

Twelfth Night Summaries

Act 1 Scene 4

Back at Orsinos Palace, the Duke orders Viola to go and woo Olivia for him.

Ironically, the Duke thinks Viola has a better chance because she is 'semblative of a woman's part'

Viola confesses in an aside to the audience that she has feelings for the Duke herself. : ' Where I woo, myself would be his wife'

Act 1 Scene 5

Maria is telling off the Fool, the court jester, because he has been away for a long time with no explanation.

The fool comments on Toby's admiration for Maria, and compliments her that she is 'as witty a piece of flesh as any in Illyria '. Maria says ' no more o' that' suggesting she likes Toby, but finds the subject painful because Toby is always drunk.

The Fool calls Olivia a fool, saying she mourns her brother's death yet why if he is in heaven ?

Malvolio and the fool have an exchange and it is clear they do not like each other.

Olivia calls Malvolio ' sick of self -love '

Viola arrives and is held at the gate by a drunk Sir Toby.

Olivia chides him for his drunkenness.

Malvolio tells Olivia that Cesario says he will stand outside and not leave, so she relents and lets him in.

Viola manages to charm Olivia, who is clearly intrigued and asks about her, but still has no interest in the Duke.

Olivia says Viola can come back, if only to tell how Orsino takes the rejection.

As Viola leaves, Olivia says ' How quickly may one catch the plague '
She has fallen in love with Viola !

She admits 'mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind'

Summary so far

Duke Orsino says he is in love with Olivia, though it seems superficial

Viola arrives shipwrecked on the coast, and determines to disguise herself as a man and work for the Duke.

At Olivia's house, Toby is chided by Maria, a witty servant woman, for his late hours and drunkenness. They discuss Sir Andrew, who Toby defends but Maria criticizes as a dimwit and quarreler.

Sir Andrew enters and it is clear Toby mocks him openly but Sir Andrew is too dim to tell he is being mocked. Toby lies to him and says he has a chance with Olivia, to get Sir Andrew to stay and pay for the drinks

Orsino takes Viola, disguised as ' Cesario' into his confidence. He sends Viola to woo Olivia.

Viola successfully woos Olivia, who sends a ring after her as a signal to comeback. Olivia confesses to herself she has fallen in love with Viola.