



SAMPLE – INCOMPLETE SCRIPT

a Community Shakespeare Company
edition of

Twelfth Night

original verse adaptation by
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“Enriching young lives, cultivating community”

NOTES ABOUT PRODUCTION

The author asks that anyone planning to stage one of his adaptations please contact him for permission, via the CSC website: www.communityshakespeare.org. There are no performance royalties due. He asks that scripts be purchased for every member of a cast.

Frequently asked questions include, “What if my group is mostly girls?” Cross-casting (females playing male roles) is almost inevitable; once it is explained that males played all the female roles in Shakespeare’s time, this obstacle is easily overcome. Moreover, girls see that many of the “big” parts are male, so those wanting more stage time gravitate toward male roles. The author also encourages groups to take certain liberties, such as changing the sex of some roles. With little alteration of the text, a duke may become a duchess, an uncle may become an aunt.

In answer to the question, “What if I have too many (or too few) students?” some parts may be divided amongst several actors (a messenger becomes two messengers), or actors may take on more than one role. In short, do what is necessary to make the play fun and accessible for young people; the author did!

Synopsis of the play

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is in love with Olivia, a proud and beautiful countess. She spurns his suit, being in mourning for her late father and brother.

A shipwreck lands Viola and Sebastian – twin brother and sister – on different parts of the Illyrian coast. Each believes the other is dead. Viola asks her sailor companions to disguise her as “*an eunuch*,” so that she may travel unknown. Arriving at Orsino’s court, she immediately becomes his confidante. Dressed in man’s attire (based on her brother’s), she becomes “*the youth, Cesario*.”

At Olivia’s, Sir Toby Belch (Olivia’s uncle) has a questionable influence on his niece’s household. He comes in late, too often drunk, and invites “*a foolish knight*” (Sir Andrew Aguecheek) to woo Olivia and join in his revels. Olivia’s servants, Maria, Fabian, and the jester Feste round out this boisterous household.

Their foil is Olivia’s steward, Malvolio, who has little patience for drunkards and fools. He is “*sick of self-love*,” and the others can’t resist playing a trick on him. Maria concocts a phony love letter that Malvolio finds and believes was written to him by Olivia. He follows its instructions, appearing in ridiculous attire and acting “*madly*” before his bewildered mistress.

Meanwhile, Viola’s twin brother, Sebastian, surfaces in Illyria, befriended by the brave Antonio, a soldier of fortune. Like his sister, Sebastian makes for Orsino’s court, and Antonio is compelled to follow him, even at risk to his own life. Antonio once fought against Orsino’s ships at sea, and if recognized could be imprisoned, or worse. Nearing Orsino’s court, he gives Sebastian all his money to keep for him.

Orsino sends Cesario (Viola) to woo Olivia on his behalf. His miscalculation couldn’t be worse: Olivia falls in love with the “youth” at first sight. Cesario (Viola) has her own problems: she is in love with Orsino (who thinks she is a man).

The scheme against Malvolio soon lands him in the madhouse, where Feste joins Sir Toby and others in taunting him. They all begin to think the jest may have gone too far, but their taste for mayhem still leads Sir Toby and Fabian to have Sir Andrew challenge Cesario (Viola) to a duel.

At that instant, Antonio arrives, defending Cesario, whom he mistakes for Sebastian. (because they are twins and dressed alike.) Captured by officers, Antonio asks Cesario for some of the money he gave “him.” Cesario (Viola) knows nothing of this, but she begins to think her brother may yet be living.

The real Sebastian then meets Olivia, who mistakes him for her beloved Cesario. Instead of spurning Olivia (as Cesario does), Sebastian is receptive to her overtures. Olivia immediately sends for a priest to marry them.

As everyone begins to arrive in one place, Cesario (Viola) denies having married Olivia and Orsino fumes, till Sebastian appears. The twins are reunited, Olivia gets her man (or at least, a twin), and it remains only for Viola to retrieve her "*woman's weeds*" (feminine attire) so that she and Orsino may be properly wed. Only "*the madly-used Malvolio*" is unhappy, but Fabian is dispatched to humor him, as Feste sings a lively song to end the play.

ABOUT THE SONGS IN THE PLAY

Melodies for most of the songs used in this script can be found in Shakespeare's Songbook, by Ross W. Duffin, pub. 2004 by W. W. Norton & Company, NY, NY, ISBN 0-393-05889-1, along with information about Shakespeare's music, and the process of tracking down appropriate tunes. Users may find the original songs unwieldy for young actors, in which case they are encouraged to write or find their own tunes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VIOLA (<i>later disguised as CESARIO</i>)	
SEBASTIAN	twins shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria
CAPTAIN	Viola's rescuer in the shipwreck
SAILORS	from the shipwreck
ANTONIO	Sebastian's friend, also a sea captain
ORSINO	Duke of Illyria
VALENTINE and CURIO	gentlemen attending on the Duke
OLIVIA	a countess living in Illyria
MARIA	Olivia's lady-in-waiting
FESTE	Olivia's fool
MALVOLIO	steward of Olivia's household
FABIAN	a member of Olivia's household
LADIES-IN-WAITING	in Olivia's household
SIR TOBY BELCH	Olivia's uncle
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK	Sir Toby's friend
A PRIEST	
OFFICERS	
MUSICIANS	
ATTENDANTS	

This play should run 85-90 minutes without intermission.

ACT I, Scene 1

Scene: Illyria. Most of the action moves between Orsino's court and Olivia's house.

(THE DUKE'S PALACE. MUSIC. ENTER ORSINO, DUKE OF ILLYRIA, CURIO, MUSICIANS AND ATTENDANTS.)

ORSINO

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that the appetite may be gone.
That strain* again, it had a dying fall: (**musical phrase*)
It came o'er my ear like the sweet breeze I recall
When sitting on a bank of violets. Enough, no more.
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh thou art.

CURIO

Will you go hunt, my lord?

ORSINO

What, Curio?

CURIO

The hart.* (**deer*)

ORSINO

Why so I do, the noblest that I have.
Not the deer you mean, but dear Olivia's love.
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought the sight of her did quench all thirst.
That instant was *I* turned into a deer;
My desires, like hounds, pursue me far and near.
(ENTER VALENTINE)
How now? What news from her?

VALENTINE

So please my lord,
I might not be admitted to speak one word,
But from her handmaid do return this tale:
Till seven years pass, she shall not lift her veil,
But like a cloistered nun will walk her chamber,
And weep a dead brother's love she would remember.

ORSINO

O, she that hath a heart of such fine frame,
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,

How will she love when stricken for some *other*
Man? When liver, brain, and heart are all three filled
With one self-king: true love! She'll be thrilled!
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers!
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

(EXEUNT)

ACT I, Scene 2

(THE SEA COAST: ENTER VIOLA, A CAPTAIN AND SAILORS)

VIOLA

What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN

Illyria, lady.

VIOLA

What should I do in Illyria, when the shady
Paths of Elysium* hold my brother. (**Heaven, in Greek mythology*)
Perchance he is not drown'd. What think you, one another?

SAILOR

It is perchance that you yourself were found.

VIOLA

And so perchance my brother is not drowned.

CAPTAIN

True, madam, have comfort, for when our ship did split,
I saw your brother - from the boat where we did sit -
Bind himself to a strong mast on the sea,
And ride the waves so long as I could see.

VIOLA

For saying so, there's gold. Know'st thou this land?

CAPTAIN

Aye, madam, I was born three hours from where we stand.

VIOLA

Who governs here?

CAPTAIN

Orsino, a noble duke,
In nature as in name, above rebuke.

VIOLA

Orsino! I have heard my father name him.
He was a bachelor then.

SAILOR

And is now, unless some woman claim him,

For but a month ago I went from hence,
And 'twas murmured then he sought for recompense
The love of fair Olivia.

VIOLA

Say, what's she?

CAPTAIN

A virtuous maid, whose father died at sea,
Leaving her in the protection of her brother,
Who died, like her father, one after the other.

SAILOR

They say she renounced the company of men,
For love of those she lost.

CAPTAIN

More's the pity, then.

VIOLA

O, that I served that lady and might not show the world
My station,* till the right time has unfurled. (**social status*)
There's fair behavior in thee, and I'll pay thee well:
Conceal me in such disguise as I shall tell
Thee. I'll serve this duke; as a eunuch* thou shalt present me – (**a neutered male*)
For I can sing – he'll thank thee, having sent me.
What else may hap, to time I will commit;
Only shape thou thy silence to my wit.

CAPTAIN

Be you his eunuch, and your mute I'll be
When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

VIOLA

I thank thee. Lead me on.

(EXEUNT)

ACT I, Scene 3

(OLIVIA'S HOUSE: ENTER SIR TOBY BELCH AND MARIA)

SIR TOBY

What a plague means my niece to take the death of her brother thus?
Care's an enemy to life. She makes too much fuss.

MARIA

Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o'nights:
My lady excepts* to your drinking and fights. (**objects*)

SIR TOBY

Let her except.

MARIA

Confine yourself within the modest limits of order.

SIR TOBY

I'll confine myself no finer than I am. Confine me no such border!
These clothes are good enough to drink in, and so be these boots, too -
If they be not, let them hang themselves by their own straps. (SNEEZES) Achoo!

MARIA

That drinking will undo you. My lady spoke of it yesterday,
And of a foolish knight you brought to woo her, I must say.

SIR TOBY

Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA

Aye, he.

SIR TOBY

He's as tall a man as I know.

MARIA

He's a fool, and a prodigal.

SIR TOBY

Fie that you say so!
He plays the viol-de-gamboys,* and speaks three languages without book. (**cello*)
He has three thousand ducats a year; *that's* worth another look.

MARIA

He's a fool and a quarreler; like you he won't behave.

And but that he hath the gift of a coward, he'd quickly have the gift of a grave.

SIR TOBY

They're scoundrels that say so. Who are they?

MARIA

They that add, moreover,
That he's drunk nightly in your company

SIR TOBY

Drinking healths to my niece, the old rover!
I'll drink to her while there's passage in my throat, and drink in Illyria still.
Why, here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

MARIA

(ASIDE) If he were a pickle, he'd be a dill.

(ENTER SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK)

SIR ANDREW

Sir Toby Belch! How now?

SIR TOBY

Sweet Sir Andrew, good day!

SIR ANDREW

(TO MARIA) Bless you, fair shrew.

MARIA

And you, sir.

SIR TOBY

(ASIDE TO SIR ANDREW) Have you no more to say?
Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.* (**speak*)

SIR ANDREW

What's that?

SIR TOBY

My niece's chambermaid.

SIR ANDREW

(TO MARIA) Good Mistress Accost . . .

MARIA

My name is Mary.

SIR ANDREW

Mistress Mary Accost . . .

SIR TOBY

(TAKING SIR ANDREW ASIDE) That's not what I said.
"Accost" is board her, woo her; assail her, man!

SIR ANDREW

(ACKNOWLEDGING THE AUDIENCE)
In front of all these people? I'm not sure that I can.
Is that the meaning of accost?

MARIA

Gentlemen, fare you well.

SIR TOBY

An' thou let her part so, Sir Andrew, you're no swell:
Thou might's never draw sword again!

SIR ANDREW

An' thou part so, mistress, I swear,
I might never draw sword again!

SIR TOBY

(ASIDE) Trust me, he wouldn't dare.

SIR ANDREW

Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?

MARIA

Nay, sir, for I have not *you* by the hand.

SIR ANDREW

Here is my hand.

MARIA

Now, sir, thought is free.

SIR ANDREW

But what's your jest?

MARIA

A dry jest. Take it from me.

SIR ANDREW

Are you full of them?

MARIA

Aye, I have them at my fingers' ends.
Now I let go your hand, I'm barren.* (**empty*)
(EXIT)

SIR TOBY

Ha! She sends
Me! (LAUGHS) O knight: when did I see thee so put down?

SIR ANDREW

Never in your life.

SIR TOBY

She's the funniest wench in town.

SIR ANDREW

Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian;
But I'm great eater of beef, and that harms my wit.

SIR TOBY

No question.

SIR ANDREW

Faith, I'll home tomorrow; your niece will have none of me.
The Count Orsino woos her; they'll just make fun of me.

SIR TOBY

She'll none o' the Count; she'll not match above her degree.
Tut, there's life in it man! Take it from me.

SIR ANDREW

I'll stay a month longer. I'm a fellow o' the strangest mind:
I delight in masques and revels. Shall we set about to find
Some?

SIR TOBY

What shall we do else? Were we not born under Taurus, we?

SIR ANDREW

Taurus? That's sides and heart; how can that be?

SIR TOBY

No, sir, it is legs and thighs. Let me see thee dance:
Ha, higher! Ha, ha, excellent! Now you stand a chance!

(EXEUNT)

ACT I, Scene 4

(THE DUKE'S COURT: ENTER VALENTINE, AND VIOLA *DRESSED LIKE A MAN*)

VALENTINE

If the Duke continue these favors towards you, young man,
You're like to be much advanced, if anyone can
Be. He hath known you but three days, Cesario, and already
You are no stranger; you've been his companion steady.

VIOLA

I thank you. Here comes the Count.

(ENTER ORSINO, CURIO, AND ATTENDANTS)

ORSINO

Who saw Cesario, ho!

VIOLA

On your attendance, my lord, here.

ORSINO

The rest of you, go.

(THE OTHERS MOVE OFF)

Cesario, to thee I've opened the book of my soul:

To win fair Olivia, thou know'st is my goal.

Therefore, good youth, address thy gait* unto her, (**direct your steps*)

Be not denied access; stand at her door and woo her.

VIOLA

My lord, if she be so full of sorrow as is spoke,

She never will admit me; please don't joke.

ORSINO

Be clamorous, and leap all civil bounds

Rather than return unprofited from these rounds.

VIOLA

Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

ORSINO

Unfold the passion of my love: the why, the when!

It shall become thee well to act my woes:

Say how I pine for her from my head to my toes!

She will attend it so much better in thy youth.

VIOLA

I think not so, my lord.

ORSINO

Dear lad, forsooth:

Thy constellation is right apt for this affair,

Diana's lip is not more smooth than yours right there,

And thy small pipe* is as the maiden's, shrill and sound. (**voice*)

All is semblative* of a woman's part: I'm glad I found (**resembles*)

Thee. Prosper well in this, and thou shalt live as freely thy lord:

To call his fortunes thine, Cesario, by my word.

(EXIT)

VIOLA

I'll do my best. (ASIDE) Yet what a barful strife!*

(**struggle full of obstacles*)

Whoe're I woo, myself would be his wife.

(EXIT)

ACT I, Scene 5

(OLIVIA'S HOUSE: ENTER MARIA AND FESTE)

MARIA

Tell me where thou hast been, or I'll not open my lips for thy excuse;
My lady will hang thee for thy absence.

FESTE

Let her hang me; what's the use?
He that is well hanged in this world is one that sees nothing to fear.
Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.

MARIA

Peace, rogue, she'll overhear.
Here comes my lady: make your excuse wisely, you were best.

FESTE

Wit, put me into good fooling; she'll put me to the test.
(ENTER OLIVIA, WITH MALVOLIO, AND LADIES-IN-WAITING)
God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA

Take the fool away.

FESTE

(TO OTHERS) Do you hear? Take away the lady.

OLIVIA

(TO FESTE) I'll no more of you. You grow dishonest.

FESTE

Truly, madonna, I'm not so shady.
Good madonna; give me leave to prove you a fool.

OLIVIA

Can you do it?

FESTE

With skill.

OLIVIA

Make your proof, then, for want of other amusement.

FESTE

Good madonna, I will.
Why mournest thou?

OLIVIA

For my brother's death, as you know well.

FESTE

Madonna, I think thy brother's soul is languishing in hell.

OLIVIA

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

FESTE

The more fool, madonna, to mourn.
Thy brother's soul being in heaven, is a soul that's been reborn.
Take away the fool, gentlemen.

OLIVIA

What think you, Malvolio, of this fool?

MALVOLIO

I marvel your ladyship delights in this barren rascal.

FESTE

I'm cool.

MALVOLIO

I saw him put down by an ordinary fool, that had no more brain than a stone.
I marvel that wise men crow at these set kind of fools; they make me groan.

OLIVIA

O you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered tongue.

(ENTER MARIA)

MARIA

Madam, there is at the gate a gentleman would speak with you; he's quite young.

OLIVIA

From the Count Orsino, is it?

MARIA

I know not: 'tis a fair man, and not alone.

.... (scene incomplete)....