

## THE PLOT

Sebastian and Viola, twin brother and sister, are separated in a shipwreck off the coast of Illyria. Each believes the other has drowned. Viola disguises herself as a boy and becomes employed as a page named Cesario in the court of Duke Orsino. Orsino is in love with the Countess Olivia, and he sends his page Cesario (Viola) to her in order to present his amorous case. Olivia is in mourning for a dead brother, and refuses to see any suitors. Even so, she is so taken with the grace and eloquence of the Duke's page that she falls passionately in love with the "boy." In the Countess's household are a melancholy steward, Malvolio; Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch; his foppish friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek; and a clown named Feste. Aguecheek is a foolish knight who pays Sir Toby to advance his own case with Olivia.

In the meantime, Sebastian (whom Viola thinks has drowned) arrives in Illyria with Antonio, a sea captain. Using Malvolio as a courier, Olivia sends Cesario a ring that "he" supposedly left with her. Because of Malvolio's arrogant behavior, Sir Toby and Olivia's maid, Maria, plan a revenge plot against him. They write a letter—supposedly from the Countess—to Malvolio that makes him think that

Olivia is in love with him. The false letter urges Malvolio always to smile broadly and wear yellow garters. (It is a color that Olivia detests.)

Duke Orsino is still in love, and sends his page Cesario back once again to Olivia. When the Countess sees the "boy," she now becomes openly passionate with "him." Sir Toby is afraid that his crony Aguecheek might leave the court because of the rival lover, and gets the cowardly knight to challenge Cesario to a duel. Elsewhere in the city, the sea captain Antonio, afraid that he might be imprisoned because of enemies in Orsino's court, leaves all his money with Sebastian for safekeeping. The revenge plot against Malvolio proceeds. Olivia thinks him mad and has him locked up in a solitary room. Sir Toby finally manages to have Aguecheek challenge Cesario. By chance, Antonio sees the fight, thinks that Cesario is the twin brother, Sebastian, and rushes in to help. Officers of Orsino's court recognize Antonio and arrest him. The captain asks Cesario, whom he thinks is Sebastian, for the money he gave him for such an emergency. The page claims (truthfully) that "he" has never seen Antonio before. Cesario thanks the old captain for his help,

but has no money to return. Antonio is led off.

Aguecheek tries to find Cesario to continue the duel, but meets the twin brother Sebastian instead of the page. Sebastian takes up the challenge, and wounds both the knight and Sir Toby. Olivia comes upon this scene. Thinking that Sebastian is Cesario, she leads the twin brother into her house, calls for a priest and marries the amazed young man. To complete the plot against Malvolio, who has been locked up all this time, Maria sends the clown Feste down to taunt the steward in the disguise of a priest.

Duke Orsino arrives with Cesario at Olivia's house just as Antonio is being carried away by the guards. The Duke supports Cesario's claim the "he" has never seen the captain before, but Orsino is outraged when Olivia refers to the page as her husband. Now Sir Toby and Aguecheek accuse Cesario of attacking them. Confusion reigns until Sebastian appears, and with the reuniting of the twins, all mysteries are solved. Olivia accepts Sebastian as her husband, and Duke Orsino, discovering the Cesario is really a woman, takes Viola as his wife. Only Malvolio is left to remain the malcontent.