



SANTA CRUZ
SHAKESPEARE
EDUCATION PROGRAM

TWELFTH NIGHT

Twelfth Night, or *What You Will* is a romantic comedy that uses gender and performance to engage audiences with questions about the nature of love and desire. The contradictions between how characters present themselves and who they really are generate both comedy and pathos in one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. Below, you will find resources to introduce this play to your students.

Recite Shakespeare While Washing Your Hands!

If music be the food of love, play on.
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall.
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. Enough; no more.
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea. Nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

~ Orsino, Act 1, Scene 1

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare



Orsino, Twelfth Night production by RSC, 2017



Listen, Read, & Watch

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Twelfth Night* is a free online source for you and your students to download and read. You can also listen to a couple free audio recordings of this play using the links below. A British television adaptation of *Twelfth Night* is available to watch on youtube, along with a Zoom version of this play provided by The Show Must Go Online.

Listen: [Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare - Full Audio Book](#);

[Full audio version of OSF's 1951 production of Twelfth Night](#)

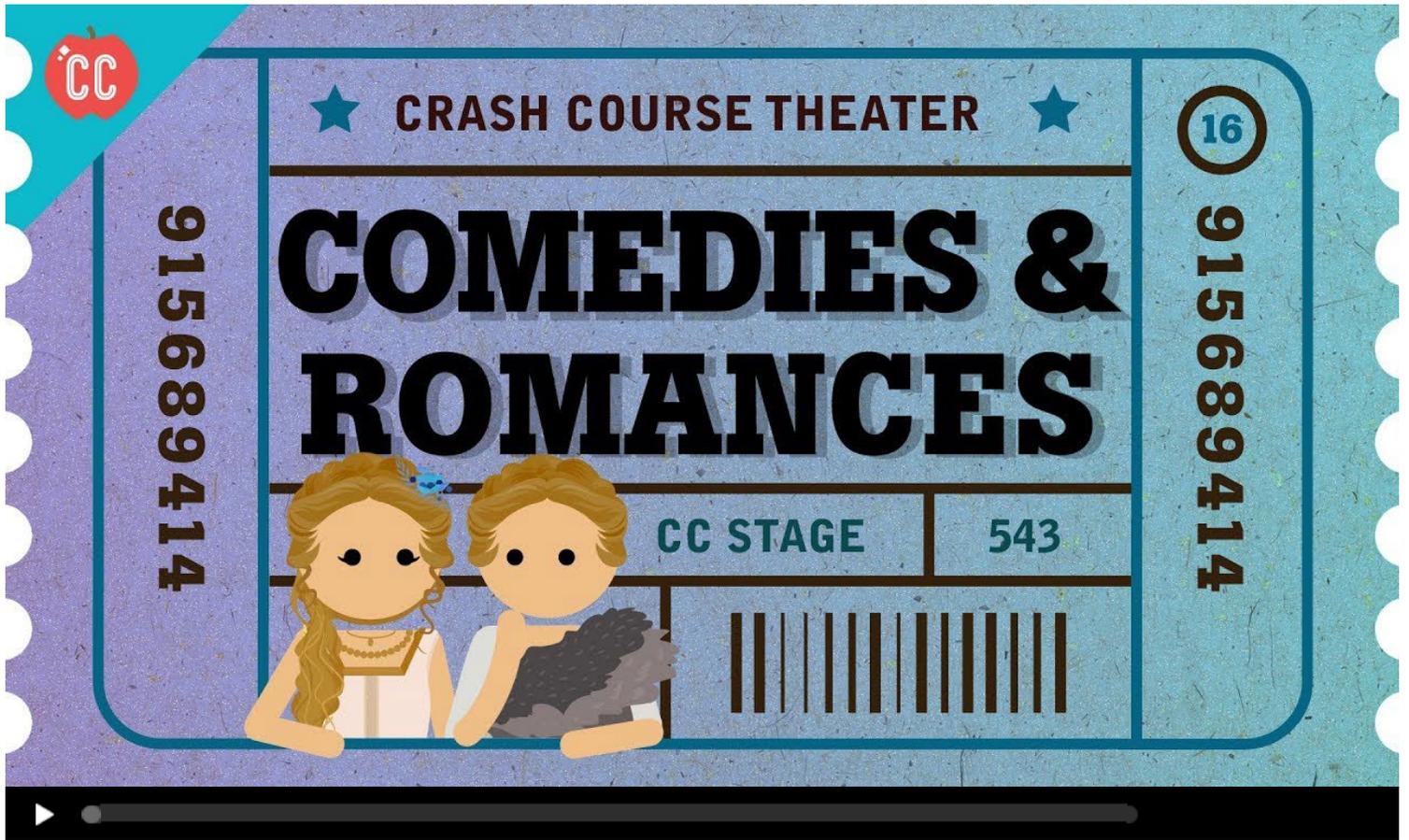
Read: shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/twelfth-night

Watch: Online Zoom Version of [The Show Must Go Online: Twelfth Night](#); [1969 television adaptation of Twelfth Night directed by John Sichel](#).

Shakespeare Comedy & Romance

Learn about Shakespeare's comedy and romance plays in this engaging video that provides historical and analytical context around *Twelfth Night* and more.





Characters Are Key

Folger Shakespeare Character Map

Orsino

Duke (or Count) of Illyria,
courting Olivia

Olivia

an Illyrian countess,
falls in love with Cesario

Antonio

friend to Sebastian

Sebastian

Viola's twin brother
believed lost at sea

Viola (Cesario)

a lady of Messaline
*disguised as a boy,
falls in love with Orsino*

Valentine

gentleman serving Orsino

Curio

gentleman serving Orsino

Malvolio

steward in Olivia's household,
secretly in love with Olivia

Maria

Olivia's waiting gentlewoman,
in love with Sir Toby

Fabian

a gentleman in Olivia's
household

Sir Toby Belch

Olivia's kinsman

Fool

Olivia's jester named Feste

Sir Andrew Aguecheek

Sir Toby's companion,
courting Olivia

CHARACTER KEY

Main Characters in **white**

Secondary Characters in **black**

The Plot

In this hands-on activity provided by Seattle Shakespeare Company, students will read a synopsis of *Twelfth Night* then create a



Jay Myers as Orsino and Allie Pratt as Viola in Seattle Shakespeare Company's production of Twelfth Night.

production poster based on the plot and themes they uncover. They can focus on a general theme of the play, or highlight a specific character that stands out to them.

Lesson and Synopsis Link: [Pre-Show Activity_Twelfth Night Poster Design](#)

Fun Fact! The actress pictured above, Allie Pratt, is a SCS alumna featured in our 2019 Season as Lizzy Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*.

Before The Play Begins

These questions, adapted from the Seattle Shakespeare Company's educator's guide, provide your students with some things to consider before reading or watching the play.

- Have you ever felt like you were in love with someone you didn't know well? Have you ever pretended to be someone you were not to make someone like you?
- Have you ever played a prank on someone? What happened? Why did you do it? How did you feel about it at the time, and how did you feel about it afterward?
- In *Twelfth Night*, characters routinely criticize other characters for not acting "appropriately" in a situation. How do different people define what is appropriate? Can you think of a time when you thought someone was acting inappropriately? Who gets to decide what is appropriate?
- In this play, much of the confusion comes from mistaken identity. Can you think of a time when you experienced a mistaken identity? What happened? This could be confusing two people with the same name, texting the wrong person by mistake, thinking you recognized someone on the street, etc.





Contact Us

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