

A young woman **Viola** is shipwrecked on the coast of **Illyria**, believing her twin brother **Sebastian** has been drowned. She disguises herself as a young man and, calling herself **Cesario**, becomes a servant to the Duke of Illyria, **Orsino**.

Orsino is in love with the Countess **Olivia**, but she's in mourning for her dead brother and has no interest in him. **Orsino** sends **Cesario** with love letters to woo **Olivia** on his behalf. He doesn't know that **Cesario** is in fact **Viola**, nor that she has fallen in love with him.

Olivia rejects **Orsino's** love letters, but against her better judgement, falls in love with **Cesario**.

Olivia's steward, **Malvolio** believes himself to be morally and intellectually superior to the rest of the household - the drunken **Sir Toby Belch** (**Olivia's** uncle), his friend **Sir Andrew Aguecheek** (who is also wooing **Olivia**), and the servants **Maria** (the maid), **Feste** (the clown) and **Fabian** (the housekeeper).

After **Malvolio** puts a stop to the late night revelling of **Sir Toby** and **Sir Andrew**, they decide to trick him into believing **Olivia** is in love with him. **Maria** forges a letter to **Malvolio** declaring that **Olivia** loves him and instructing him to wear yellow stockings and to smile all the time. **Malvolio** (who is secretly in love with **Olivia**) believes the letter and when he appears before **Olivia** dressed in yellow stockings and smiling, she thinks he has gone mad and has him imprisoned

Viola's twin brother **Sebastian** did not drown but was rescued by **Antonio**, a former pirate (who is now in love with **Sebastian**), who brings him to **Illyria**.

Sir Andrew, angry that **Olivia** is showing more affection to **Cesario** than to him, challenges **Cesario** to a duel. **Antonio**, thinking **Cesario** is **Sebastian**, intervenes and is arrested.

The real **Sebastian** meets **Olivia**, who mistakes him for **Cesario**. When she expresses her love for him, he reciprocates. She proposes marriage and he willingly agrees.

***** SPOILER ALERT! If you don't want to know the end, stop reading here! *****

Orsino goes to **Olivia's** house to woo her one last time. However, his affection for her is waning as he has started to have feelings for **Cesario**.

Olivia, seeing **Cesario** with **Orsino** asks why her "husband" has left her so soon.

Antonio is brought in by the police and accuses **Cesario** (who he thinks is **Sebastian**) of betraying him.

Sir Toby and **Sir Andrew** arrive complaining that **Sebastian** (who they think is **Cesario**) has attacked them.

Sebastian arrives and all is explained.

Orsino, now realising that the boy **Cesario** is in fact a woman, proposes marriage to **Viola** and she accepts.

Fabian and **Feste** confess the trick that was played on **Malvolio**, who is released from prison and vows to have his revenge.