



**AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE**  
**PRESENTS**

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S**  
**TWELFTH NIGHT**  
**2019 STUDY GUIDE**

American Players Theatre / PO Box 819 / Spring Green, WI 53588  
[www.americanplayers.org](http://www.americanplayers.org)

# Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

## 2019 STUDY GUIDE

By Becky Kliebenstein

All photos by Liz Lauren

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## Who's Who in *Twelfth Night*



**Viola (Kelsey Brennan)**  
Twin sister to Sebastian, she disguises herself as “Cesario,” a male page, in order to win the favor of Duke Orsino, with whom she falls in love.



**Sebastian (Michael Goldstein)**  
Viola’s twin brother, he is initially feared to have perished in a storm at sea.



**Orsino (Gavin Lawrence)**  
Duke of Illyria, he woos Olivia even as she mourns her dead brother, but he finally returns Viola’s love with a promise of marriage.



**Maria (Colleen Madden)**  
Olivia’s gentlewoman, she is fondly described by Sir Toby as “my little villain”; she is the witty author of the plot to humiliate Malvolio.



**Olivia (Aila Peck)**  
A rich countess, having vowed to mourn her dead brother for seven years, she rejects the advance of Duke Orsino, who calls her a “marble-brested tyrant,” but she finds time to woo “Cesario” and later marries Sebastian.



**Feste (La Shawn Banks)**  
Clown in the home of Olivia, he is a brilliant wit and impersonator who finds himself sparring verbally with everyone in his own household and even in the palace of his neighbor, Duke Orsino.



**Malvolio (David Daniel)**  
Steward to Olivia, peevish and servile, he is accused of believing “that all that look on him love him”; fed up with his pomposity, certain members of Olivia’s household set out to humble him and take their pranks too far.



**Sir Andrew Aguecheek (Played by Marcus Truschinski. Pictured: Ted Deasy.)**  
A wealthy and inane guest in Olivia’s home, where at the impish prompting of Sir Toby, he makes sloppy attempts to woo Olivia.



**Sir Toby Belch (Triney Sandoval)**  
Uncle to Olivia, a lover of drink and merry-making, he plays countless pranks on the dim-witted Sir Andrew and irritates Malvolio, who finds him uncivil; he is eager to bring Malvolio “some notable shame.”



**Antonio (Jeb Burris)**  
A sea captain and friend to Sebastian, his concern that Duke Orsino still takes him for a “pirate and saltwater thief” links the action in Illyria to a grittier past marked by naval war; he is arrested and eventually forgiven.

## Who's Who in *Twelfth Night*



**Fabian (Phoebe González)**  
A servant to Olivia who joins in the mockery of Malvolio.



**Sea Captain (Tim Gittings)**  
The captain of the *Viola* and Sebastian's boat. Once shipwrecked, the captain assists Viola to disguise herself as "Cesario" and places her in Duke Orsino's court.



**Valentine (Noah Yaconelli)**  
Gentleman attending on Duke Orsino.



**Curio (Yao Dogbe)**  
Gentleman attending on Duke Orsino.



**Attendant (Samantha Newcomb)**  
Attendant to Olivia.



**Attendant (Alys Dickerson)**  
Attendant to Olivia.



*Twelfth Night* Ensemble

## About the Play

Duke Orsino of Illyria is in love with Olivia, but his advances are rejected. A shipwrecked Viola arrives on his shores, and with the help of a Captain, disguises herself as a boy, calling herself Cesario, and enters Orsino's service. Orsino takes to Cesario, and sends 'him' to woo Olivia for him. Viola, however, is already falling in love with Orsino.

Cesario arrives to woo Olivia, and Olivia falls in love with 'him.' She rejects Orsino's approach, but asks Cesario to return. Orsino discusses the nature of love with Cesario, and sends 'him' again to Olivia, who confesses her love for Cesario, much to 'his' dismay. Meanwhile, Viola's twin brother Sebastian, also a casualty of the shipwreck, arrives in Illyria with the help of Antonio, a sea-captain and former enemy of Orsino. Sebastian looks around the town, and Antonio gives him his purse to use, deciding to stay at the inn for safety.

Staying with Olivia is her uncle, Sir Toby, who is encouraging Sir Andrew, his drinking-companion and source of funds, to woo Olivia. While carousing with Olivia's fool Feste late one night, they quarrel with Malvolio, and with the help of Olivia's maid Maria, they decide to trick him. Maria writes a letter to Malvolio, forging Olivia's handwriting to make Malvolio think Olivia loves him. The letter asks Malvolio to dress and behave in eccentric ways.

Toby, Andrew and Fabian observe Malvolio opening the letter and absorbing its contents. He approaches Olivia according to the letter's instructions, and she thinks him mad. Toby arranges for him to be confined in a dark room. Later, he gets Feste to disguise himself as a priest, Sir Topas, to taunt Malvolio. Malvolio writes a letter of complaint to Olivia.

Meanwhile, Andrew prepares to leave the house after seeing that Olivia is interested in Cesario. Toby persuades him to stay and challenge Cesario to a duel. Toby separately informs Andrew and Cesario that the other is a ferocious fighter, and they approach each other with trepidation. They are about to fight when Antonio arrives, intending to defend Cesario, whom he has mistaken for Sebastian. Antonio is arrested by officers who recognize him as Orsino's enemy. He asks for his purse from Cesario, who of course professes no knowledge of it.

Feste is sent to bring Cesario to Olivia, but encounters Sebastian instead. They meet Andrew, who strikes Sebastian, thinking him to be Cesario, and Andrew is beaten for his pains. Olivia arrives to stop a fight between Sebastian and Toby. Sebastian is immediately taken with her. Thinking him to be Cesario, she is delighted that he has finally responded to her advances, and they go off to be married.

Orsino is told by Cesario of Antonio's arrival, but when Antonio is brought before him and asserts that he has been with Cesario for some time, Orsino thinks him mad. Olivia arrives and again rejects Orsino's advances. As he and Cesario prepare to leave, Olivia insists on Cesario staying, and calls him her husband. When Cesario denies it, she presents the priest as confirmation. Orsino is enraged, thinking Cesario has betrayed him. Toby and Andrew pass by, having just been severely beaten by Sebastian. Sebastian then arrives, and the twins delightedly recognize each other. Everyone is amazed, Viola's true identity is revealed and she and Orsino decide to be married.

Feste delivers Malvolio's letter to Olivia, and he is brought from his cell. Fabian reveals the nature of the trick played upon him, and Malvolio leaves vowing revenge on them all. They all prepare for celebration, leaving Feste to bid the audience farewell.

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# American Players Theatre's *Twelfth Night*

## Or, “What you Will,” customs and social upheaval in *Twelfth Night*

The twelve days of Christmas used to be more than just a song. The dancing ladies and leaping lords were all part of a night of fun and drinking. In Christianity, it marked the period between Christmas and the Epiphany—the day when the Wise Men met baby Jesus. Many Christians worldwide still actively observe the Epiphany on January 5th or 6th. In Shakespeare's day, the eve of the Epiphany was a big party of drinking and eating to celebrate the end of the Christmas season. In the same way that the arrival of the Wise Men to show reverence to Jesus turned the social order of that time upside down, many *Twelfth Night* revelries in the 1500 and 1600's were anchored in flipping the script on social expectations.

Because Shakespeare wrote this play for such a night of drinking and fun, the play *Twelfth Night* centers on turning things inside out. A woman is dressed as a man, a knight or two are hanging out with and even marrying servants, and the Fool is the smartest guy in town. Our production dives head-first into the chaos, wending through the disorder with songs, drunkenness, duels, dancing, a dash of mistaken identity and more than a little bit of passion and love. As Viola notes in Act 2, Scene 2 “O time! thou must untangle this, not I; It is too hard a knot for me to untie!”

Director John Langs describes *Twelfth Night* as a play revolving around “extreme poles” and the eventual resolution of all the friction caused by these opposite forces. The play is a comedy that starts with a tragedy. We see in the first act a devoted sister and brother swept apart by a tempest, both assuming the other is dead, an uncle in mourning turning to irreverent rebellion to deal with his losses and, a young woman giving up on living in order to honor the dead. As the knots tighten and unravel, the viewers are given a glimpse into the hearts of all the characters. Many of them struggle with the expectations thrust upon them as well as the limits of their station, especially when it comes to friendships and love. Langs' production explores “how the infection of love takes hold in the vulnerability of different people,” a journey that both resonates and, we hope, illuminates the personal journey of our younger audiences.



Viola (Kelsey Brennan) and Sebastian (Michael Goldstein) lead a chorus of “O Mistress Mine.”

At the center of it all is Viola, a young woman literally set adrift, alone in the world with only the clothes on her back—clothes which happen to belong to her twin brother Sebastian. But Kelsey Brennan's Viola/Cesario is no passive bystander. Instead of haplessly standing by to let the men handle the crisis, Viola rebounds from the initial tragedy of her brother being lost at sea and embraces the challenges and opportunities that present themselves in her new life. Disguising herself as a boy, she heads off to find her future. Director John Langs has focused Viola's experience not on expected grief, but on “how many moments of hope” she can find in this unusual world into which she has literally washed up. Brennan found all this hope both inspiring and challenging to portray. According to her, Viola has “an amazing amount of grace in the line of fire,” which is a great example to young people who so frequently encounter emotionally challenging situations that seem insurmountable at first. However, in keeping with her strength of spirit, Viola never gives up her hope and sets the tone for a happier *Twelfth Night* than the first scene leads us to expect.

# American Players Theatre's *Twelfth Night*

## “Journey’s End in Lovers’ Meeting.” The Unlikely Loves of *Twelfth Night*

Star-crossed lovers pop up with regularity in Shakespeare, but in *Twelfth Night* they cross class and gender as well. The core romance, which could be called a love triangle if you’re not great at geometry, finds a countess falling for a “boy” who happens to be a woman, who is in love with a duke, who thinks he loves the countess, but who is actually falling for the “boy” as well. Then the twin of the ‘woman disguised as boy’ shows up and everyone lives happily ever after, of course. Additionally, we have a steward attempting to woo his employer with horrifying smiles and even worse fashion choices, a singing fool and a few drunkards lolling about, adding up to even more romance.

As a smart and charming new servant, Cesario finds his way into the confidence of Duke Orsino early on in the play. Having convinced himself that, as the most important man in town, Olivia is his one true love, due to her own wealth and social standing. As actor Gavin Lawrence, who portrays Orsino, points out, Olivia is “representative of what Orsino should have,” so when he finds himself drawn to Cesario, Orsino is befuddled. Finding everything he’s ever wanted in the form of a servant, a MALE servant, speaks to both the fluid notions of gender and sexuality and the topsy-turvy world of the play. In keeping with the theme of choosing for oneself instead of choosing what one should, Orsino “falls in love with a person,” as Brennan points out. Even though Cesario isn’t real, the woman pretending to be Cesario is, which stands in contrast to the unrealistic picture of Olivia that Orsino desires.



Olivia (Aila Peck) is teased by Feste upon his return to her household.

Meanwhile, the steadfast countess Olivia will not be won by the romantic Duke Orsino. While Orsino accuses her of being unnatural for her hard heart, Olivia instead takes pride in her constancy, both to the memory of her lost brother and in her rejection of a man she cannot love.

Instead, Olivia falls in love with the defiant and attractive young servant Orsino sends her way. Though she has sworn off men in her grief, she finds her heart opening when subject to Cesario’s honest scrutiny, which provides Olivia a window with which to re-evaluate her own feelings and behavior. And then, like Viola and Orsino, Olivia pursues the person she wants.

Sir Toby, Olivia’s uncle, and Maria, Olivia’s waiting woman, have a connection and history that is apparent from their first entrance. Despite their class differences, their mutual respect and admiration are clear and we hope for their happy ending, even though it seems unlikely. A rambunctious Sir Toby, played by Triney Sandoval, leads his band of occasionally reluctant followers into the highest moments of fun in the play, always protected and supported by Maria. Colleen Madden, playing Maria in this production, explains: “They are soulmates. His mischievous nature appeals to her, and he is attracted to her strength.” This unlikely pair, by social standards, seems the most likely by our contemporary view of love and romance, with the characters bringing out the best in each other. She wants him to moderate his behavior, while he needs her to join in his fun to help him overcome his grief over the loss of his nephew, Olivia’s brother. They get together, Madden explains, “when she decides to play a prank, and all things turn upside down, the order completely dissolves, and no barriers remain.”

# American Players Theatre's *Twelfth Night*

## If music be the food of love: Music as expression

The play starts with a lively song and sing-along, bringing the audience in on the fun and setting the tone for a frolicking good time. The lyrics will resonate through the production as many people fall in love and end one journey to start another.

Later, the unlikely love story of Orsino and Viola unfolds through song. Feste is brought in to entertain the lovelorn duke, but in the ensuing song, Orsino and Cesario join voices. Brennan explains the impact of the song this way: “There are so few scenes between Orsino and Viola. The song is a great opportunity to show the longing that both of them are experiencing, their undeniable chemistry, and the impossibility of them being together in their current circumstances.”

Lawrence also points to his character’s desire to connect with his confidant, and the “physical contact or the denial of any touch” that leads to the passion in the scene also “allows Orsino to lose himself in his feelings for Cesario from which he can’t seem to recover.”

The aftermath of the song, as Brennan points out “breaks open their relationship in a way that allows Viola to be more honest with Orsino.” Orsino “gets so emotionally caught up in the story that he finds himself wanting/ needing to comfort him/her” as Thompson notes. Both actors point out, and audience members readily enjoy, the way the song and the sharing of stories brings this relationship to its tipping point.

## “It’s really not that different—it’s just a different part of me:” Gender and sexuality in *Twelfth Night*.

Actors in Shakespeare’s time were exclusively male. Originally, Viola would have been played by a boy, portraying a woman, pretending to be a boy. So we can imagine that transforming into Cesario would not have been such a stretch for the young actor playing Viola. Actor Kelsey Brennan, who plays Viola in APT’s production has a more contemporary understanding of the concepts that define gender, and brings those sensibilities into her work onstage. Shakespeare never lets us forget that Cesario is actually Viola. The character drops her male persona in many asides and soliloquies and the other players frequently comment on Cesario’s feminine features. Brennan imbues Cesario with characteristics both stereotypically feminine and masculine in order to avoid gender clichés. Her forceful defense of her position when arguing with the Duke falls into traditional notions of masculinity (if not subservience), while her hilarious attempts at dueling remind the audience that no gently bred young woman would likely have known how to fight (of course, neither does Sir Andrew). These may be ridiculous notions today, but were universally accepted for hundreds of years.



Orsino (Gavin Lawrence) and Viola (Kelsey Brennan). Kelsey previously played a woman pretending to be a man in last season’s *The Recruiting Officer*.

Maria, Olivia’s waiting woman, also plays with gender expectations. She runs toe-to-toe with the intellect of Feste, the mischievousness of Sir Toby and outwits Malvolio. Core Company Actor Colleen Madden is no stranger to these roles, having portrayed many of Shakespeare’s witty women in her 17 years with APT. Olivia is also singular, as she is a young woman in control of her own future after the death of her father and brother. She refuses to marry the extremely eligible duke and calls the shots in all aspects of her life, including



# American Players Theatre's *Twelfth Night*

proposing to the “man” she loves. The notion of binary gender roles and the idea that only males can be tough and woman loving are deconstructed throughout the play. In fact, the play opens with the male and female siblings, Viola and Sebastian, switching gender roles with a neat costuming trick, setting up the concept that these rules are all quite superficial and possibly downright silly. Sebastian still weeps for his lost sister months after the shipwreck. The Duke is noticeably attracted and drawn to Cesario. Antonio follows Sebastian like a lovelorn teenager. Malvolio dresses to impress his crush.

## The Look of Illyria



Feste's (La Shawn Banks) costume was handpainted by the APT Costume Shop .

Although written for winter, the play was set in Illyria along what is now the coast of the Adriatic Sea in the Balkans. Costume Designer Jenny Mannis and Scenic Designer Arnel Sancianco have created a bright, luscious visual story for the show. The sun and salt-worn blue of the wall reflects the azure sea and the saturation of color and texture throughout the costumes help a young audience understand the personalities of the characters inside of them. The setting was, itself, a melding of cultures and aesthetics, as there were strong Christian and Islamic, European and Middle Eastern influences in the region, all helping to inform the perfect mash-up that is visual world of the play.

Malvolio's change from black and puritanical to his bright yellow ensemble mark the change in his expectations, and highlight his hypocrisy. The formal but sumptuous attire of Orsino's servants indicate their class and his mood. Sir Toby and Sir Andrew's more flamboyant and occasionally disheveled apparel mark their commitment to carousing. Feste's handpainted patch suit and dynamite shoes mark him as the progressive, solitary figure he plays, as his costume is of a different period than all of the others, setting him apart. Costume Designer Jenny Mannis “was also inspired by the references to ‘opal’ and ‘changeable taffeta’ in the text - both of which refer to iridescence. We created a pastel palette with plenty of shine and sparkle and iridescence. We used a combination of authentic Renaissance research and a rock and roll, 70s vibe.”



Feste Costume Rendering by Jenny Mannis.

### *Twelfth Night* Design Team

Director: John Langs  
Voice & Text Coach: Eva Breneman  
Costume Design: Jenny Mannis  
Scenic Design: Arnel Sancianco  
Lighting Design: Michael A. Peterson  
Sound Design & Original Music: Josh Schmidt  
Choreographer: Jessica Bess Lanus  
Fight Director: Brian Byrnes  
Assistant Costume Design: Kelly Myers  
Stage Manager: Jacqueline Singleton

# Twelfth Night Photo Summary



1  
Viola and Sebastian are shipwrecked, both thinking the other is lost at sea.

2  
“If music be the food of love, play on.”  
- Orsino, ACT I, SC i



Duke Orsino enters and declares his everlasting love for Countess Olivia, who swears she won't marry anyone as she is grieving her dead brother.



3  
Viola decides to disguise herself as a boy and seek employment with the Duke

“I'll serve this duke:  
Thou shall present me as an eunuch to him:  
It may be worth thy pains; for I can sing  
And speak to him in many sorts of music.”  
- Viola, ACT I, SC ii



4  
Sir Toby Belch, Olivia's uncle, comes home drunk, again, and is warned by Maria that if he keeps it up, Olivia will kick him out.



5  
Sir Andrew Aguecheek is unsuccessfully wooing Olivia, but Sir Toby is successfully using Sir Andrew for his money and for entertainment.

“Take away the fool, gentlemen.”  
- Feste, ACT I, SC v



6  
The fool, Feste, returns to Olivia's and he declares HER the fool for being sad her brother is in heaven.

## Twelfth Night Photo Summary



7

“How now!  
Even so quickly  
may one catch  
the plague?”  
- Olivia,  
ACT I, SC v

Viola, dressed as the boy Cesario, is sent to woo Olivia for Orsino. Olivia falls for Cesario instead.



8

Sebastian also arrives in Illyria, accompanied by Antonio, a sailor wanted by Orsino.



9

“My master  
loves her  
dearly; And I,  
poor monster,  
fond as much  
on him; And  
she, mistaken,  
seems to dote  
on me. What  
will become of  
this?”  
- Viola,  
ACT II, SC ii

Viola, who has fallen for Orsino, realizes Olivia has feelings for Cesario, and leaves it to fate and time to figure out.



10

Cesario (Viola) and Orsino, discussing the nature of love and feelings, are drawn to each other.



11

“I am not what  
I am”  
- Viola,  
ACT III, SC i

Malvolio finds the letter Maria has written to trick him into thinking Olivia loves him, and that she wants him to dress in “yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered.”



12

Olivia confesses her love for Cesario (Viola) who tells her “he” cannot return that love.

## Twelfth Night Photo Summary

13



Sir Andrew and Cesario almost duel, but Antonio, thinking it is Sebastian, intervenes and is arrested. He describes having rescued Sebastian and Viola begins to hope her brother lives.

14



Sebastian is mistaken for Cesario by many people, including Sir Toby, with whom he fights. Olivia interrupts and kicks Sir Toby out.

15



Sebastian is happy to go with the beautiful countess swearing her love for him. Olivia is delighted to find this Cesario interested in her overtures.

“If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!”  
- Sebastian,  
ACT IV, SC i

16



Malvolio, having taken the advice of the letter, proceeds to harass Malvolio with the help of Sir Toby and Fabian. They convince Olivia that he has gone mad.

17



Olivia and Sebastian are married, though Olivia believes she has married Cesario.

“ A solemn combination shall be made Of our dear souls.”  
- Orsino,  
ACT V, SC i

18



Orsino arrives at Olivia's where he finds her married to a man whom everyone thinks is Cesario. Sebastian arrives and the mistaken identity is unraveled, the siblings are reunited, and Viola and Orsino marry.

# Twelfth Night Classroom Activity 1

## If music be the food of love, play on!

So often used it has become cliché, Duke Orsino's words about music being the food of his "love" for Olivia retain their original truth. Their meaning is especially resonant for young people who find so much inspiration, solace and community in their consumption, creation, and enjoyment of music. This series of lessons uses Shakespeare's lyrics as a jumping-off point for students to analyze the themes of the play and the characters' motivations, curate their own music menu, and/or generate their own music. It is not required that every student have seen APT's 2019 production in order to complete one or more of these options.

**Step 1:** Direct students to read and analyze the lyrics of the songs independent of the context of the play. One way to do this is to have students skim for unknown words, define them, then read and annotate for potential meaning before discussing as a small or large group. To support students who might need it, provide one of the several modern language translations of these passages. Some students might also benefit from directed questions. See those below each poem.

### **Song: "Come away, come away, death"**

From *Twelfth Night*

Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid.  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O, prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,  
On my black coffin let there be strown.  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.  
A thousand thousand sighs to save,  
Lay me, O, where  
Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there!

1. What had "killed" the speaker of the poem?
2. What does the speaker not want on his grave?
3. Where does he want to be buried?
4. Why does the speaker want to avoid the traditional things that come with death and graves?

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50654/song-come-away-come-away-death->

### **Song: "O Mistress mine where are you roaming?"**

From *Twelfth Night*

O Mistress mine where are you roaming?  
O stay and hear, your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low.  
Trip no further pretty sweeting.  
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love, 'tis not hereafter,  
Present mirth, hath present laughter:  
What's to come, is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come kiss me sweet and twenty:  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

1. What does the speaker promise his mistress?
2. Why is the future unimportant?
3. How does meeting someone end a journey?

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47420/song-o-mistress-mine-where-are-you-roaming>

# *Twelfth Night* Classroom Activity 1

**Step 2:** For students who have recently viewed the 2019 production:

Having clarified their understanding of the two songs, have students brainstorm the events surrounding the use of these songs. Feel free to provide the text of Act 2, Scene 4 for “Come Away.” Using specific lines from each song, have them decide to which characters the songs most apply. This can be a discussion or a written response.

**Step 3 A: Student Instructions:** Music for the Moods Menu. Orsino has a lot of feelings. Olivia has a lot of feelings. Even poor Sir Andrew has emotions to share. So do you. For this extension activity, you will make a list of six songs and explain, using specific lyrics, instrumentation, rhythm etc., details why this song is the PERFECT song to feed the mood you’ve chosen. Be sure the moods are distinct enough to justify including them both. Your ability to use carefully selected words should help you provide distinct explanations of similar-seeming moods like happiness and joy.

Teacher instructions: Prepare your own sample for students. If you wish, encourage them to use a menu layout. Students who do not wish to share their moods or who do not easily name feelings can still complete this activity. Help them by having them brainstorm what sounds happy, scared, mad, sad to most people. They can provide a description of those sounds without necessarily choosing a specific song. Additionally, you can create a playlist and have students who might need that support identify the mood of each song and explain why they chose it.

**Step 3 B** (you can, have students complete both): Students will choose one of the two songs. Consider allowing them to work in pairs.

- Have them do a sentence-by-sentence translation of their song. This should not be lyrical.
- Have them write a brief synopsis of the point of the song. If you are teaching honors or AP, consider doing a SOAPS of the song in the context of the text of the play or the 2019 production.
- Students can choose one of the following:
  - Finding and justifying their choice of the best modern or contemporary song they would replace Shakespeare’s with. Obviously the original is best, but if they were to do a reboot of *She’s the Man*, what song would they in place of the original.
  - Writing lyrics to a modern version of the song. If you have musically inclined students, encouraging and allowing them the time to write and perform their own would be awesome.

**Assessment:** There are a lot of pieces to assess for mastery, if you choose. Mood (identify and analyze, including author’s purpose in use of mood) textual analysis, and comparing g source material to contemporary uses.

## ***Twelfth Night Classroom Activity 2***

### **Feste, Toby, Maria, Sir Andrew and Fabian: Fools and Pranksters or Bullies?**

Everyone enjoys a good laugh, and *Twelfth Night*'s Feste, Toby, Maria, Sir Andrew and Fabian all have their share of fun at others' expense. Their frequent target is Malvolio, who is often cast as the bad guy of the play. American Players Theatre's 2019 production retains Malvolio's arrogance and judgmentalism but his character is not a villain, making his treatment at the hands of some of our favorite characters a little uncomfortable to watch. In addition, the most fun characters often laugh and prank with no concern for the consequences, until those consequences are staring them in the face.

In this activity, students will analyze the use of humor, especially humor at the expense of others, and put it into contemporary context. This activity is intended for students who have seen the play recently.

**Materials:** A copy of your district's bullying and harassment policies. Print or electronic copies of the play (optional). Internet access. Paper, highlighters, and markers.

**Pacing:** 50-90 minutes. Depending on your objectives and classroom environment, this could be the basis of several days of activity and discussion. To reduce the time, pre-generate the list of behaviors in the play so students can spend their time sorting and classifying.

**Step 1:** In small groups, have students find the definitions of joking, conflict, bullying, and harassment. On the top of a piece of paper, they should make 4 categories, with a simple, clear definition of each. If you prefer, you could project this and have the class agree on common definitions.

**Step 2:** Have the students brainstorm moments in the play when characters have fun at the expense of other characters. On a different piece of paper, make a list of those who joke, make fun, prank, or simply criticize others, based on your viewing of the play.

**Step 3:** Using highlighters, attempt to code the list: Is this joking, like Feste's claim Olivia is a fool? Is it conflict like Feste and Malvolio's insults in the same scene? Or does it cross the line into something else like bullying or harassment? Have the students then enter the moments in to the chart from Step 1. Consider asking students to return to the text to find the line(s) that best express their read of that scene. Also consider having the students use the discussion debate under "Extensions" to resolve on which

**Step 4:** Cross reference the behaviors of the characters with those behaviors listed as "bullying and harassment" in your own Student Handbook or wherever your district publishes those guidelines. On the back of the page make a list of characters and their actions that would be considered actionable under your school policies.

**Step 5:** Return to the chart from Step 1 and have students discuss what consequences the characters faced in the world of the play.

## ***Twelfth Night Classroom Activity 2***

**Step 6:** Have students construct a written response or prepare an oral commentary explaining why behaviors that are funny in Shakespeare's time and ours as a means of entertainment do or do not belong in actual human interactions. Have them conclude the response with an opinion of what they think the production they saw was saying about bullying. Use Olivia's word from 1.5.90-95 as a touchstone for Shakespeare's attitudes on fun at others' expense.

Olivia: To be generous, guiltless,  
and of free disposition is to take those things  
for bird-bolts that you deem cannon bullets. There  
is no slander in an allowed Fool, though he do  
nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet  
man, though he do nothing but reprove.

### **Extensions:**

Use giant post-it paper or square drawn on the board for each of the four categories and give students small post-its. After brainstorming the list of joking or harassing behaviors, allow students to decide where each behavior goes. This is effective for less talkative groups and useful for students who do not like to share out loud.

Have students share and debate the nature of these behaviors. A lot of conflict and bullying in teens arises from a lack of understanding of others' perspectives or an unwillingness to accept those perspectives as valid. Discussing the actions of fictional characters is a safer way to approach these barriers.

Have students create Shakespearean versions of office referrals for the worst culprits.