

Malvolio gets what he  
deserves essay



We encounter Malvolio for the first time in Act 1 Scene 5 when Feste is trying to convince Olivia that he is worth being her fool again. Malvolio seems to be rude, disdainful, and supercilious towards Feste. ' I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. '. This shows that Malvolio is highly critical of people below him. Not only that he is insulting Feste but he is showing no respect for Olivia and her dead father ' I marvel your ladyship takes in delight such a barren rascal. ' It appears as if Shakespeare wanted us to create a bad opinion about Malvolio at the beginning of the play.

Malvolio's character does not seem to have a very important role at the beginning of the play but he does his job properly as Olivia's steward. ' I told him you were sick... I told him you were asleep... ' As play progresses he becomes more complex and in some way amusing character as he is self-conceit and narcissistic. He is intolerant of Sir Toby's, Maria's, Sir Andrew's, and Feste's merrymaking. In the night when they are making noise in Olivia's house, he comminates that if they do not stop it, he will tell everything to Olivia.

Up to this point, he was only annoying other characters in the play, but now they are certainly sure they want revenge. They are all planning his downfall, which seems as an amusing situation at the beginning. '... and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work' When Malvolio finds the letter Maria forged, he believes that Olivia seriously loves him. This suggests that he is too self confident and conceit, which causes him to easily fall into the trap set for him.

On the other hand, it seems, as Shakespeare wanted to represent him in a little bit naive manner. I do not now fool myself to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me'. Further more, when he finds out that his lady loves him, he starts being even more spiteful ' I will baffle sir Toby' which shows the dark side of his character. In addition, he obeys each word the letter says, he wears yellow stockings and crossed garters and smiles, which makes him look stupid in the front of Olivia, but he does not realize that everything is a farce. It seems as if Shakespeare wanted to use slapstick elements for a humorous effect.

After Maria's statement that he is acting in ' a strange manner' and after his smiles, Olivia bids her people to have a special care of him. This indicates that she is connected with him, as she knows him since she was baby. Even if we have felt large contempt for Malvolio so far, when he is in the dark room, where Sir Toby, Fabian and Maria have put him, we start to feel some pity too. Maria spitefully wishes to have him expelled from the house, which will then be ' the quieter'. Here the humour starts to be uncomfortable and the whole idea of funny revenge is going too far.

The deception of Malvolio becomes positively cruel when Feste disguises himself as Sir Topas, the curate. Feste not only disguises his voice but the whole outfit as well. It seems that he wanted to amuse Sir Toby, Maria and himself even more. Again, Malvolio believes that it is real Sir Topas and tries to pursue him that he is not mad. His repetition of words ' wrong' and ' notoriously abused' indicates that he is affected with the whole akt of theirs. When praying Feste for ' some light and some paper' his transport is obvious.

It appears that Feste wanted to wreak Malvolio but as well that he is aware that they are going too far. He brings the letter Malvolio has written to Olivia and reads it aloud. Finally, when he appears on the celebration, he arouses our sympathy rather than derision, as he asks why he has been made 'the most notoriously geck and gill, That e'er invention played on?'. Olivia recognizes 'Maria's hand' and explains why she thought he was mad. This reveals the whole act. Fabian admits his fault and says that 'stubborn and uncourteous' Malvolio deserves what he gets.

Feste confesses that he is participant as well and explains why he did it 'But do you remember – 'Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal, and you smile not, he's gagged?'. The culmination is Malvolio's last sentence 'I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!' where he reveals his personality. He cannot forgive, but thinks only of revenge. This end sums up our ambivalence towards the whole of this deception. It appears that Shakespeare wanted us to agree with Fabian's view on the whole thing despite the fact that at a certain moment Malvolio is amusing and victim.