

The Story of *Twelfth Night, or All You Need is Love*  
Adapted by Lesley and Robert Currier from Shakespeare

Welcome to Illyria, the most hip, far out, psychedelic place in the world! So begins Robert and Lesley Currier's adaptation of *Twelfth Night, or All You Need is Love* for Marin Shakespeare Company's 20<sup>th</sup> Season!

As the Valentines, a hip singing combo, welcome us to the court of Duke Orsino, the ruler of Illyria, we find the despondent Orsino pining for his love, the beautiful Countess Olivia. "If music be the food of love, play on," he commands. The singers are only too happy to oblige with a love song, but a distracted Orsino stops them with "enough, no more: 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before." Then there is unwelcomed news. The Lady Olivia will not see Orsino, and to make matters worse, she has vowed to remain hidden, in mourning for her brother's death, for a full seven years! Lovesick, Orsino revels in his melancholy: "Away before me to sweet beds of flowers: / Love thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers."

The scene now flies to the seacoast of Illyria where a Sea Captain and some sailors have swum ashore after having been tossed overboard in a shipwreck off the coast. In their company is a young lady, Viola, who laments the loss of her twin brother Sebastian who she thinks has drowned in the shipwreck. But she turns to the task of self-preservation, asking the Sea Captain where she is, and how she can best survive on her own. Upon learning she is in Illyria, Viola decides to disguise herself as a man and join the service of Orsino, as it is her best chance of remaining safe.

We now get our first glimpse into the house of Olivia, Duke Orsino's beloved. Olivia's uncle, the aptly-named Sir Toby Belch, is getting an earful from Olivia's friend and maid, Maria who declares: "That quaffing and drinking will undo you." Toby shrugs off the reprimand and the conversation turns to Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a bumbling fool who Toby has invited visit – along with his fortune, which Toby is only too happy to help spend on booze and entertainments. Andrew is in love with Olivia and hopes to win her hand in marriage. But there seems little chance of that, as Andrew proves his inadequacy in the realm of love, attempting, in vain, to woo Maria. As a rebuffed Andrew threatens to leave the next day, Toby persuades him to stay and party on.

Back at Orsino's, we find that Viola has disguised herself as a boy and, calling herself Cesario, gained employment in Orsino's household. The first thing Orsino does is to send her, um...him, to Olivia to try to woo her for Orsino. But before Cesario leaves to do Orsino's bidding, he (um, she) shares a painful secret with the audience: "Yet a barful strife! Who'er I woo, myself would be his wife."

At Olivia's house we meet Feste, a wandering clown and songster and a favorite in Olivia's house, who has been missing for quite some time. As Feste prays for his wit to get him out of trouble with Olivia, the lady herself enters, bidding her servants to send Feste away. The fool, however, cleverly outwits Olivia and she forgives him

with a laugh. Olivia's uptight steward Malvolio, however, does not mince words in expressing his disapproval of Feste. When Maria declares there is a gentleman at the gate who won't leave, Olivia sends Malvolio to check things out. He returns saying: "Madam, yond young fellow swears he will speak with you. I told him you were sick; he takes on him to understand so much and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and therefore comes to speak with you." This intrigues Olivia, who asks what the young man is like, but Malvolio's answers are cryptic, so Olivia decides to see for herself. She covers her face with her mourning veil and allows the "young man," Cesario, in.

Cesario enters formally, with a rehearsed speech, but stops, uncertain which is the lady of the house, "for I never saw her: I would be loath to cast away my speech, for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to con it." Olivia teases Cesario, but finally removes her veil, declaring she will not hear Orsino's entreaties. Yet Cesario attempts to do Orsino's bidding. But Olivia has other ideas – she is more interested in this stubborn young man and wants to know all about him. Cesario finally gives up and leaves, but not before Olivia has fallen head-over-heels in love. Fearing she will never see him again, Olivia precipitously sends Malvolio with a ring, which she claims Cesario forced upon her, bidding Malvolio to return it, and to tell the gentleman, if he protests, to come back tomorrow. Alone, Olivia reveals: "I do I know not what, and fear to find / Mine eye to great a flatterer for my mind. / Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe; / What is decreed must be, and be this so." Love knows no pride.

Back on the Illyrian seacoast, we meet a sad Sebastian, who reveals he has just lost his twin sister in a shipwreck at sea, even as he was saved by his new friend, the Sea Captain Antonio. The audience, of course, knows this lost twin sister is Viola, and that she is not lost at all! As Sebastian goes off to explore Illyria, Antonio reveals he has enemies in Illyria, so needs to disguise himself as he accompanies his friend.

Elsewhere in Illyria, Malvolio has caught up with Cesario and delivers a haughty speech along with Olivia's ring, which he drops on the ground before abruptly leaving. Viola is utterly confused...until it occurs to her that Olivia has indeed fallen in love, not with Orsino – with Cesario! Viola exclaims: "O time, thou must untangle this, not I. / 'Tis too hard a knot for me to untie."

Night falls in Illyria but all is not quiet in Olivia's house! Toby and Andrew are on a binge, and when Feste joins them, their drunken singing awakens Maria, who tries to hush them, and Malvolio, who threatens to have them all kicked out of the house (and therefore separated from Olivia's money.) As Malvolio stalks away, the others mutter empty threats until Maria comes up with a plan: she will mimic Olivia's handwriting and drop a letter in Malvolio's path, leading him to believe that Olivia loves him! They know Malvolio has an inflated opinion of himself and will easily be fooled! They all agree this is just the sort of trick to knock Malvolio down a few pegs.

Back at Orsino's, Feste is summoned to provide a long song – although he might be getting suspicious about who is in love with whom! Orsino commands Cesario to “Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty” and press his suit to Olivia again. Viola argues: “Say that some lady, as perhaps there is, / Hath for your love as great a pang of heart / As you have for Olivia: you cannot love her, / You tell her so; must she not then be answer'd?” Without revealing herself as a woman, Viola then gives an honest account of her own love for Orsino, referring to herself as “my father's daughter,” which leaves both Orsino and Viola utterly confused.

Meanwhile, Maria, Toby and Andrew hide as Malvolio struts arrogantly, daydreaming about winning Olivia's love. When he discovers the letter Maria has just dropped, he finally concludes (just as Maria intended) it is proof of Olivia's love! The letter commands him to act contrary to his typical style to signal that Olivia's love is requited. Following the letter's instructions, Malvolio vows to smile and don yellow stockings. Toby and Andrew are thrilled with Maria's genius! Maria explains: “mark his first approach before my lady: he will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a color she abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests; and he will smile upon her, which will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt. If you will see it, follow me.”

As a love-struck Olivia welcomes Cesario's return, Andrew eavesdrops. Cesario tries to keep his distance but Olivia brazenly declares her love. Cesario rebuts that he will never marry a woman (how true!!) and will never come to see Olivia again.

When Andrew comes out of hiding, he vows to leave immediately as it is obvious Olivia is in love with Cesario. But Toby has other plans and provokes Andrew to challenge Cesario to a duel. As Andrew goes off to write the challenge, Maria and Toby rush to witness what promises to be an enormously funny encounter between Olivia and a lovestruck Malvolio!

A few streets away, Antonio has caught up with Sebastian and explains that he must lay low in Illyria to avoid the authorities. They decide to split up so that Sebastian can see the sights and Antonio can hide, planning to meet later at the Elephant Inn. Out of love for the young man, Antonio gives Sebastian his purse of money, in case he sees something he wants to buy.

When Malvolio appears cross-gartered in yellow stockings and smiling from ear to ear, Olivia concludes he is dangerously insane. Toby and Maria are charged to have him locked up, and they proclaim he is bewitched. When Andrew enters with a ridiculously worded challenge for Cesario, Toby promises to deliver it, confiding to Maria he intends to have a little fun with this scheme as well!

As Cesario leaves Olivia, Toby challenges Cesario to duel with Andrew, claiming him to be a brilliant fighter! Cesario – who hasn't been trained to duel, like a man – balks

and begs Toby to try to make peace, which Toby says he will do. But instead, Toby tells Andrew what a fierce and angry fighter Cesario is! The game continues as Toby terrifies each dueler, eventually getting Andrew to offer up his horse if Toby can only manage to get the duel called off.

As the fight gets underway, Antonio enters and breaks it up, only to be challenged by Toby. But before they can duel, some officers recognize and arrest Antonio, who indeed has enemies in Illyria. Before Antonio is taken away, he asks Cesario (thinking he is talking to Sebastian) for his money back, so that he can make bail. Cesario, not knowing who Antonio is (and not having his money), offers him a few coins, and Antonio declares: "Thou hast, Sebastian, done a good feature shame" as he is led away. Viola is stunned to be mistaken for her dead twin brother, Sebastian. Andrew (suddenly bold, now that the threat is gone) boasts: "A coward, a most devout coward. I'll after him again and beat him."

In Olivia's garden, Feste encounters Sebastian, who Feste believes is Cesario. When Andrew and Toby find Sebastian and challenge him, he – unlike his twin sister – is well trained at fighting and quickly beats Andrew, before turning to Toby. But Olivia, thinking she is protecting Cesario, commands the duel to stop. She shoos the others away and when she apologizes to who-she-thinks-is-Cesario, she is most pleasantly surprised when her affections are whole-heartedly returned by a very surprised young man!

Meanwhile, Toby has had Malvolio bound and placed in a dark cell – typical treatment for someone who is insane. Feste dresses as a local religious figure and torments Malvolio while Maria and Toby watch, but even Toby has to admit the prank is turning sour. Feste, no longer in disguise, promises to help Malvolio write a letter to Olivia.

But Olivia has no thought at all of Malvolio. She rushes Sebastian into a quick wedding ceremony before he can change his mind!

When Orsino shows up with Cesario in tow, the officers pass by with the captured Antonio and Cesario tells Orsino "here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me" and encourages Orsino to be lenient with him. Antonio tells the story of the shipwreck and subsequent events, but Orsino brushes him off as the beautiful Olivia arrives on the scene. When she has eyes only for Cesario, Orsino flies into a rage and storms away, Cesario following, and when Olivia asks where he is going, Cesario says "after him I love," to which Olivia replies: "Cesario, husband, stay." Orsino is shocked to hear Cesario hailed as Olivia's husband!

But when Sebastian joins the group, the confusion is unraveled, much to the chagrin of many. Orsino declares to Viola: "Give me thy hand / And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds."

The happy moment is interrupted by Feste, who bears Malvolio's letter and the

madman is brought forward. He thrusts Olivia's love letter at her, demanding an explanation. Olivia reads the note and sighs: "Alas, Malvolio, this is not my writing, / Though, I confess, much like the character / But out of question 'tis Maria's hand." Feste confirms Maria's trickery and announces that Toby has married her for the jest! Malvolio, finding himself made a fool, storms off with: "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!" Feste bids us a fond farewell, and the celebration begins! Really, all you need is love.