

Twelfth Night Summaries

2.4

Orsino continues to wallow in self indulgence, saying “ I am as all true lovers are ”

Orsino contradicts himself : “ our fancies are more giddy and unfirm” but then says that women cannot love like men. “ they lack retention”

Viola says ' but I know” almost giving herself away. She explains her sister loved a man but could not tell him and pined away to death.

The Fool sings a song of ' unrequited' love which is a big theme of the play ; loving someone but not having that love returned. “ I am slain by a fair cruel maid) The Fool also sees Orsino clearly, saying ' thy mind is a very opal” (changes colour in the light)

2.5

The trap is set for Malvolio.

Malvolio is fantasising about having married Olivia ; note that his fantasy revolves around the power this would bring him, (“ calling my officers about me “) not to do with Olivia herself. He especially fantasies about dealing with Toby.

Malvolio finds the letter that Olivia planted, and the vague clues convince him that it is Olivia hinting that she loves him.

The letter instructs Malvolio to wear yellow stockings, cross garted, smile, 'be surly with kinsman' and other actions that will make him look a fool ; things Malvolio does not appear to see.

He has been ' blinded' by self -love.'

3.1

The Fool and Viola meet, and the Fool hints that he may actually see Viola for what she is :

' Jove... send thee a beard '

Viola commends his intelligence : ' This fellow is wise enough to play the fool'

This speech is a nice summary of how the Fool is actually the cleverest fellow around ; he sees things for what they really are and has the licence and courage to comment on it.