave us alone for a moment. I've got a "sacred" secret to hear.

**MARIA** and attendants exit.

Now, sir, what's this holy secret you wanted to tell me?

**VIOLA**

Most sweet lady—

**OLIVIA**

Oh, “sweet”! It sounds like a nice and gentle kind of faith. Where’s the passage of holy scripture that you’re basing your sermon on?

**VIOLA**

In Orsino’s heart.

**OLIVIA**

In his heart? In what chapter and verse of his heart?

**VIOLA**

The table of contents says it’s in the first chapter of his heart.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, I’ve read that. That’s not holy, it’s heresy. Do you have anything else to say?

**VIOLA**

Madam, please let me see your face.

**OLIVIA**

Has your lord given you any orders to negotiate with my face? I don’t think so. You’re overstepping your bounds now. But I’ll open the curtain and let you see the picture. Look, sir, this is a portrait of me as I am at this particular moment. It’s pretty well done, isn’t it?

**OLIVIA** takes off her veil.

**VIOLA**

It was done excellently, if it’s all-natural, the way God made it.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, it’s all-natural, sir. Wind and rain can’t wash it off.

**VIOLA**

That’s true beauty. Mother Nature herself painted your skin so white and your lips so red. My lady, you’d be the cruelest woman alive if you let your beauty die with you, with no children to inherit your good looks for future generations to enjoy.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, I’d never be that cruel. I’ll definitely do as you say and leave my beauty for the rest of the world to enjoy. I’ll write out a detailed inventory of my beauty and label every part. For example—*item*: two lips, ordinary red. *Item*: two gray eyes, with lids on them. *Item*: one neck, one chin, and so on. Anyway, were you sent here just to tell me I’m beautiful?

**VIOLA**

I see what you’re like. You’re proud. But you’d still be gorgeous even if you were as proud as the devil. My lord loves you. You should return a love as deep as his, even if you’re the most beautiful woman in the world.

**OLIVIA**

How does he love me?

**VIOLA**

He adores you. He cries and groans and sighs.

**OLIVIA**

Your lord knows what I think. I can’t love him. I’m sure he’s a very nice man. I know he’s noble, rich, young, and with a fine reputation. People say he’s generous, well educated, and brave, and he’s very attractive.

But I just can’t love him. He should have resigned himself to that a long time ago.

**VIOLA**

If I loved you as passionately as my master does, and suffered like he does, your rejection would make no sense to me. I wouldn't understand it.

**OLIVIA**

What would you do about it?

**VIOLA**

I'd build myself a sad little cabin near your house, where my soul's imprisoned. From that cabin I'd call out to my soul. I'd write sad songs about unrequited love and sing them loudly in the middle of the night. I'd shout your name to the hills and make the air echo with your name, "Olivia!" Oh, you wouldn't be able to go anywhere without feeling sorry for me.

**OLIVIA**

Not bad; you might accomplish something. Who are your parents?

**VIOLA**

I was born to a higher position than I've got now. But I'm still fairly high-ranking. I'm a gentleman.

**OLIVIA**

Go back to your lord. I can't love him. Tell him not to send any more messengers—unless you feel like coming back to tell me how he took the bad news. Goodbye. Thanks for your trouble. Here's some money for you.

**OLIVIA** offers **VIOLA** money

**VIOLA**

I'm not a paid messenger, my lady. Keep your money. It's my master who's not getting the reward he deserves, not me. I hope you fall in love with a man whose heart is hard as a rock and who treats your love like a big joke, just like you've done. Goodbye, you beautiful, cruel woman.

**VIOLA** exits.

**OLIVIA**

"Who are your parents?" "I was born to a higher position than I've got now. But I'm still fairly high-ranking. I'm a gentleman." Yes, I'm sure you are. Your way of talking, your face, your body, your behavior, and your sensitive soul all prove you're a gentleman. Ah, no. Calm down, calm down. If only his lord were more like him. How strange I'm feeling! Can someone fall in love this quickly? I can feel this young man's perfection creeping in through my eyes like some kind of disease, slowly and invisibly. Oh, well.—Malvolio! Come here!

**MALVOLIO** enters.

**MALVOLIO**

At your service, madam.

**OLIVIA**

Run after that obnoxious messenger, the duke's servant. He insisted on leaving this ring with me whether I wanted it or not. Tell him I want nothing to do with it. (*she hands him a ring*) Ask him not to encourage Orsino or to get his hopes up. I'm not for him. If that young man comes here again tomorrow, I'll tell him why. Hurry, Malvolio.

**MALVOLIO**

Madam, I will.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**OLIVIA**



I don't know what I'm doing. I'm afraid I'm not using my head, and I'm falling for his good looks. Fate, do your work. We human beings don't control our own destinies. What is fated to happen must happen. So let it happen!

**OLIVIA** exits.

### **Act 2, Scene 1**

**ANTONIO** and **SEBASTIAN** enter.

**ANTONIO**

You won't stay any longer? And you don't want me to come with you?

**SEBASTIAN**

No, I'd rather you stayed here. My luck is pretty bad right now, and it might rub off on you. So just let me say goodbye and face the bad stuff alone—otherwise I wouldn't be thanking you very well for all you've done for me.

**ANTONIO**

At least tell me where you're going.

**SEBASTIAN**

Honestly, I can't. I'm just wandering, with no particular destination. But I know you'd never force me to tell you things I don't want to, so I should be polite and tell you what I can. My name's Sebastian, though I've been calling myself Roderigo. My father was Sebastian of Messaline. I know you've heard of him. He's dead now. He left behind myself and my twin sister, who was born in the same hour as me. If God had been willing, I wish we had died in the same hour too! But you kept that from happening. An hour before you pulled me out of the breaking waves, my sister drowned.

**ANTONIO**

How tragic!

**SEBASTIAN**

Although many people said she looked like me, she was considered beautiful. And though I can't believe everything people said about her beauty, I'll be so bold as to say she had a beautiful mind. Even those who were jealous of her would have to admit that. She's been drowned in salty sea water, and now my salty tears are about to drown her memory all over again.

**ANTONIO**

I'm sorry I wasn't a better host for you, sir.

**SEBASTIAN**

Oh, Antonio, I'm sorry I caused you so much trouble.

**ANTONIO**

I care about you a lot. Please let me be your servant so I can be with you. You'll be killing me if you don't.

**SEBASTIAN**

If you don't want to break my heart, then say goodbye to me right now. I like you very much.

I'm really about to cry, just like my mother would do. I'm going to Count Orsino's court.

Goodbye.

**SEBASTIAN** exits.

**ANTONIO**

I wish you all the best. If I didn't have so many enemies in Orsino's court, I'd go join you there. But who cares. I'm so crazy about you that danger doesn't bother me. I'll go anyway.

**ANTONIO** exits.

**Act 2, Scene 2**

**VIOLA** enters with **MALVOLIO** following.

**MALVOLIO**

Excuse me, weren't you with Countess Olivia just now?

**VIOLA**

Yes, sir. I've only made it this far since I left her place, walking at a moderate pace.

**MALVOLIO**

She's sending this ring back to you, sir. You should've saved me some trouble and taken it away yourself. She wants you to make it very clear to your lord that she wants nothing to do with him, and that you should never come again on his behalf, unless you want to come back to tell her how he reacted to the bad news. Here, take the ring.

**VIOLA**

She took that ring from me. I won't take it back.

**MALVOLIO**

You threw it at her rudely, and she wants you to take it back. (*he throws down the ring*) If it's worth bending over to pick up, there it is on the ground, where you can see it. If not, whoever finds it can have it.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**VIOLA**

I didn't give her any ring. What's she trying to say? I hope she doesn't have a crush on me! It's true she looked at me a lot, in fact, she looked at me so much that she seemed distracted, and couldn't really finish her sentences very well. Oh, I really think she loves me! She sent this rude messenger to tell me to come back, instead of coming herself, which would be indiscreet. She doesn't want Orsino's ring! Orsino never sent her a ring. I'm the man she wants. If that's true, which it is, she might as well be in love with a dream, the poor lady. Now I understand why it's bad to wear disguises. Disguises help the devil do his work. It's so easy for a good-looking but deceitful man to make women fall in love with him. It's not our fault—we women are weak. We can't help what we're made of. Ah, how will this all turn out? My lord loves her, and, poor me, I love him just as much. And she's deluded enough to be in love with me. What can possibly fix this situation? I'm pretending to be a man, so my love for the Duke is hopeless. And since I'm a woman—too bad I'm a woman—Olivia's love for me is hopeless as well! Oh, only time can sort out this mess. I can't figure it out by myself!

**VIOLA** exits.

**Act 2, Scene 3**

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **SIR ANDREW** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, Sir Andrew. If we're still awake after midnight, then we're up early in the morning. And the doctors say it's healthy to get up early—

**SIR ANDREW**

I don't know what the doctors say. All I know is that staying up late is staying up late.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A false conclusion. I hate your logic as much as I hate an empty drinking cup. Staying up after midnight means that you go to bed after midnight, in the wee hours of the morning, which is early. So it's like going to bed early. Isn't everybody made up of the four elements—earth, water, fire, and air?

**SIR ANDREW**

That's what they say, but I think life consists of food and booze.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You're a smart guy. So we should eat and drink. Maria! Bring us some wine!

The **FOOL** enters.

**SIR ANDREW**

Look, here comes the fool.

**FOOL**

Hello, my friends! What a pretty picture, three fools all together.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Hello, you idiot. Sing us a song.

**SIR ANDREW**

I swear, this fool has an excellent singing voice. I'd give forty shillings to have his nice legs and his beautiful voice. (*to the FOOL*) Fool, you were very funny last night talking that astrological nonsense about Picrogromitus and the Vapians passing the equinox of Queubus. Very amusing. I sent you some money to spend on your girlfriend. Did you get it?

**FOOL**

I gave your little present to my girlfriend because you can't get a grip on Malvolio's nose to whip your horse with it. My girlfriend has beautiful white hands, and great warriors aren't mom-and-pop diners, you know.

**SIR ANDREW**

Ha, ha! I love it when you talk nonsense—that's what fools should do. Come on now, sing for us.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*giving the FOOL money*) Yes, come on. Here's sixpence for you. Let's hear a song.

**SIR ANDREW**

(*giving the FOOL money*) Here's something from me too. If one knight gives—

**FOOL**

Would you rather hear a love song or a song about the good life?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A love song, a love song.

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, yes. I'm not interested in being good.

**FOOL**

(*he sings*)

*Oh my lover, where are you roaming? Stay and listen! Your true love's coming, the one who can sing both high and low: Don't roam any further, pretty darling. Your journey ends when you meet a lover, as every wise man's son knows.*

**SIR ANDREW**

That was excellent, really excellent.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Good, very good.

**FOOL**

*(singing)*

*What is love? It isn't in the future. When you're having fun now, you're laughing right now. The future's unsure, and there's no reason to waste time. Come kiss me while you're twenty. You won't be young forever.*

**SIR ANDREW**

A beautiful voice, I swear.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

His breath stinks.

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, it stinks very sweetly.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

If we could listen to him with our noses, we would definitely say he stinks very sweetly. So what do you say, should we sing loud enough to shake the heavens? Should we sing a round to wake up the night owl? Should we do that?

**SIR ANDREW**

Let's go for it. I'm a very good singer, and can sing rounds like a dog.

**FOOL**

Then you'll be good at catchy tunes. Dogs like to play catch.

**SIR ANDREW**

Absolutely. Let's dance to "You Jerk."

**FOOL**

You mean, "Shut up, you jerk"? That's the song where the singers call each other jerks, right? So I'll be forced to call you a jerk, Sir Andrew.

**SIR ANDREW**

It won't be the first time someone was forced to call me that. You start, Fool. It starts, "Shut up."

**FOOL**

I'll never be able to start if I shut up.

**SIR ANDREW**

That's true. But come on, start.

They sing.

**MARIA** enters.

**MARIA**

You're making a terrible racket out here! Lady Olivia told her servant Malvolio to kick you out of the house. I swear it's true.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Lady Olivia can go to China for all I care. We're very smart guys, and Malvolio's Little Bo Peep. *(he sings)* *We're just having some fun.*—Aren't I her relative, after all? Aren't we related? Fiddle-dee-dee, "Lady!" *(singing)* *There lived a man in Babylon, lady, lady!*

**FOOL**

Gosh, the knight's very good at acting like a fool.

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, he's good at it when he's in the mood, and so am I. He's practiced more, but it comes more naturally to me.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(he sings) On the twelfth day of December—*

**MARIA**

For God's sake, shut up!

**MALVOLIO** enters.

**MALVOLIO**

Are you all crazy? What's wrong with you? Are you making all this noise at this time of night because you have no manners, or because you're just stupid? Are you trying to turn my mistress's house into a noisy bar? Is that why you're squealing out these ridiculous vulgar songs without lowering your voices at all? Don't you have any respect for anything?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

We respected the beat of the song, sir. So shut up!

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Toby, I've got to be frank with you. My lady told me to tell you that while she lets you stay at her house because you're a relative, she doesn't approve of your behavior. If you can shape up, you're welcome to stay in the house. If you can't, and would prefer to leave, she's very willing to say goodbye to you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(he sings) Goodnight, sweetheart, I'm going to leave you now.*

**MARIA**

No, good Sir Toby.

**FOOL**

*(singing) You can tell from his eyes that his life is almost over.*

**MALVOLIO**

Is this how it's going to be?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(singing) But I will never die.*

**FOOL**

*(singing) Sir Toby, that's a lie.*

**MALVOLIO**

This behavior really makes you look great.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(singing) Should I tell him to go?*

**FOOL**

*(singing) What if you do?*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(singing) Should I tell him to go, and be harsh with him?*

**FOOL**

*(singing) Oh no, no, no, no, don't you dare.*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

That's out of tune, sir. You lie. *(to MALVOLIO)* You're nothing more than a servant here. Do you think that just because you're a goody two shoes, no one else can enjoy himself?

**FOOL**

They certainly will. They'll have double helpings, too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You're right. (*to MALVOLIO*) Go polish your steward's chain, sir. Maria, bring us some wine!

**MALVOLIO**

Miss Mary, if you cared what Lady Olivia thinks about you at all, you wouldn't contribute to this rude behavior. I assure you, she'll find out about this.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**MARIA**

Go and wiggle your ears!

**SIR ANDREW**

There's nothing I'd love more than to make a fool out of that guy somehow. I could challenge him to a duel and then not show up. That would do the trick.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Do that. I'll write a letter challenging him to a duel on your behalf. Or I'll deliver your insults to his face.

**MARIA**

Dear Sir Toby, don't do anything rash tonight. Ever since the Duke's messenger visited Olivia, she's been upset. As for Monsieur Malvolio, let me take care of him. I'll make a big fool out of him, just trust me. I'll make him famous for his stupidity. Everyone will laugh at him. I know I can do it.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Tell us something about him. Come on, tell us something.

**MARIA**

Well, sometimes he acts like a goody two shoes.

**SIR ANDREW**

Oh, I'll beat him up for that!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You're going to beat him up for being good? And what's your brilliant reason for that, please?

**SIR ANDREW**

I don't have any "brilliant" reason for it, but I have a good enough reason.

**MARIA**

He isn't really that pure and good. He's just a conceited flatterer. He's a pretentious guy who aspires to speak and act like nobility. He's proud, and he thinks he's so stuffed full of wonderful qualities that everyone loves him. That's the weakness I'll use to get revenge on him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What are you going to do?

**MARIA**

I'll drop some mysterious love letters in his path. He'll think they're addressed to him, because they'll describe the color of his beard, the shape of his legs, the way he walks, and the expression on his face. I can make my handwriting look just like Lady Olivia's: she and I can't tell the difference between each other's handwriting.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Excellent! Sounds like you've got a good trick in mind.

**SIR ANDREW**

I like it too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He'll think these letters are from Olivia and that she's in love with him.

**MARIA**

Yes, that's the idea.

**SIR ANDREW**

He's going to look like a total idiot.

**MARIA**

Absolutely, you idiot.

**SIR ANDREW**

This is going to be great!

**MARIA**

It's going to be fun, I promise. I know my medicine will work on him. I'll have you two hide—and the fool too—right where he'll find the letter. Watch his reaction. Meanwhile, let's go to bed and dream about this. Good night.

**MARIA** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Good night, you amazing woman, you.

**SIR ANDREW**

She's a fine woman, all right.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

She's a good little woman, and she adores me. What about it?

**SIR ANDREW**

Someone adored me once, too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Let's go to bed, knight. Tomorrow you need to get more money sent to you.

**SIR ANDREW**

If I can't persuade your niece to marry me, I'm going to be in some serious financial trouble.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Get your hands on some money and everything will be all right. I know you'll win over Olivia in the end.

**SIR ANDREW**

I know I will too, if it's the last thing I do.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, I'll go warm up a nice glass of sherry for us. It's too late to go to bed now. Come on, my friend, come on.

They exit.

#### **Act 2, Scene 4**

**ORSINO, VIOLA, CURIO,** and others enter.

**ORSINO**

Play me some music. (*music plays*) Good morning, my friends.—Have them sing me that song again, Cesario, that old-fashioned song someone sang last night. It made me feel better and took my mind off my troubles much better than the silly songs they sing nowadays. Please, have them sing just one verse.

**CURIO**

Sir, the person who should sing that song isn't here.

**ORSINO**

Who was it?

**CURIO**

Feste, the jester, my lord. Olivia's father used to like him. He's somewhere else in the house.

**ORSINO**

Then go find him. Meanwhile, play the tune.

**CURIO** exits. Music plays.

(*to VIOLA*) Come here, boy. If you ever fall in love and feel the bittersweet pain it brings, think of me. Because the way I am now, moody and unable to focus on anything except the face of the woman I love, is exactly how all true lovers are. What do you think of this song?

**VIOLA**

It really makes you feel what a lover feels.

**ORSINO**

You're absolutely right. I'd bet my life that, as young as you are, you've fallen in love with someone. Haven't you, boy?

**VIOLA**

A little bit.

**ORSINO**

What kind of woman is she?

**VIOLA**

She's a lot like you.

**ORSINO**

She's not good enough for you, then. How old is she?

**VIOLA**

About as old as you are, my lord.

**ORSINO**

That's definitely too old. A woman should always pick an older man. That way she'll adjust herself to what her husband wants, and the husband will be happy and faithful to her. Because however much we like to brag, boy, the truth is that we men change our minds a lot more than women do, and our desires come and go a lot faster than theirs.

**VIOLA**

I think you're right, sir.

**ORSINO**

So find someone younger to love, or you won't be able to maintain your feelings. Women are like roses: the moment their beauty is in full bloom, it's about to decay.

**VIOLA**

That's true. It's too bad their beauty fades right when it reaches perfection!

**CURIO** and the **FOOL** enter.

**ORSINO**

My friend, sing us the song you sang last night.—Listen to it carefully, Cesario, it's a simple old song. Spinners and knitters used to sing it while they sewed, and maidens used to sing it over their weaving. It tells the simple truth about innocent love, as it was in the good old days.

**FOOL**

Are you ready, sir?

**ORSINO**

Yes. Please, sing.



Music plays.

**FOOL**

*(he sings)*

*Come on, let me die now  
And put my body in a dark coffin.  
I feel my breath leaving me.  
I've been killed by a beautiful girl.  
Prepare my shroud of white,  
Adorned with sprigs of yew-tree.  
I'm the most faithful person  
Who ever lived or died.  
Don't scatter sweet flowers  
On my black coffin.  
Don't let my friends  
See my poor corpse.  
I don't want to hear sad sighs,  
So bury me where no sad lovers  
can find my grave to weep over it!*

**ORSINO**

*(giving the FOOL money)* Here's some money for your trouble.

**FOOL**

No trouble, sir. I like singing.

**ORSINO**

Then I'll pay you for doing what you like.

**FOOL**

Well, in that case, all right. We all pay for what we like sooner or later.

**ORSINO**

You may leave.

**FOOL**

I'll pray for the god of sadness to protect you, sir. And I hope your tailor will make you an outfit out of fabric that changes color, because your mind is like an opal that changes colors constantly. Men as wonderfully changeable as you are should all go drifting on the sea, where they can do whatever comes their way, and go wherever the current takes them. Those are the men whose trips are always successful. Goodbye.

The **FOOL** exits.

**ORSINO**

All the rest of you can leave too.

**CURIO** and attendants retire.

Cesario, go visit that cruel Olivia one more time. Tell her my love is purer than anything else in the whole world, and has nothing to do with her property. The wealth she's inherited isn't what makes me value her. It's her rich, jewel-like beauty that attracts me.

**VIOLA**

But if she can't love you, sir?

**ORSINO**

I refuse to accept that.

**VIOLA**

But you have to. Just imagine some lady might exist who loves you as powerfully and agonizingly as you love Olivia. But you can't love her, and you tell her so. Shouldn't she just accept that?

**ORSINO**

No woman is strong enough to put up with the kind of intense passion I feel. No woman's heart is big enough to hold all my love. Women don't feel love like that—love is as shallow as appetite for them. It has nothing to do with their hearts, just their sense of taste. They eat too much and get indigestion and nausea. But my love's different. It's as all-consuming and insatiable as the sea, and it can swallow as much as the sea can. Don't compare a woman's love for a man with my love for Olivia.

**VIOLA**

Yes, but I know—

**ORSINO**

What do you know?

**VIOLA**

I know a lot about the love women can feel for men. Actually, their hearts are as sensitive and loyal as ours are. My father had a daughter who loved a man in the same way that I might love you, if I were a woman.

**ORSINO**

And what's her story?

**VIOLA**

There was no story, my lord. She never told him she loved him. She kept her love bottled up inside her until it destroyed her, ruining her beauty. She pined away. She just sat waiting patiently, sadly, smiling despite her sadness. Her complexion turned greenish from depression. Doesn't that sound like true love? We men might talk more and promise more, but in fact we talk more than we really feel. We might be great at making vows, but our love isn't sincere.

**ORSINO**

But did your sister die of love?

**VIOLA**

I am the only daughter in my father's family, and all the brothers too—but I'm not completely sure about that. Anyway, sir, should I go see the lady?

**ORSINO**

Yes, go quickly and give her this jewel. Tell her my love won't go away and won't be denied.

*(he hands her a jewel)*

They exit.

**Act 2, Scene 5**

**SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come along with us, Signor Fabian.

**FABIAN**

I'm coming, don't worry. If I miss this, let me be boiled alive.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Won't you be glad to see that rascal dog humiliated?

**FABIAN**

I'll be thrilled. You know, he got me in trouble with the lady of the house once when I arranged a bear-baiting here.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

We'll have another bear-baiting just to make him angry, and we'll mock him till he's black and blue. Won't we, Sir Andrew?

**SIR ANDREW**

If we don't, it'll be the biggest disappointment of our lives.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Here comes the little villain herself.

**MARIA** enters.

How are you, my golden girl?

**MARIA**

Hide behind the boxwood hedge, all three of you. Malvolio's coming down the path. He's been over there practicing how to act for the past half hour. Watch him carefully if you want to have some fun, guys. This letter's going to turn him into a starry-eyed idiot. Now hide, for God's sake!

They all hide.

Now, you lie there on the path. (*MARIA throws down a letter*) Here comes the fish that's going to gobble up our bait.

**MARIA** exits.

**MALVOLIO** enters.

**MALVOLIO**

It's all luck. Everything's luck. Maria once told me Olivia was fond of me. I've almost heard Olivia say that herself. She said if she were interested in someone, it would be someone who looked like me. Besides, she treats me more respectfully than the other servants. What's the obvious conclusion from that?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*whispering*) What an egomaniac!

**FABIAN**

(*whispering*) Shh! When he's alone with his thoughts, he's even more like a haughty peacock. Watch him strut!

**SIR ANDREW**

(*whispering*) I swear, I'd like to beat the jerk so hard!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*whispering*) Be quiet!

**MALVOLIO**

Just think, I could be Count Malvolio!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*whispering*) Ah, what a jerk!

**SIR ANDREW**

(*whispering*) Shoot him, just shoot him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*whispering*) Shh, shh!

**MALVOLIO**

After all, it wouldn't be the first time that kind of thing has happened. Lady Strachy married her wardrobe manager.

**SIR ANDREW**

*(whispering)* Damn him, the arrogant fool!

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* Shh! We've got him right where we want him. He's on a big ego trip.

**MALVOLIO**

Just think of me, having been married to her for three months, sitting around majestically—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* If only I had a slingshot so I could hit him in the eye!

**MALVOLIO**

Calling my servants together, wearing an embroidered robe, having just come from a couch where I've left Olivia sleeping—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* That does it!

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* Oh, be quiet, be quiet!

**MALVOLIO**

Then I'd put on a lofty and exalted expression. I'd look around the room calmly, then tell them that I know my place, and I'd like them to know theirs. Then I'd tell them to go find my cousin Toby—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* That really does it!

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* Oh, quiet, quiet! Please, please.

**MALVOLIO**

I'd send seven of my servants to go get him. While I waited, I'd frown impatiently, and perhaps wind my watch, or play with my—with some expensive piece of jewelry I happen to be wearing. Toby would approach me. He'd bow to me—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Are we going to let this guy live?

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* Yes, we have to be quiet, even if it's torture.

**MALVOLIO**

I reach out my hand to him like this, giving him a stern look instead of my usual friendly smile—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* And then doesn't Toby punch you in the mouth?

**MALVOLIO**

And I'd say to him, "Cousin Toby, since I've been lucky enough to marry your niece, I have the right to say a few things to you—"

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Oh yeah, like what?

**MALVOLIO**

"You must stop being such a drunk."

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Get out of here, you scab!

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* No, be quiet, or we'll screw up the joke.

**MALVOLIO**

“And you're wasting your time with that foolish knight—”

**SIR ANDREW**

*(whispering)* That's me, I bet.

**MALVOLIO**

“That Sir Andrew—”

**SIR ANDREW**

*(whispering)* I knew he was talking about me. A lot of people call me foolish.

**MALVOLIO**

*(seeing the letter)* What's this?

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* He's taking the bait.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Shhh! I hope he reads it out loud, to make it funnier!

**MALVOLIO**

*(picking up the letter)* My goodness, this is my lady's [handwriting](#)! These are her C's, her U's and her T's, and that's how she makes her big P's. It's definitely her handwriting, no doubt about it.

**SIR ANDREW**

*(whispering)* Her C's, her U's, and her T's. Why focus on that?

**MALVOLIO**

*(reads)* To my dear beloved who doesn't know I love him, I send you this letter with all my heart”—That's exactly how she talks! Excuse me, sealing wax. *(he breaks the seal)* Wait! This is the stamp my lady seals her letters with—it has a picture of Lucrece on it. This letter is from Olivia. Who is this written to?

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* This'll get him.

**MALVOLIO**

*(he reads)*

God knows I love someone.

But who?

I can't let my lips say his name;

“No man must know.”

**MALVOLIO**

“No man must know.” What comes after that? Look, the meter changes in her poem. “No man must know.” What if this someone were you, Malvolio?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Go hang yourself, you stinking badger!

**MALVOLIO**

*(reading)*

“I may order the one I love.

But silence, like a knife, cuts open my heart

With strokes that draw no blood.  
M.O.A.I. rules my life.”

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* What a pretentious riddle!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* That Maria has outdone herself!

**MALVOLIO**

“M.O.A.I. rules my life.” Hmm, let me see, let me see, let me see.

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* What a dish of poison she’s mixed for him!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* And look how willingly he’s taking the bait.

**MALVOLIO**

“I may command the one I love.” Well, she commands me. I’m her servant. She’s my boss. Why, anyone can see what this means. There’s no ambiguity here. But the end, what do those letters mean? If only I could somehow relate them to me! Hmm. M.O.A.I.—

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Oh, bad dog.—He’s losing the scent!

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* He’ll find it again, no matter how much it stinks.

**MALVOLIO**

“M”—Malvolio. “M”—why, that’s the first letter in my name.

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* Didn’t I tell you he’d figure it out? This dog’s excellent at following false leads.

**MALVOLIO**

“M.” But then the next letter isn’t the same. “A” should be next, but instead “O” comes next.

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* And an “O” like a noose will end this, I hope.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(whispering)* Yeah, or I’ll beat him up and make him yell “Oh!”

**MALVOLIO**

And then the “I” comes next.

**FABIAN**

*(whispering)* If you had an I in the back of your head, you’d see trouble behind you.

**MALVOLIO**

M.O.A.I. This code’s not as easy to crack as the other one. But if I shake it up a little it’ll work, because every one of those letters is in my name. But wait, there’s some prose after her poem.

*(he reads)*

“If this letter falls into your hands, think carefully about what it says. By my birth I rank above you, but don’t be afraid of my greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. Your fate awaits you. Accept it in body and spirit. To get used to the life you’ll most likely be leading soon, get rid of your low-class trappings. Show some eagerness for the new upscale lifestyle that’s waiting for you. Argue with a relative like a nobleman, and be rude to servants. Talk about politics and affairs of state, and act free and independent. The woman who advises you to do this loves you.

Remember the woman who complimented you on your yellow stockings, and said she always wanted to see you with crisscrossing laces going up your legs—remember her. Go ahead. A happy new life is there if you want it. If you don't want it, just keep acting like a lowly servant who's not brave enough to grab the happiness there before him. Goodbye. Signed, she who would be your servant,

The Fortunate Unhappy.”

This is as clear as sunlight in an open field. I'll do it. I'll be vain and proud, I'll read up on politics, I'll insult Sir Toby, I'll get rid of my lower-class friends, and I'll be the perfect man for her. I know I'm not fooling myself, or letting myself get carried away by my imagination, because every clue points to the fact that Lady Olivia loves me. She did compliment me on my yellow stockings recently, and she said she liked how the crisscross laces looked on my legs. That's her way of saying she loves me. Oh, I thank my lucky stars, I'm so happy. For her I'll be strange and condescending, and I'll put on my yellow stockings and crisscross laces right away. Thank God and my horoscope! Here's a postscript!

*(reads)*

“You must have figured out who I am. If you love me, let me know by smiling at me. You're so attractive when you smile. Please smile whenever you're near me, my dearest darling.”

Dear God, thank you! I'll do everything she wants me to do.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**FABIAN**

I wouldn't have missed this even for a pension of thousands of pounds, to be paid by the shah of Persia.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I could marry that Maria for thinking this up.

**SIR ANDREW**

So could I.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And I wouldn't ask for any dowry except for her to play another trick like this one.

**SIR ANDREW**

Neither would I.

**MARIA** enters.

**FABIAN**

Here she comes, the brilliant fool-catcher.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

May I kiss your feet?

**SIR ANDREW**

And I too?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Shall I be your slave?

**SIR ANDREW**

Me too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You've made him so delusional he'll go crazy when he learns the truth.

Dear God, thank you! I'll do everything she wants me to do.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**FABIAN**

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Shall I be your slave?

**SIR ANDREW**

Me too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You've made him so delusional he'll go crazy when he learns the truth.

**MARIA**

Did it really work?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Like medicine for a sick man.

**MARIA**

If you want to really have some fun, watch him next time he's near Lady Olivia. He'll show up in yellow stockings—she hates yellow—and with laces crisscrossing up his legs—she hates that style of dress—and he'll smile, which will go completely against her mood, since she's addicted to sadness now. She'll definitely get upset with him. If you want to watch, follow me.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I'd follow you to the gates of Hell, you sneaky little devil!

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll come too.

They all exit.

### **Act 3, Scene 1**

**VIOLA** and the **FOOL**, playing a drum, enter.

**VIOLA**

God bless you, my friend, and your music too. Do you make your living by playing that drum?

**FOOL**

No, sir, I live by the church.



**VIOLA**

Oh, you're a clergyman?

**FOOL**

No, I live by the church because I live in a house, and my house is by the church.

**VIOLA**

You could just as easily say that a king sleeps near a beggar if the beggar lives near him, or that the church is supported by your drum because it "stands by" your drum.

**FOOL**

You're right, sir. What a wonderful time to be alive! Sentences can be turned inside out so easily nowadays!

**VIOLA**

That's true. People who fool around with words too much can make words act like whores—changing all the time, and immoral too.

**FOOL**

That's why I wish my sister didn't have a name, sir.

**VIOLA**

Why, man?

**FOOL**

Well, her name's a word, and if you fooled around with it you might make her into a whore. But, you know, words have been rascals ever since people started using written contracts rather than their word of honor.

**VIOLA**

Why do you say that?

**FOOL**

Honestly, sir, I'd need to use words to explain why, and since words are so unreliable and false, I'd rather avoid using them in a serious discussion.

**VIOLA**

I bet you're a happy fellow who doesn't care about anything.

**FOOL**

You're wrong, sir, I do care about something. But I'll admit I don't care for you. If that means I don't care about anything, you should disappear right now, since you're nothing.

**VIOLA**

Aren't you Lady Olivia's fool?

**FOOL**

No, sir. Lady Olivia doesn't want to have anything to do with foolishness. So she won't have a fool until she gets married. Fools are to husbands as anchovies are to sardines—husbands are the bigger ones. I'm not her fool. I just make words into whores for her.

**VIOLA**

I saw you at Count Orsino's recently.

**FOOL**

I'm everywhere. Foolishness is all over the world, just like sunshine. I'd be sorry if people thought your master was less familiar with foolishness than my mistress is. I think I saw you there, you wise man.

**VIOLA**

Oh no, if you're joking around with me, I'm leaving. Wait, here's a coin for you.

**FOOL**

Next time God sends out a shipment of hair, I hope he gives you a beard!

**VIOLA**

Oh, I know. Seriously, I'm dying for one, (*to herself*) I mean, I'm dying for a man who has a beard; I don't want one to grow on my chin. (*to the FOOL*) Is Lady Olivia inside?

**FOOL**

If I had two of these coins, do you think they'd breed more coins?

**VIOLA**

Yes, if you kept them together and invested them.

**FOOL**

I'd like to be like that famous pimp, Lord Pandarus, and get a Cressida for my Troilus.

**VIOLA**

(*giving the FOOL money*) I get what you're driving at, sir. You're a very clever beggar.

**FOOL**

It shouldn't be too much to ask; I'm only begging for a beggar. They say Cressida became a beggar in her old age. My lady Olivia's inside, sir. I'll tell them where you come from, though I don't know who you are or what you want. I'd say I was "out of my element," but that phrase is overused, so I'll say I'm "out of my air."

The **FOOL** exits.

**VIOLA**

This guy's wise enough to play the fool, and only clever people can do that. He pays attention to the mood and social rank of the person he's joking with, and also to the time of day. And he doesn't let go of his target when a distraction appears. His job requires as much effort and skill as any wise man's occupation could. And he shows he's very smart at playing the fool, while smart people look stupid when they play the fool.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **SIR ANDREW** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Hello, sir.

**VIOLA**

Hello to you too, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

(*speaking in French*) May God protect you, sir.

**VIOLA**

(*speaking in French*) And you too, sir. I'm at your service.

**SIR ANDREW**

(stammering) Oh, good, I am too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

My niece would like you to come in to the house, if your business here has to do with her.

**VIOLA**

I'm headed for your niece, sir. She's the reason I'm here.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Taste your legs, sir. Please go inside.

**VIOLA**

Taste my legs? My legs stand under me, but I don't understand what "taste your legs" means.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I mean please go into the house, sir.

**VIOLA**

I will. But now we don't have to!

**OLIVIA** and **MARIA** enter.

Oh, beautiful and accomplished lady, may the heavens rain odors upon you!

**SIR ANDREW**

*(to himself)* That young man's classy. "Rain odors." That's good.

**VIOLA**

My message is not for anyone else to hear, my lady. It's only for your willing and receptive ear.

**SIR ANDREW**

*(to himself)* "Odors," "willing," and "deserving." I'll have to remember those words so I can use them later myself.

**OLIVIA**

Close the garden door and leave me alone to hear his message.

**SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and MARIA** exit.

Give me your hand, sir.

**VIOLA**

I give you my obedience and my humble service, madam.

**OLIVIA**

What's your name?

**VIOLA**

Cesario is my name—your servant's name—fair princess.

**OLIVIA**

My servant! The world's gone downhill since fake humility started passing for compliments.

You're not my servant, young man. You're Count Orsino's servant.

**VIOLA**

But he's your servant, so everything that's his must be yours too. Your servant's servant is your servant, madam.

**OLIVIA**

As for him, I never think about him. As for his thoughts, I wish he'd think about nothing at all rather than think about me all the time.

**VIOLA**

Madam, I've come here to try to make you like him.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, please, I'm begging you, don't mention him again. But if you want to tell me that someone else loves me, I'd enjoy hearing that more than I'd enjoy listening to angels sing.

**VIOLA**

My dear lady—

**OLIVIA**

Please let me say something, I'm begging you. After you cast your magic spell on me last time, I sent you a ring. I fear it was a mistake, since I tricked my servant, myself, and you too. You probably think poorly of me after I forced that ring on you with such outrageous trickery. What else could you possibly think of me?

Haven't you totally dismissed my honor and integrity in your anger? For someone as intelligent as you the situation must be clear enough. I'm wearing my heart on my sleeve, and I can't hide my feelings. So let me hear what you have to say.

**VIOLA**

I feel sorry for you.

**OLIVIA**

That's a step in the direction of love.

**VIOLA**

No, not at all. It's a perfectly ordinary experience for us to feel sorry for our enemies.

**OLIVIA**

Well, enough of my whining then. That's that! I was getting carried away with fantasies I didn't deserve to have. But I should consider myself lucky. It's much better to be destroyed by a noble enemy than by a cruel and heartless one. (*a clock strikes*) Listen to that, the clock's scolding me for wasting my time loving you. Don't worry, young man, I won't stalk you. And when you're older and wiser and ready for marriage, your future wife will have a fine husband. There's the way back home for you, due west.

**VIOLA**

Then west is where I'm headed! I wish you all the best. You do

**OLIVIA**

Stay, Please, tell me what you think of me.

**VIOLA**

I think you're denying what you really are.

**OLIVIA**

If that's true, I think the same thing about you.

**VIOLA**

You're right. I am not what I am.

**OLIVIA**

I wish you were what I wanted you to be!

**VIOLA**

Would it be better if I were that, instead of what I am? I wish I were something better, because right now I'm a big fool.

**OLIVIA**

(*to herself*) Oh, how beautiful he is even when he's angry and full of contempt! A murderer can hide his guilt longer than someone in love can hide her love. Love shines brightly and can't be hidden. (*to VIOLA*) Cesario, I swear by the spring roses, by virginity, honor, truth, and everything, I swear I love you. I love you so much that I can't hide my passion for you, as clever as I am. Don't assume that because I'm pursuing you there's no reason to pursue me. Put two and two together and realize that asking for love is good, but getting it without asking is much better.

**VIOLA**

And I swear by my youth and innocence that I've only got one heart and one love to give, and that I've never given them to a woman and never will. So goodbye, my lady. I won't ever come to complain about my lord's love for you again.

**OLIVIA**

Then come again for another reason. You might still be able to make yourself fall in love with me, the person he loves, even though you hate me now.  
They exit.

**Act 3, Scene 2**

**SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN** enter.

**SIR ANDREW**

No, I won't stay a second longer.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why are you leaving, my angry friend?

**FABIAN**

Yes, you have to tell us why, Sir Andrew.

**SIR ANDREW**

Well, because I saw your niece Olivia treat the count's messenger better than she's ever treated me. I saw it in the orchard.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Did she see you there the whole time, old boy? Tell me that.

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, she saw me quite clearly.

**FABIAN**

Well, that proves she's in love with you.

**SIR ANDREW**

Are you trying to make fun of me?

**FABIAN**

No, I'll prove it with airtight evidence and logical argument.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And you can't deny evidence and argument—They've been around since Noah's ark.

**FABIAN**

She flirted with the messenger boy to exasperate you, fire up your passions, and make you angry and jealous. You should have run up to her, unleashed a few excellent quips invented on the spot, and rendered the young man speechless.

That's what she was expecting, and you let her down. You wasted a golden opportunity, and now my lady thinks badly of you. You can only raise her opinion of you with some impressive act of courage or complicated intrigue.

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll have to do something courageous then, because I hate intrigue. I'd rather be a heretic than a schemer with fancy plots.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Well then, improve your situation with a show of courage. Challenge the count's young servant to a fight. Hurt him in eleven different places. My niece Olivia will notice, and let me tell you, no matchmaker in the world can get you a woman faster than a reputation for courage.

**FABIAN**

It's really the only way, Sir Andrew.

**SIR ANDREW**

Will either of you give him the message that I'm challenging him to a duel?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go ahead and write it down. Make your handwriting look like a soldier's. Be pointed and brief. It doesn't need to be witty as long as it's eloquent and imaginative. Taunt him as much as you want, since you're only doing it in writing. It's fine if you refer to him as "thou" instead of "you." Write down as many lies as you can fit on a sheet of paper. Go ahead, get on with it. You may be using an ordinary pen, but you can fill it with poison ink. Now get busy.

**SIR ANDREW**

Where will I find you when I've finished it?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

We'll come find you in the bedroom. Go on.

**SIR ANDREW** exits.

**FABIAN**

This precious little guy is putty in your hands, Sir Toby.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He must like me, since he's let me spend two thousand of his ducats.

**FABIAN**

His letter's going to be hilarious. But you're not going to deliver it, are you?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Never trust me again if I don't. And by all means see if you can get the young man to answer it. I don't think a team of oxen could get them close enough to fight. If you dissected Andrew and found enough red blood in his liver for a flea to eat, then I'd eat the rest of his corpse. He's a coward.

**FABIAN**

And his opponent, the young messenger, doesn't look like he'd be very aggressive in a fight.

**MARIA** enters.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Here comes my little bird.

**MARIA**

Listen, if you want a good laugh—and I mean a side-splitting one—then follow me. That gullible idiot Malvolio must have renounced Christianity, since no Christian could do such outrageous things as he's doing. He's wearing yellow stockings.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

With crisscrossed laces?

**MARIA**

Oh, he looks like a pathetic Sunday school teacher. I've stalked him like a murderer, and he's done everything the letter told him to. He smiles so much his face has more lines in it than a map of the East Indies. You've never seen anything like it. I can hardly keep myself from throwing things at him. I know that my lady's going to end up hitting him. And when she does, he'll imagine she's flirting with him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, take us to him.

They all exit.

**Act 3, Scene 3**

**SEBASTIAN** and **ANTONIO** enter.

**SEBASTIAN**

I really didn't want to inconvenience you. But since you seem to enjoy helping me, I won't nag you to stop any more.

**ANTONIO**

I couldn't stay behind after you left. I just felt a sharp desire to follow you. It wasn't just that I wanted to see you, though I very much did want that. I was also worried about what might happen to you while you were traveling, since you're not familiar with this area, and it's rough and unwelcoming to a stranger with no guide. I followed you because I love you and I was worried about you.

**SEBASTIAN**

My friend Antonio, all I can say is thank you. I know words are cheap. If I had any money I'd back up my gratitude with cash. Anyway, what should we do? Should we go see the sights in the town?

**ANTONIO**

We can do that tomorrow, sir. First we should make sure you have somewhere to stay.

**SEBASTIAN**

I'm not tired, and night is a long time away. Come on, let's go see the sights.

**ANTONIO**

I'm sorry, but I can't. You see, it's dangerous for me to walk in these streets. Once in a battle at sea I did a lot of damage to Count Orsino's warships. If they arrested me here, it'd be the end of me.

**SEBASTIAN**

You probably killed a lot of his men?

**ANTONIO**

No, I didn't do anything as violent as that, though we would've been justified in shedding a little blood over the matter. The whole quarrel might have been resolved since then when we repaid what we stole from them—which most of our city did, for the sake of friendly trade relations. I was the only one who refused to give back what I stole. That's why I'll pay dearly if they find me here.

**SEBASTIAN**

Then don't make yourself too conspicuous.

**ANTONIO**

You're right. Hang on a minute, here's some money for you. (*he gives SEBASTIAN money*) The best place to stay around here is an inn called the Elephant, in the suburbs south of the city. I'll arrange for our meals while you enjoy yourself and educate yourself by looking at the town.

You'll find me at the Elephant.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why are you giving me your purse?

**ANTONIO**

Maybe you'll see some little trinket you want to buy. I doubt you've got enough money for little purchases like that.

**SEBASTIAN**

I'll hold on to your money and leave you for an hour.

**ANTONIO**

We'll meet at the Elephant.

**SEBASTIAN**

I remember.  
They exit.

**Act 3, Scene 4**

**OLIVIA** and **MARIA** enter.

**OLIVIA**

I've sent for him. He says he'll come. What kind of food should I serve him? What presents should I give him? It's easier to buy young people than to beg or borrow them. Oh, I'm talking too loud.—Where's Malvolio? He's very serious, which is right for someone in mourning like me. Where is Malvolio?

**MARIA**

He's coming, madam; but he's acting very strangely. He must be possessed by the devil.

**OLIVIA**

Why, what's the matter with him? Is he talking nonsense?

**MARIA**

No, he just smiles. You should have a guard nearby if he comes in here, because he's clearly disturbed.

**OLIVIA**

Ask him in here.

**MARIA** exits.

I'm as crazy as he is, if sad craziness and happy craziness are equivalent.

**MARIA** enters with **MALVOLIO**.

What's going on, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

Hello, sweet lady.

**OLIVIA**

You're smiling? I sent for you about a sad occasion.

**MALVOLIO**

Sad, my lady! I could be sad if I wanted to be. These crisscrossing laces do cut off the circulation in my legs a bit, but who cares? As the sonnet says, "If you please one special person, you please everyone who matters."

**OLIVIA**

Why, what's going on? What's the matter with you?

**MALVOLIO**

My legs may be yellow, but I don't feel blue. It was addressed to him, and orders must be obeyed. I think we know whose fancy handwriting that was.

**OLIVIA**

Don't you think you should go to bed, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

To bed! "Yes, sweetheart, I'll come to you."

**OLIVIA**

For heaven's sake, why are you smiling like that and kissing your hand so much?

**MARIA**

How are you feeling, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**



You're asking me! Noble people don't answer to peasants!

**MARIA**

Why are you acting so brazen toward my lady?

**MALVOLIO**

"Don't be afraid of greatness." That was well written.

**OLIVIA**

What do you mean by that, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

"Some are born great—"

**OLIVIA**

What?

**MALVOLIO**

"Some achieve greatness—"

**OLIVIA**

What are you saying?

**MALVOLIO**

"And some have greatness thrust upon them."

**OLIVIA**

Heaven help you!

**MALVOLIO**

"Remember who liked your yellow stockings—"

**OLIVIA**

Your yellow stockings?

**MALVOLIO**

"And wanted to see you with laces crisscrossed over your legs."

**OLIVIA**

Crisscrossed?

**MALVOLIO**

"Go ahead. A happy new life is there if you want it—"

**OLIVIA**

Am I a new life?

**MALVOLIO**

"If you don't want it, just keep acting like a lowly servant."

**OLIVIA**

This is completely insane.

**SERVANT** enters.

**SERVANT**

Madam, Count Orsino's young messenger has returned. It was hard to get him to come back, but he's here now, waiting for you.

**OLIVIA**

I'll go to him.

**SERVANT** exits.

Maria, take care of this poor fellow here. Where's my cousin Toby? Have some of my servants take care of Malvolio. I'd give half my dowry to keep anything bad from happening to him.

**OLIVIA** and **MARIA** exit.

**MALVOLIO**

Oh ho! Look at me now! No less a person than Sir Toby, Lady Olivia's own relative, is going to take care of me. This is just what the letter said. She's sending him to me on purpose, so I can be rude to him just like she said in the letter. "Get rid of your low-class trapping," she said. "Argue with a relative of mine like a nobleman, and be rude to servants. Talk about politics and affairs of state, and act free and independent." And then she explains how to do it: I should have a serious face and dignified demeanor, well-modulated speech, acting like a distinguished gentleman and so on. I've got her now, but I've got God to thank for it! And when she left just now, she said "Take care of this poor fellow here." Fellow!" Not "Malvolio," not anything referring to my low station in life, but "fellow." Everything's going perfectly. Not the tiniest ounce, not the littlest insignificant amount of trouble or bad luck could ruin it—what can I say? Nothing can come between me and the fulfillment of all my hopes. Well, God is responsible for that, not me, and he deserves thanks.

**MARIA** enters with **SIR TOBY BELCH** and **FABIAN**.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Where is he, for God's sake? I don't care if all the devils in hell crammed together to possess him, I still want to speak to him.

**FABIAN**

Here he is, here he is. How are you, sir?

**MALVOLIO**

Go away. I don't want to see your face. Let me enjoy my privacy. Go away.

**MARIA**

(*to SIR TOBY BELCH*) Ooh, listen to the scary devil speaking from inside him! Didn't I tell you? Sir Toby, Lady Olivia wants you to take care of him.

**MALVOLIO**

Ah-ha! Does she?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(*to FABIAN and MARIA*) Come on, come on! Calm down, calm down. We need to treat him gently. Let me take care of this.—How are you, Malvolio? How are things? Come on, man, just say no to the devil! Think about it, he's the enemy of mankind.

**MALVOLIO**

Do you even know what you're talking about?

**MARIA**

(*to SIR TOBY BELCH*) Look at that, he acts insulted if you say bad things about the devil! I hope to God he's not bewitched!

**FABIAN**

Get a urine sample and take it to a witch doctor to find out.

**MARIA**

Sure thing, we'll do it tomorrow morning. My lady would never want to lose him.

**MALVOLIO**

What are you saying, mistress?

**MARIA**

Oh, Lord!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(to MARIA) Please, keep quiet. This is not the way to act. Don't you see you're upsetting him? Leave me alone with him.

**FABIAN**

Gentleness is the only way to go—gently, gently. The devil inside him is rough, but we can't treat it roughly.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(to the imaginary devil inside MALVOLIO) So how are you, my pretty little bird? How are you doing in there, sweet little chicken?

**MALVOLIO**

Sir!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Yes, dear little chick, come along with me.—Shut up, man! You're serious enough to know not to play games with Satan. Damn that dirty black coalminer of a devil!

**MARIA**

Get him to say his prayers, Sir Toby, get him to pray.

**MALVOLIO**

My prayers, you hussy?

**MARIA**

(to SIR TOBY BELCH) No, I'm telling you, he refuses to hear anything about religion.

**MALVOLIO**

Go hang yourselves, all of you! You're all lazy and shallow. I'm not like you. I have a higher future waiting for me. You'll know more about it later.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Is it possible?

**FABIAN**

If this were a play, I'd complain it was unrealistic.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He's really taken this prank to heart. He's playing the role perfectly.

**MARIA**

No, follow him now, before he divulges the prank and ruins everything.

**FABIAN**

Wow, we're really going to drive him crazy.

**MARIA**

The house will be so much quieter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, let's put him in a dark room and tie him up. My niece already thinks he's insane. We can go on like this, punishing him and having some fun, until we're tired of it. Then we can take mercy on him and let him out, and talk about how well the joke went. We'll also worship you for setting up this trick. Let's do it, let's do it!

**SIR ANDREW** enters.

**FABIAN**

Here's more insanity for us.

**SIR ANDREW**

*(presenting them a piece of paper)* Here's the challenge, read it. It's bursting with fighting words.

**FABIAN**

Is it that aggressive?

**SIR ANDREW**

Yes, it is, I think. Just read it.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Give it to me. *(he reads)* "Young man, whatever you are, you're a real scum bucket."

**FABIAN**

Nice. Very courageous.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(reading)* "Don't even ask why I call you that, because I won't give you any explanation."

**FABIAN**

That's a good thing to put in—it keeps you from getting in trouble with the law.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(reading)* "You come to see the lady Olivia, and she's kind to you. But you're a complete liar. That's not why I'm challenging you to a duel."

**FABIAN**

Nice and short and full of good sense—or should I say nonsense?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(reading)* "I'll ambush you on your way home, and if you're lucky enough to kill me—"

**FABIAN**

Good.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(reading)* "You'll be killing me like a common criminal, a mugger."

**FABIAN**

You still haven't said anything incriminating. Good.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(reading)* "Good luck, and may God have mercy on one of our souls. He may have mercy upon mine. But I have a better chance of surviving, so watch out. Signed, your friend, if you treat him right, and your sworn enemy, Andrew Aguecheek"

If this letter doesn't make him fight, I don't know what will. I'll give it to him.

**MARIA**

You might have a great opportunity to give it to him right now. He's conducting some business with my lady, and sooner or later he'll leave.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go, Sir Andrew. Look out for him in the corner of the orchard as if you were a sheriff's deputy. As soon as you see him, draw your sword, and as you draw it, start swearing horribly.

Sometimes a terrible swear word, like a well-shot arrow, makes you look more brave and manly than getting in a fight would. Now go!

**SIR ANDREW**

Don't worry about me not swearing enough.

**SIR ANDREW** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I won't deliver this letter. The young gentleman's behavior shows that he's sensible and has good manners. The fact that he serves as a go-between for his lord and my niece Olivia confirms this. So this letter, which is so incredibly stupid and ignorant, isn't going to scare him at all. He'll just think an idiot wrote it. But I'll deliver Sir Andrew's challenge by word of mouth, describing Sir Andrew as courageous in battle and convincing the young gentleman that Sir Andrew is furious, impetuous, and a skilled fighter (he'll believe me because he's young). This will make them both so afraid that they'll kill each other just by looking at each other.

**OLIVIA** enters with **VIOLA**.

**FABIAN**

Here comes the messenger with your niece. Leave them alone until he sets off home, and then follow him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Meanwhile, I'll think of some horrible way to phrase the challenge.

**SIR TOBY BELCH, FABIAN, and MARIA** exit.

**OLIVIA**

I've said too much to someone with a heart of stone. I've foolishly jeopardized my honor and reputation. I hate myself for behaving that way, but I just had to, and no criticism could have stopped me.

**VIOLA**

My lord acts just as crazy with love as you do.

**OLIVIA**

Here, take this piece of jewelry. There's a picture of me inside. Don't refuse it. It won't annoy you like me, because it doesn't have a voice. And I beg you, please come here again tomorrow. What could you possibly ask of me that I wouldn't give you, as long as it didn't damage my honor and self-respect?

**VIOLA**

Nothing, except your true love for my lord.

**OLIVIA**

How could I honorably give him what I've already given you?

**VIOLA**

I'll give it back to you.

**OLIVIA**

Just come again tomorrow. Good-bye. A devil like you could lead me to hell.

**OLIVIA** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **FABIAN** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Hello, sir.

**VIOLA**

Hello to you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You'd better think up a way to defend yourself. I don't know what you've done to upset him, but someone has challenged you to a duel. He's riled up and bloodthirsty, and he's waiting for you at the back of the orchard. Draw your sword and get on your toes, because your assailant is quick, skillful, and deadly.

**VIOLA**

There must be some mistake, sir. I'm sure nobody would have any reason to fight with me. I can't remember anything I've ever done to offend anyone.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You're wrong about that, I assure you. So if you value your life at all, be on your guard. Your opponent has enough youth, strength, skill, and anger to outfight anyone.

**VIOLA**

But who is this person, sir?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He's a knight. He was made a knight because of his court connections, but when he's fighting a civilian he's a real monster. He's killed three people, and he's so furious right now that the only thing that will satisfy him is seeing you die. "Fight to the death" is his motto.

**VIOLA**

I'll go back inside and ask the lady for some kind of escort. I'm not a fighter. I've heard of men who pick fights with other people on purpose, just to see how brave they are. This man is probably like that.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No, sir. He's furious because you insulted him, and he has a right to satisfaction. So go out there and give him what he wants. You can't go back into the house unless you want to fight with me—and if you're willing to do that, you might as well just go and fight with him. So go to the orchard, or take out your sword right now. You're going to have to fight one way or another, there's no doubt about that, or else you'll have to stop wearing a sword and claiming to be a gentleman.

**VIOLA**

This is as rude as it is strange. Please, do me this one favor: find out what I've done to offend this knight. It must be something I did accidentally.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I will do so. Mr. Fabian, stay with this gentleman until I come back.

**SIR TOBY** exits.

**VIOLA**

Excuse me, sir, do you know anything about this?

**FABIAN**

I know the knight is furious with you, so much that he's willing to fight you to the death, but I don't know anything else about it.

**VIOLA**

What kind of man is he?

**FABIAN**

He's not much to look at, but he's very brave in battle. He really is the most skillful, bloodthirsty, and dangerous opponent you can find in Illyria. Do you want to go see him? I'll try to calm him down for you if I can.

**VIOLA**

I'd be very grateful to you if you did. I'm much more of a religious type than a fighter, and I don't care who knows it.

They exit.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** enters with **SIR ANDREW**.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Wow, he's a real devil. I've never seen such a monster. I had a round with him, and his sword thrust is so deadly that you can't even duck out of the way. And when he strikes back at you, he'll hit you as sure as you're standing there. They say he used to fence for the shah of Persia.

**SIR ANDREW**

That's it! I won't mess with him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Yes, but now there's no way to calm him down. Fabian can hardly control him over there.

**SIR ANDREW**

Darn it, if I'd guessed he was so brave and such a good swordsman, I never would have challenged him. I'll give him my gray horse Capilet if he forgets the whole thing.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I'll give it a try. Stay right here and try to look good. This may end without anyone getting killed.  
*(to himself)* I'll ride your horse just like I ride you.

**FABIAN** and **VIOLA** enter.

*(to FABIAN)* He's given me his horse to try to avoid the fight—I've persuaded him that the young man is a fighting machine.

**FABIAN**

He's just as terrified of Sir Andrew. He's pale and hyperventilating, as if a bear were chasing him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(to VIOLA)* There's nothing you can do about it, sir. He insists on fighting with you because he swore he would. But he's thought over his reason for challenging you to fight, and he realizes it's so insignificant that it's not worth thinking about. So draw your sword so he can carry out his vow. He promises not to hurt you.

**VIOLA**

*(to herself)* God help me! If anything happens I'm going to have to tell them exactly how unmanly I am.

**FABIAN**

Back off if he seems really furious.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, Sir Andrew, there's nothing you can do about it. The gentleman insists on fighting a round with you, for the sake of his honor. The rules of dueling say he has to. But as a gentleman and a soldier he's promised me he won't hurt you. Come on, get ready.

**SIR ANDREW**

I hope to God he keeps his promise!

**VIOLA**

I swear to you, I don't want to be doing this.

They draw their swords. **ANTONIO** enters.

**ANTONIO**

Put your sword away. If this young gentleman has offended you, I'll take the blame for it. If you've offended him, I'll fight you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You, sir? Who are you?

**ANTONIO**

I'm just a good friend of his. In fact, I'd do even more to him than what you've heard him promise to do.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

If you're someone who gets into fights, I'll fight with you.  
They draw their swords. **OFFICERS** enter.

**FABIAN**

Oh, Sir Toby, stop! The police are here.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

(to ANTONIO) I'll be back for you soon.

**VIOLA**

(to ANDREW) Please, sir, put away your sword. Please.

**SIR ANDREW**

I certainly will, sir. And as for what I promised to you, I'm as good as my word. You can ride him easily, and he responds well when you pull the reins.

**FIRST OFFICER**

This is the man. Do your job.

**SECOND OFFICER**

Antonio, you're under arrest on the orders of Count Orsino.

**ANTONIO**

You must be mistaking me for someone else, sir.

**FIRST OFFICER**

No, sir, not at all. I recognize your face perfectly, even without a sailor's cap on your head.—  
Take him away. He knows I recognize him.

**ANTONIO**

I have to obey. (to VIOLA) This has happened because I came looking for you, but there's nothing I can do about it now. I'll take what's coming to me. But what'll you do now that I have to ask you for my purse back?

I'm more upset about not being able to help you than I am about what's going to happen to me. You look so confused. Don't worry about me.

**SECOND OFFICER**

Come on, sir, let's go.

**ANTONIO**

(to VIOLA) Really, I must ask you for some of that money.

**VIOLA**

What money, sir? I feel sorry for you in this situation, and I want to thank you for the kindness you've shown me here, so I'll lend you some of my money, though I don't have much. I'll give you half of everything I have right now. Take this. It's half of all my money. (*she offers him money*)

**ANTONIO**

Are you really going to pretend you don't know me now? After everything I've done for you, you're refusing to help me? Don't make me more miserable than I am. I might do something really weak and unmanly, like listing the kind things I've done for you.



**VIOLA**

I don't know any kind things you've done for me, and I don't recognize your voice or your face. I hate an ungrateful man more than I hate lying, vanity, babbling, drunkenness, or any other vice that we feeble human beings are susceptible to.—

**ANTONIO**

Oh, my God!

**SECOND OFFICER**

Come on, sir, please. Let's go.

**ANTONIO**

No, I've got something to say. I saved this young man's life when he was half-dead, and nursed him back to health lovingly and tenderly. I devoted myself to him, since he looked noble and good.

**FIRST OFFICER**

Why should we care? Time's passing. Let's go!

**ANTONIO**

But oh, what a deceiver he turned out to be! You don't live up to your good looks, Sebastian. You look good but you're bad on the inside, where it counts, since the only real flaws in nature are in a person's mind and soul. Only really cruel people can be called deformed. Virtue is beauty, but someone beautiful and wicked is like an empty box decorated by the devil.

**FIRST OFFICER**

The man's going crazy. Take him away. Come on, sir. Come on.

**ANTONIO**

Take me.

He exits with the **OFFICERS**.

**VIOLA**

He was so angry I feel he must really believe what he was saying. I don't believe it. Yet I wish I could. Oh, please be true, please let it be that this man has mistaken me for you, my dear brother!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come here, Sir Andrew. You too, Fabian. We've got some words of wisdom to mull over.

**VIOLA**

He called me Sebastian. I know my brother's still alive in a sense, since I see him whenever I look in the mirror. My brother looked like me, and he dressed the same way that I'm dressed now—in the same colors, with the same accessories. Oh, if it turns out to be true that he survived, then that storm was kind, and the ocean was full of love!

**VIOLA** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He's a very dishonest, puny boy, and more cowardly than a rabbit. He abandoned his friend here in an emergency, and even pretended he didn't know him. That shows he's dishonest. As for his cowardliness, ask Fabian.

**FABIAN**

He's a coward, a total coward. He's religiously devoted to his cowardice.

**SIR ANDREW**

By God, I'll go after him again and beat him up.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Please do. Beat him up well, but don't draw your sword.

**SIR ANDREW**

I swear I will—

**FABIAN**

Come on, let's go see what happens.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I'll bet anything you like that nothing will happen, once again.

They all exit.

**Act 4, Scene 1**

**SEBASTIAN** and the **FOOL** enter.

**FOOL**

Are you trying to tell me that I wasn't sent to get you?

**SEBASTIAN**

Oh, who cares, you're acting like a fool. Leave me alone.

**FOOL**

Good for you, holding out on me like this! No, I don't know you, and my lady didn't send me to get you, and I'm not supposed to tell you to come speak with her, and your name is not Master Cesario, and this is not my nose, either. Nothing is what it is.

**SEBASTIAN**

Oh please, go somewhere else to blab your nonsense. You don't know me.

**FOOL**

Blab my nonsense? He must've heard that phrase describing some great man and now he's using it on a jester. Blab my nonsense! What an idiotic place this world is. Now please stop being so strange and tell me what exactly I should blab to my lady. Should I blab to her that you're coming?

**SEBASTIAN**

Please, fool, go away. Here's money for you. (*giving him money*) If you stay any longer, I'll give you something worse.

**FOOL**

Well, well. You're a generous man. Wise men who give fools money might get a good reputation—if they keep up regular payments for fourteen years.

**SIR ANDREW**, **SIR TOBY BELCH**, and **FABIAN** enter.

**SIR ANDREW**

Well, sir, we meet again? Take that.

**SIR ANDREW** hits **SEBASTIAN**.

**SEBASTIAN**

(*returning the blow*) Well, then, take that, and that, and that. Is everyone here insane?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Stop right now or I'll throw your dagger over the roof.

**FOOL**

(*to himself*) I'm going to tell my lady about this right away. I wouldn't be in any of your shoes if you paid me.

**FOOL** exits.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(grabbing SEBASTIAN)* Come on, sir, stop!

**SIR ANDREW**

No, leave him alone. I'll get back at him another way. I'll sue him for assault and battery, if there's any justice in Illyria. It doesn't matter that I hit him first.

**SEBASTIAN**

*(to SIR TOBY BELCH)* Let me go.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No, sir, I won't let you go. Come on, put your sword away, my little soldier. You're awfully eager to fight. Come on.

**SEBASTIAN**

I'll get free of you.

**SEBASTIAN** pulls free and draws his sword.

What are you going to do now? If you insist on trying my patience any further, then take out your sword right now.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What? No. Because then I'd have to shed an ounce or two of your impudent blood.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** draws his sword. **OLIVIA** enters.

**OLIVIA**

Stop, Sir Toby! I order you to stop!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Madam!

**OLIVIA**

Are you always going to be like this? You're an ungrateful slob who's only fit to live in the mountains, in caves far from civilized people where you won't ever need good manners! Get out of my sight!—Dear Cesario, please don't be offended.—Get out of here, you barbarian!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**, **SIR ANDREW**, and **FABIAN** exit.

Oh, my dear friend, please don't get too upset by these rude people who bothered you. Come with me to my house. I'll tell you about all the pointless, clumsy pranks this thug uncle of mine has come up with, so that you can laugh at this one. You have to come with me. Please don't say no. Damn that Toby! He made my heart leap for you.

**SEBASTIAN**

*(to himself)* What does this mean? Where is this all going? Either I'm insane or this is a dream. I hope these

delusions continue. If this is a dream, let me keep on sleeping!

**OLIVIA**

Come with me, please. I wish you'd do what I ask!

**SEBASTIAN**

Madam, I will.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, say it, and mean it!

They exit.

**Act 4, Scene 2**

**MARIA** and the **FOOL** enter.

**MARIA**

No, I'm telling you, put on this robe and beard. Make him think you're Sir Topas the priest. Be quick. Meanwhile, I'll get Sir Toby.

**MARIA** exits.

**FOOL**

Well, I'll put it on and disguise myself. I wish I were the first person who ever told lies in a priest's robe.

The **FOOL** puts on the robe and beard.

I'm not tall enough to make a believable priest, or skinny enough to look like a good student. But if you're an honest man and a good host, that's almost as good as being moral and studious. Here come the conspirators.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **MARIA** enter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

God bless you, Mr. Priest.

**FOOL**

Bonos dies, Sir Toby. As the old hermit of Prague, who couldn't read or write, said very wittily to a niece of King Gorboduc, "Whatever is, is." So since I'm Mr. Priest, I'm Mr. Priest. Because isn't "that" "that," and isn't "is" "is"?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go to him, Sir Topas.

**FOOL**

*(disguising his voice)* Quiet down in this prison!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

The fool's a good actor. A good fool.

**MALVOLIO**

*(offstage)* Who's shouting?

**FOOL**

I'm Sir Topas the priest. I've come to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, please go find my lady Olivia—

**FOOL**

Get out, demon! Why are you bothering this poor man! Can't you talk about anything besides ladies?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

*(to himself)* Well said, Mr. Priest.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, nobody's ever been as badly treated as I've been. Good Sir Topas, don't believe I'm insane, They've shut me up here in horrible darkness.

**FOOL**

You should be ashamed of yourself, Satan, you liar! I'm being gentle with you, because I'm one of those good-hearted people who are polite to the devil himself. You call this house dark?

**MALVOLIO**

Dark as hell, Sir Topas.

**FOOL**

But it has bay windows that are as transparent as stone walls, and the upper windows facing south-north are as clear as coal. But you're still complaining of darkness and a bad view?

**MALVOLIO**

I'm not insane, Sir Topas. I'm telling you, this house is dark.

**FOOL**

You're wrong, you madman. There's no darkness except ignorance, and you're more ignorant than the Egyptians during the plague of fog.

**MALVOLIO**

I tell you, this house is as dark as ignorance. And I tell you, no man has ever been treated worse than me. I'm no more insane than you are, and I'll prove it. Ask me any commonsense question.

**FOOL**

What was the philosopher Pythagoras's belief about wild birds?

**MALVOLIO**

That our grandmother's soul could end up inhabiting a bird.

**FOOL**

What do you think of his belief?

**MALVOLIO**

I respect the soul very much, so I disagree with his belief.

**FOOL**

Well then, goodbye. Stay in the dark. I'll only admit that you're sane when you agree with Pythagoras and hesitate to kill a bird because it might contain your grandmother's soul.

Goodbye.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, Sir Topas!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

The brilliant Sir Topas!

**FOOL**

I can do anything!

**MARIA**

You could've done this without your beard and gown. He couldn't see you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Now talk to him in your own voice, and tell me how he is. I wish this trick would be over. If we can find a convenient way to let him go, I want to do it. I'm in so much trouble with my niece that it wouldn't be safe to let this prank go to its conclusion. Come to my room later on.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and **MARIA** exit.

**FOOL**

*(he sings in his own voice)*

*Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,  
Tell me how your lady is.*

**MALVOLIO**

Fool!

**FOOL**

*(singing) My lady's mean, and that's a fact.*

**MALVOLIO**

Fool!

**FOOL**

*(singing) Oh, I'm sorry, why is she mean?*

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, I say!

**FOOL**

*(singing) She loves someone else—Who's shouting?*

**MALVOLIO**

Good fool, good jester, I'll make it worth your while if you get me a candle, and a pen, ink and paper. You have my word as a gentleman that I'll always be grateful to you.

**FOOL**

Master Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

Yes, good fool.

**FOOL**

Poor man, how did you go insane?

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, no one has ever been as mistreated as I am. I'm completely sane, Fool. I'm as sane as you are.

**FOOL**

As sane as me? Then you really are insane, if you're no saner than a fool.

**MALVOLIO**

They treat me like garbage here. They keep me in darkness, and send idiotic priests to talk to me—those asses!—and do everything they can to insist I'm insane.

**FOOL**

Be careful what you say—the priest is here. *(in the voice of Sir Topas)* Malvolio, Malvolio, may heaven make you sane again! Try to sleep, and stop your pointless babbling.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas!

**FOOL**

*(as Sir Topas)* Don't talk to him, my friend. *(in his own voice)* Who, me, sir? Not me, sir. God be with you, Sir Topas, goodbye. *(as Sir Topas)* Well then, amen. *(in his own voice)* Goodbye, sir.

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, fool, hey, fool!

**FOOL**

Please, sir, be quiet. What do you want to say, sir? I've just been scolded for speaking to you.

**MALVOLIO**

Be a nice fool and help me find a candle and some paper. I tell you, I'm as sane as any man in Illyria.

**FOOL**

If only you were, sir.

**MALVOLIO**

I swear I am. Get me some ink, paper, and a candle. I'll write a letter and you'll take it to my lady. You'll get a bigger reward than you ever got delivering a letter before.

**FOOL**

I'll help you. But tell me honestly, are you sure you're not insane? Or are you just pretending?

**MALVOLIO**

Believe me, I'm not. I'm telling the truth.

**FOOL**

I'll never believe a madman until I can see his brains. But I'll get you a candle and paper and ink.

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, I'll repay you for this favor. Please, hurry.

**FOOL**

*(he sings)*

*I'm going now, sir, but soon  
I'll be with you again,  
To help you resist the devil,  
Like the sidekick in the old plays  
Who shakes a wooden dagger,  
Fumes in rage and wrath,  
And shouts "Whoa!" to the devil.  
He yells, "Trim your nails, old man.  
And goodbye, Satan, you peasant."*

**FOOL** exits.

**Act 4, Scene 3**

**SEBASTIAN** enters.

**SEBASTIAN**

This is the air, that's the glorious sun. I can feel and see this pearl she gave me. I may be dazed and confused, but I'm not insane. Where's Antonio, then? I didn't find him at the Elephant. But he'd been there before me, and they told me he'd gone out looking for me. I could really use his advice right now. I feel sure this situation is due to some mistake, and I don't think I'm crazy. But this sudden flood of good luck is so unbelievable that I'm ready to distrust my own eyes and my own rational mind when they tell me I'm not insane—maybe the lady's insane. But if that were the case, she wouldn't be able to run her house, command her servants, listen to reports, make decisions, and take care of business as smoothly as she does. There's something going on that's not what it seems. But here she comes.

**OLIVIA** and a **PRIEST** enter.

**OLIVIA**

*(to SEBASTIAN)* Don't be angry with me for acting so quickly. If your intentions toward me are honorable, come with me and this holy man into the chapel over there, where you can soothe all my worries by making your marriage vows to me. The priest will keep it secret until you're ready to make the news public and we can throw a full marriage celebration that befits my social standing. What do you say?

**SEBASTIAN**

I'll follow the priest and go with you; and after I've sworn to be faithful, I'll be faithful forever.

**OLIVIA**

Then lead the way, father. I want the skies bright and shining to show its approval of our wedding. They all exit.

**Act 5, Scene 1**

The **FOOL** and **FABIAN** enter.

**FABIAN**

If you're my friend, you'll let me see his letter.

**FOOL**

Dear Mr. Fabian, do me another favor first.

**FABIAN**

Anything.

**FOOL**

Don't ask to see this letter.

**FABIAN**

That's like giving someone a dog as a present, and then asking for the dog back in return.

**ORSINO, VIOLA, CURIO**, and lords enter.

**ORSINO**

My friends, are you all Lady Olivia's servants?

**FOOL**

Yes, sir, we're part of her entourage.

**ORSINO**

I know you. How are you, my friend?

**FOOL**

I'm better off because of my enemies, and worse off because of my friends.

**ORSINO**

You mean it the other way around. You're better off because of your friends.

**FOOL**

No, sir, worse off.

**ORSINO**

How can that be?

**FOOL**

Well, my friends praise me and make me look like an idiot, while my enemies tell me straightforwardly that I am an idiot. My enemies help me understand myself better, which is an advantage, and my friends help me lie about myself, which is a disadvantage. So if four negatives make two affirmatives, I'm worse off because of my friends and better off because of my foes.

**ORSINO**

That's excellent.

**FOOL**

Don't say that—unless you want to be one of my friends.

**ORSINO**

*(he gives him a coin)* You won't be worse off because of me: here's some money.

**FOOL**

That's a nice hand you dealt me. But if it's not double-dealing, sir, I wish you'd deal me another.

**ORSINO**

Oh, you're a naughty one, encouraging double-dealing.

**FOOL**

Ignore your virtue and nobility just this once, sir, go ahead.



**ORSINO**

Well, I'll commit the sin of double-dealing, and deal you a second coin. Here it is. (*he gives him another coin*)

**FOOL**

And maybe a third? You know, there's a game called "third time's the charm," which is fun to play, and they always say that three's a magic number. The three-beat rhythm is a good for dancing, and the church bells chime—one, two, three.

**ORSINO**

You can't get any more money out of me right now. If you tell your lady I'm here to speak with her, and bring her out with you when you come back, you might make me more generous.

**FOOL**

Well then, sing a lullaby to your generosity: it'll nap until I come back. But don't think I'm doing this because I'm greedy. I'll be back soon to wake up your generosity.

The **FOOL** exits.

**VIOLA**

Here comes the man who rescued me, sir.

**ANTONIO** and **OFFICERS** enter.

**ORSINO**

I remember his face well. Though the last time I saw him it was black from the smoke of war. He was the captain of a flimsy boat that was practically worthless because it was so small. But with that tiny boat he fought such a fierce battle against the largest warship in our fleet that we had to admire his courage and skill even though he caused us a lot of damage.—What's going on?

**FIRST OFFICER**

Orsino, this is the same Antonio who took the *Phoenix* and her cargo from Crete and captured our ship the *Tiger* during the battle where your young nephew Titus lost his leg. We arrested him here for fighting in the streets. It's as if he didn't care we were on the lookout for him here.

**VIOLA**

He was kind to me and took my side in the fight. But then he said strange things to me. He might be insane. I don't know what else it could be.

**ORSINO**

But you're a famous pirate! A master thief of the seas! What made you stupid and careless enough to come visit the people you robbed and slaughtered?

**ANTONIO**

Orsino, sir, please don't call me those names. I was never a thief or a pirate, though I admit I was your enemy for good reasons. I came here because someone put a spell on me. I rescued that ungrateful boy next to you from drowning. He was a wreck, almost past hope. I saved his life and gave him my love, without reservation. I dedicated myself to him. For his sake I ran the risk of revisiting this unfriendly town, and I drew my sword to defend him when he was in trouble. But when the police caught us, he was clever and treacherous enough to pretend he'd never met me before. He acted like someone who barely knew me. He refused to give me my own wallet, which I had lent him only half an hour before.

**VIOLA**

How is that possible?

**ORSINO**

(*to ANTONIO*) When did he come to town?

**ANTONIO**

Today, my lord. And for three months before that, we spent every day and night together.

**OLIVIA** and attendants enter.

**ORSINO**

Ah, the countess is coming! An angel is walking on earth. But as for you, mister, what you're saying is insane. This young man has worked for me for three months; but more about that later. *(to an officer)* Take him away.

**OLIVIA**

What can I give you that you want, my lord, except the one thing you can't have? Cesario, you missed your appointment with me.

**VIOLA**

Madam?

**ORSINO**

Dearest Olivia—

**OLIVIA**

What do you have to say for yourself, Cesario?—My lord, please—

**VIOLA**

My lord wants to speak. It's my duty to be quiet.

**OLIVIA**

If what you have to say is anything like what you used to say, it'll be as repulsive to my ears as wild screams after beautiful music.

**ORSINO**

Are you still so cruel?

**OLIVIA**

I am still so faithful, my lord.

**ORSINO**

What, faithful to being mean and nasty? You're not polite! I breathed from my soul the most faithful offerings to your ungrateful altars that any devoted person has ever offered—what more am I supposed to do?

**OLIVIA**

You can do whatever you want as long as it's socially appropriate.

**ORSINO**

Maybe I should act like the Egyptian thief who kills the woman he loves before he dies? That kind of savage jealousy sometimes seems noble. But listen to me. Since you keep denying the love I feel for you, and since I know who's stealing my place in your heart, you can go on being cold-hearted, but I'm going to take this boy from you. He knows his master loves you. I'm doing this, even though he's dear to me, because I know you love him. Come with me, boy. I'm ready to do something extreme. I'll sacrifice this boy I care for, just to spite a beautiful woman with a heart of stone.

**VIOLA**

And I would die a thousand deaths cheerfully, if it made your life easier.

**OLIVIA**

Where's Cesario going?

**VIOLA**

Following the one I love more than my eyes or my life. More than I will ever love a wife. That's the truth. The angels in heaven are my witnesses, and can see how pure my love is.

**OLIVIA**

Ah, how awful, I feel so used! I've been tricked!

**VIOLA**

Who tricked you? Who treated you badly?

**OLIVIA**

Have you completely forgotten? Has it been so long? Call the priest.

An attendant exits.

**ORSINO**

(to VIOLA) Come on, let's go!

**OLIVIA**

Go where, my lord?—Cesario, my husband, stay here.

**ORSINO**

Husband?

**OLIVIA**

Yes, husband. Can he deny it?

**ORSINO**

Are you her husband, boy?

**VIOLA**

No, my lord, not me.

**OLIVIA**

You're afraid, so you hide your identity. But don't be afraid, Cesario. Accept the good luck that's come your way. Be the person you know you are, and you'll be as powerful as this person you fear.

The **PRIEST** enters.

Oh, hello, father! Father, could I please ask you to tell these people what happened between me and this young man? (I know we wanted to hide it, but now the situation demands that we reveal everything.)

**PRIEST**

They were joined in an eternal bond of love and matrimony, and it was confirmed by a holy kiss and an exchange of rings. I witnessed it all as priest. It took place just two hours ago.

**ORSINO**

(to VIOLA) Oh, you little liar! How much worse will you be when you're older? Maybe you'll get so good at deceit that your tricks will destroy you. Goodbye, and take her. Just never set foot in any place where you and I might happen to meet.

**VIOLA**

My lord, I swear to you—

**OLIVIA**

Oh, don't swear! Keep a little bit of honesty, even if you're afraid.

**SIR ANDREW** enters.

**SIR ANDREW**

For the love of God, call a doctor! Sir Toby needs help right away.

**OLIVIA**

What's the matter?

**SIR ANDREW**

He cut my head and gave Sir Toby a bloody head, too. For the love of God, help us! I'd give forty pounds to be safe at home right now.

**OLIVIA**

Who did this, Sir Andrew?

**SIR ANDREW**

The count's messenger, Cesario. We thought he was a coward, but he fights like a devil.

**ORSINO**

My Cesario?

**SIR ANDREW**

Oh, no, there he is! —You cut my head for no reason. Anything I did to you, I did it because Sir Toby made me.

**VIOLA**

Why are you talking like this? I never hurt you. You waved your sword at me for no reason, but I was nice to you. I didn't hurt you.

**SIR ANDREW**

If a bloody head counts as a hurt, then you hurt me. Apparently you think there's nothing unusual about a bloody head.

**SIR TOBY BELCH** and the **FOOL** enter.

Here comes Sir Toby, limping. He'll tell you more of the story. If he hadn't been drunk, he would've really roughed you up.

**ORSINO**

Hello, sir! How are you?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

It doesn't matter how I am: he hurt me, and that's that. (*to FOOL*) Fool, have you seen Dick the surgeon?

**FOOL**

Oh, he's drunk, Sir Toby, for a whole hour now. His eyes started glazing over around eight in the morning.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Then he's no good. I hate no-good drunks.

**OLIVIA**

Take him away! Who did this to him?

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll help you, Sir Toby. They'll treat our wounds together.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Will you help me?—What an ass and a fool, a gullible no-good idiot!

**OLIVIA**

Get him to bed and make sure his wounds are treated.

The **FOOL**, **FABIAN**, **SIR TOBY BELCH**, and **SIR ANDREW** exit.

**SEBASTIAN** enters.

**SEBASTIAN**

I'm sorry, madam. I wounded your relative. But I would've been forced to do the same thing to my brother, since my safety was at stake. You're looking at me strangely, so I guess you're

offended. But please forgive me, darling, for the sake of the vows we made to each other so recently.

**ORSINO**

One face, one voice, one way of dressing, but two people! It's like an optical illusion. It is and isn't the same person!

**SEBASTIAN**

Antonio, oh my dear Antonio! I've been so tortured since I lost track of you!

**ANTONIO**

Are you Sebastian?

**SEBASTIAN**

Do you have any doubts, Antonio?

**ANTONIO**

How did you divide yourself in two? These two people are as identical as two halves of an apple. Which one is Sebastian?

**OLIVIA**

How unbelievable!

**SEBASTIAN**

*(looking at VIOLA)* Is that me standing over there? I never had a brother, and I'm certainly not a god who can be in two places at once. I had a sister who drowned. Please tell me, how am I related to you? Are you from my country? What's your name? Who are your parents?

**VIOLA**

I'm from Messaline. Sebastian was my father's name, and my brother was named Sebastian too. He was dressed just like you are when he drowned. If ghosts can take on someone's body and clothes, you must be a spirit who's come to frighten us.

**SEBASTIAN**

I am a spirit, yes, since I have a soul. But my spirit has a body attached to it, one that I've carried since I was in the womb. If you were a woman, I'd hug you now and cry, and say "Welcome back, drowned Viola!"

**VIOLA**

My father had a mole on his forehead.

**SEBASTIAN**

Mine did too.

**VIOLA**

He died on Viola's thirteenth birthday.

**SEBASTIAN**

Oh, I remember that very clearly! It's true, he died on the day my sister turned thirteen.

**VIOLA**

If the only thing keeping us from rejoicing is the fact that I'm wearing men's clothes, then don't hug me till I can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that I'm Viola. I'll take you to a sea captain here in town who's got my women's clothing in storage. He saved my life so I could serve this noble count. Everything that's happened to me since then has involved my relationship with this lady and this lord.

**SEBASTIAN**

(to OLIVIA) So you got it wrong, my lady. But nature fixed everything, turning your love for my sister into a love for me. If you hadn't, you would've married a maiden. But that's not completely wrong. I'm still a virgin, so in a sense I'm a maiden too.

**ORSINO**

(to OLIVIA) Don't be shocked. His blood is noble. If this is all as true as it seems to be, then I'm going to have a share in that lucky shipwreck. (to VIOLA) Boy, you told me a thousand times you'd never love a woman as much as you love me.

**VIOLA**

Everything I said before I'll say again. I swear I meant every word.

**ORSINO**

Give me your hand and let me see you dressed in woman's clothing.

**VIOLA**

The captain who brought me to shore has my women's clothes. For some reason he's in prison now on some legal technicality, on Malvolio's orders. Malvolio is a gentleman in my lady's entourage.

**OLIVIA**

He'll release him.

**FABIAN** and the **FOOL** with a letter enter.

Go and get Malvolio—But, oh no! Now I remember, they say the poor man is mentally ill. I was so crazy myself that I forgot all about him. (to the **FOOL**) How is Malvolio doing, do you know?

**FOOL**

Well, he keeps the devil away as well as a man can in his situation. He's written you a letter. I would've given it to you this morning, but a madman's letters aren't Gospel, so it doesn't matter much if I'm a bit late.

**OLIVIA**

Open it and read it.

**FOOL**

There's a lot to learn when a fool recites the words of a madman. (*he reads*) "I swear to God, madam,"—

**OLIVIA**

Why are you talking like that? Are you insane?

**FOOL**

No, madam, I'm just reading an insane letter. If you want things done in the right way, you'll have to let me read a crazy letter in a crazy voice.

**OLIVIA**

No, please, read it like a sane person.

**FOOL**

I will, my lady, but a sane person reading this would make it sound crazy. So listen up, princess.

**OLIVIA**

(*giving the letter to FABIAN*) Oh, you read it, sir.

**FABIAN**

(*he reads*)

"I swear to God, madam, you've wronged me, and I'll tell the whole world. You've shut me up in a dark room and given your drunken cousin authority over me, but I'm as sane as you are. I've got a letter from you encouraging me to act the way I did. If I didn't have it, I couldn't prove that

I'm right and you're wrong. I don't care what you think of me. I'm going to forget my duties to you a little bit and complain about the injuries you've caused me. Signed,  
The poorly treated Malvolio."

**OLIVIA**

Did he write this?

**FOOL**

Yes, madam.

**ORSINO**

It doesn't sound like an insane person's letter.

**OLIVIA**

Set him free. Fabian, bring him here.

**FABIAN** exits.

My lord, I hope that after you think things over a bit you'll come to like the idea of having me as a sister-in-law instead of a wife. We can have the weddings tomorrow if you want, here at my own house. I'll pay for everything.

**ORSINO**

I accept that offer happily, madam. (*to VIOLA*) So you're free now. I'm offering you my hand in marriage because of your loyal service to me, which was far from what any woman should be expected to do, especially a noble woman. You've called me "master" for so long. And now you'll be your master's mistress.

**OLIVIA**

(*to VIOLA*) You'll be my sister-in-law!

**FABIAN** enters with **MALVOLIO**

**ORSINO**

Is this the madman?

**OLIVIA**

Yes, my lord. How are you, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

Madam, you've treated me badly, very badly.

**OLIVIA**

I did, Malvolio? No.

**MALVOLIO**

(*he hands OLIVIA a paper*) You did. Please have a look at this letter. You can't deny that it's your handwriting. Go ahead and try to write differently, and try to pretend that's not your seal with your design on it. You can't. So just admit it. And tell me honestly, why did you show me such fondness and asked me to smile at you, wear yellow stockings and crisscrossed laces for you, and be rude to Sir Toby and the servants?

And then tell me why you imprisoned me in a dark house after I followed your instructions perfectly. You made me look like the biggest fool that anybody ever tricked. Tell me why you did it.

**OLIVIA**

I'm sorry, Malvolio, but this isn't my writing, though I admit it looks like mine. It's definitely Maria's handwriting. Now that I think about it, Maria was the one who first told me you were insane. That's when you came in smiling at me, dressed up like the letter said, and acting just

like it told you to act. Someone has played a very mean trick on you, but when we find out who's responsible, you won't just be the victim, but the judge who sentences the culprit. I promise.

**FABIAN**

Madam, let me say something. Please don't let squabbles ruin this beautiful and miraculous moment. I confess that Toby and I were the ones who tricked Malvolio because we hated his strict and heavy-handed ways. Sir Toby had Maria write that letter, and he married her as a reward. We should just laugh about the whole thing rather than get upset about it, especially if we consider that each of the two parties offended the other equally.

**OLIVIA**

(to MALVOLIO) Oh, poor fool, they've really humiliated you!

**FOOL**

Well, you know, "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Anyway, I was part of the trick, sir. I pretended to be a priest named Sir Topas. But what does it matter? (*he imitates MALVOLIO*) "I swear, fool, I'm not crazy."—But do you remember what he said about me before? "I'm surprised you enjoy the company of this stupid troublemaker—unless he's got somebody laughing at him, he can't think of anything to say." What goes around comes around.

**MALVOLIO**

I'll get my revenge on every last one of you.

**MALVOLIO** exits.

**OLIVIA**

He really was tricked horribly.

**ORSINO**

Go after him and try to calm him down a little.

Some exit.

He still hasn't told us about the captain. When that's been taken care of and the time is right, we'll all get married. Until then, we'll stay here, my dear sister-in-law. Cesario, come here. I'll keep calling you Cesario while you're still a man, but when we see you in women's clothes you'll be the queen of my dreams, Orsino's true love.

Everyone exits except the **FOOL**

**FOOL**

(*he sings*)

*When I was a tiny little boy,  
With, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
A foolish thing didn't matter much,  
Because the rain it rains every day.  
But when I became a man,  
With, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
People stopped talking to bad guys and thieves.  
Because the rain it rains every day.  
But when I got married, ah, too bad!  
With, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
It did me no good to boast and show off,  
Because the rain, it rains every day.  
But when I had to go to bed*



*With, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
With idiots drunk out of their minds,  
Because the rain it rains every day.  
The world began a long time ago,  
With, hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
But that doesn't matter, our play is done,  
And we'll try to please you every day.*  
The **FOOL** exits.