

# Make notes on the characters of viola and sebastian

Literature



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In "Twelfth Night", Viola's character comes across stronger than Sebastian's. This is probably because we only get to know Sebastian towards the finale of the play where all the confusion is going on, whereas we have been following Viola's story throughout the play. Viola comes across as a very tough character. For instance when Viola is saved from the sea by the sailor and thinks her that her brother is dead and she is half drowned herself, she doesn't sit around and cry like other women in plays.

Viola makes a plan and decides to just carry on with her own life. Viola is also a caring person because when Olivia falls in love with her instead of just not going to see her she tries to let her down gently. After Olivia giving Viola a long speech about how much she loves her and how she loves her instead of telling her to stop being stupid or to get lost, after letting Olivia down gently Viola says " Grace and good disposition attend your ladyship! You'll nothing madam, to my lord by me? (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 120/121)

Which not only shows that she doesn't want to hurt Olivia's feelings but also shows her selflessness, that she is still thinking of Orsino even after being told that Olivia is in love with her. Viola's selflessness also come across at the start of the play where she falls in love with Orsino but to make him happy she still tries to woo Olivia for him even though she wants to be with him and not her. Once we meet Sebastian in Act 2 he comes across as a grateful kind person when he is thanking Antonio who saved him from drowning. " My determinate voyage is mere extravagancy.

But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of modesty that you will not extort me from what I am willing to keep in. " (Act 2 Scene 1 Lines 8/9) But later on

in Scene 4 Act 1, when Sebastian is in Olivia's garden and Sir Andrew mistakes him for Viola and wants to fight Sebastian's masculinity comes you. " I will be free from thee {draws sword} What wouldst thou now? If thou dars't temp me further draw thy sword. " (Act 4 Scene 1 Lines 33-35). Viola and Sebastian are the most important people in the play since it is all about them. It begins with them being separated and ends with them being reunited.

The play's comic aspect was one of great popularity in Shakespeare's time. In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Comedy Of Errors* and in *Twelfth Night*, the comedy is of mistaken identity. What makes the play even funnier is that in Shakespeare's time women weren't allowed to act, so Cesario would have actually have been a man, playing a woman, playing a man. Sebastian and Viola are equally important in the Orsino and Olivia story because without them the story wouldn't progress. The play is also a love story involving many different types of love. Most of them involve Sebastian or Viola.

For instance, the misplaced love of Olivia for Viola, the hopeless love of Viola for Orsino, the family love of Viola and Sebastian for each other, the friendship between Antonio and Sebastian and Orsino and Viola. Without Viola or Sebastian there wouldn't be any of these love stories Write character studies of: Sir Toby Belch: Sir Toby Belch is Olivia the Duchess's uncle who is very fun-loving and enjoys drinking. " Th'art a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink. Marian, I say, a stoup of wine! " Sir Toby Belch is also a keen-witted person, even when he is drunk, and his intelligence contrasts sharply with his dupe, Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

In his relationship with Sir Andrew, Sir Toby displays a manipulative side to his character. He fools the gullible knight into believing that he could marry Olivia so that he will remain in her house and continue to fund his drinking habits. Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before them? Are they like to take dust, like Mistress Mall's picture? Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto? Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jug; I would not so much as make water but in sink-a-pace. What dost thou mean?

Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was formed under the star of galliard. " Sir Andrew Aguecheek Sir Andrew is a tall thin and very stupid knight. He is staying at Olivia's house at the invitation of Sir Toby Belch. He is rich and Sir Toby encourages him to keep wooing the unwooable Olivia so that he will finance their regular drinking sessions. Sir Andrew Aguecheek is foolish and easily tricked. He does not realize that he has been cheated. Sir Andrew only stays because Sir Toby keeps telling him that Olivia is considering him as a possible suitor.

In addition, he is a coward. For example when Sebastian stands up to him he backs down very quickly. A good deal of the humour surrounding him comes from how he is tricked. Orsino The Duke Duke Orsino's opening speech in Act 1 tells us something about his character and mood. He is in love but this doesn't bring him happiness, rather a profound melancholy. His speech turns to images of disease and death. " excess... surfeiting... sicken... die... dying"

(lines 2/4) and it is clear that Orsino is not an active lover focused on his beloved.

He is preoccupied with the sensation of love itself, feeling his emotions with music and elaborate poetic images. Orsino has probably seen Olivia only once and her image as insipid to him in a kind of romantic indulgence. A belief that if she doesn't love him in return, he will die. From this passive, self-regarding emotion comes his employment of Cesario (Viola) as a messenger who will do his wooing for him. Orsino is an inconsistent character as Feste points out in Act 2 Scene 4 with a mind of "opal" (line 75) He begs for music to reflect his mood, then quickly becomes bored.

This changeable nature, however, makes his sudden transference of affection from Olivia to Viola at the end of the play believable. Choose two episodes from the play that you found particularly enjoyable and effective. Explore the contribution to the play of each of the episodes you have selected and analyse how Shakespeare makes each one dramatically effective. The first episode I have chosen starts at Act 3 Scene 4 and is the episode in which Malvolio finds the letter written by Maria which he thinks is from Olivia and begins to act strangely around her.

I enjoyed this episode because the comedy is both in what Malvolio says and how he acts. Shakespeare uses the same comedy as in the main plot with the theme of misplaced or unreciprocated love. Like in the main plot Orsino has an unrequited infatuation with Olivia in the episode Malvolio has unacknowledged feelings for Olivia. Shakespeare also uses the recurring theme of disguise or deception. Once Malvolio gets his letter he begins to act

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completely different to his normal self to try and impress Olivia. Shakespeare also uses confusion amongst the actors but not amongst the audience to make the episode more amusing.

It's like modern day farce where the actors don't know what's happening though the audience is in on the joke. For example when Malvolio comes in skipping with a beaming smile and crossed garters with yellow socks, we know why he's doing it because we know he's had the letter. Had that happened to a different character, Sir Toby for instance the audience may feel sorry for him, but since Malvolio was so stuck up in the beginning it seems alright to laugh at him since it's his fall from grace. When he starts quoting the letter to Olivia we know what he's talking about but Olivia has no idea, which makes it even funnier.

Malvolio has also been identified as a caricature of Sir Christopher Hatton, who was Queen Elizabeth's steward and did woo her. His manner was so fawning that some people found him both hypocritical and ridiculous so the Queen would call him her "Sheep". In the part where Malvolio is prancing around Olivia in yellow stockings there are few directions and you only know that he is smiling and prancing from what Maria and Olivia say but in theatre and film generally the actors dance around and show off their yellow cross-gartered stockings.

In the last line of the scene Olivia shows that she does care for Malvolio but just not in the way he had believed. The Second episode I have chosen is Act 1 Scene 5 when Olivia first meets Cesario/Viola and Cesario tries to woo her for Orsino but ends up unwittingly wooing her for herself. Again in this scene

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Shakespeare uses deception and disguise, which the audience knows about. The other comedy from this scene would be that in Shakespeare's time Cesario would be played by a young man, playing a young woman, disguised as a young man.

In this scene there is a big change of heart from Viola. From the start where she refuses all of Cesario's compliments to the end where she wants him to tell her all the things he likes about her. The mood of the scene changes when Viola removes her veil and they move from speaking in lines to blank verse very poetically. From this scene is when you begin to think that Olivia is falling for Cesario/Viola. First is when she says to him/her " Go to your lord, I cannot love him. Let him send no more - unless perchance you come to me again.

What she's saying she'll have none of what he says about her Orsino loves her but she wants to see Viola again. Second is when she does a soliloquy about how much she wants to see him/her again and what a gentleman he is. It becomes very obvious that she is smitten when she sends Malvolio to give Cesario a ring of hers because she knows that he is such a gentleman he will have to return to return her ring since it isn't hers meaning that she'll have to go and see Olivia today.