

Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 5
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

SCENE V. OLIVIA's garden.

Enter SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN

SIR TOBY BELCH

Come thy ways, Signior Fabian.

FABIAN

Nay, I'll come: if I lose a scruple of this sport,
let me be boiled to death with melancholy.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly
rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?

FABIAN

I would exult, man: you know, he brought me out o'
favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here.

SIR TOBY BELCH

To anger him we'll have the bear again; and we will
fool him black and blue: shall we not, Sir Andrew?

SIR ANDREW

An we do not, it is pity of our lives.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Here comes the little villain.

Enter MARIA

How now, my metal of India!

MARIA

Get ye all three into the box-tree: Malvolio's
coming down this walk: he has been yonder i' the
sun practising behavior to his own shadow this half
hour: observe him, for the love of mockery; for I
know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of

him. Close, in the name of jesting! Lie thou there,

Throws down a letter

for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

Exit

Enter MALVOLIO

MALVOLIO

'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me: and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't?

SIR TOBY BELCH

Here's an overweening rogue!

FABIAN

O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him: how he jets under his advanced plumes!

SIR ANDREW

'Slight, I could so beat the rogue!

SIR TOBY BELCH

Peace, I say.

MALVOLIO

To be Count Malvolio!

SIR TOBY BELCH

Ah, rogue!

SIR ANDREW

Pistol him, pistol him.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Peace, peace!

MALVOLIO

There is example for't; the lady of the Strachy
married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

SIR ANDREW

Fie on him, Jezebel!

FABIAN

O, peace! now he's deeply in: look how
imagination blows him.

MALVOLIO

Having been three months married to her, sitting in
my state,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye!

MALVOLIO

Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet
gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left
Olivia sleeping,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

Fire and brimstone!

FABIAN

O, peace, peace!

MALVOLIO

And then to have the humour of state; and after a
demure travel of regard, telling them I know my
place as I would they should do theirs, to for my
kinsman Toby,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

Bolts and shackles!

FABIAN

O peace, peace, peace! now, now.

MALVOLIO

Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make

out for him: I frown the while; and perchance wind
up watch, or play with my--some rich jewel. Toby
approaches; courtesies there to me,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

Shall this fellow live?

FABIAN

Though our silence be drawn from us with cars, yet peace.

MALVOLIO

I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar
smile with an austere regard of control,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then?

MALVOLIO

Saying, 'Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on
your niece give me this prerogative of speech,'--

SIR TOBY BELCH

What, what?

MALVOLIO

'You must amend your drunkenness.'

SIR TOBY BELCH

Out, scab!

FABIAN

Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

MALVOLIO

'Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with
a foolish knight,'--

SIR ANDREW

That's me, I warrant you.

MALVOLIO

'One Sir Andrew,'--

SIR ANDREW

I knew 'twas I; for many do call me fool.

MALVOLIO

What employment have we here?

Taking up the letter

FABIAN

Now is the woodcock near the gin.

SIR TOBY BELCH

O, peace! and the spirit of humour intimate reading
aloud to him!

MALVOLIO

By my life, this is my lady's hand these be her
very C's, her U's and her T's and thus makes she her
great P's. It is, in contempt of question, her hand.

SIR ANDREW

Her C's, her U's and her T's: why that?

MALVOLIO

[Reads] 'To the unknown beloved, this, and my good
wishes:'--her very phrases! By your leave, wax.
Soft! and the impressure her Lucrece, with which she
uses to seal: 'tis my lady. To whom should this be?

FABIAN

This wins him, liver and all.

MALVOLIO

[Reads]
Jove knows I love: But who?
Lips, do not move;
No man must know.
'No man must know.' What follows? the numbers
altered! 'No man must know:' if this should be
thee, Malvolio?

SIR TOBY BELCH

Marry, hang thee, brock!

MALVOLIO

[Reads]

I may command where I adore;
But silence, like a Lucrece knife,
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore:
M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.

FABIAN

A fustian riddle!

SIR TOBY BELCH

Excellent wench, say I.

MALVOLIO

'M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.' Nay, but first, let
me see, let me see, let me see.

FABIAN

What dish o' poison has she dressed him!

SIR TOBY BELCH

And with what wing the staniel cheques at it!

MALVOLIO

'I may command where I adore.' Why, she may command
me: I serve her; she is my lady. Why, this is
evident to any formal capacity; there is no
obstruction in this: and the end,--what should
that alphabetical position portend? If I could make
that resemble something in me,--Softly! M, O, A,
I,--

SIR TOBY BELCH

O, ay, make up that: he is now at a cold scent.

FABIAN

Sowter will cry upon't for all this, though it be as
rank as a fox.

MALVOLIO

M,--Malvolio; M,--why, that begins my name.

FABIAN

Did not I say he would work it out? the cur is excellent at faults.

MALVOLIO

M,--but then there is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation A should follow but O does.

FABIAN

And O shall end, I hope.

SIR TOBY BELCH

Ay, or I'll cudgel him, and make him cry O!

MALVOLIO

And then I comes behind.

FABIAN

Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.

MALVOLIO

M, O, A, I; this simulation is not as the former: and yet, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name. Soft! here follows prose.

Reads

'If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. Thy Fates open their hands; let thy blood and spirit embrace them; and, to inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity: she thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say, remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and

not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. Farewell.

She that would alter services with thee,

THE FORTUNATE-UNHAPPY.'

Daylight and champagne discovers not more: this is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-devise the very man. I do not now fool myself, to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised! Here is yet a postscript.

Reads

'Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertainest my love, let it appear in thy smiling; thy smiles become thee well; therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I prithee.'
Jove, I thank thee: I will smile; I will do everything that thou wilt have me.

Exit

FABIAN

I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy.

SIR TOBY BELCH

I could marry this wench for this device.

SIR ANDREW

So could I too.

SIR TOBY BELCH

And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.

SIR ANDREW

Nor I neither.

FABIAN

Here comes my noble gull-catcher.

Re-enter MARIA

SIR TOBY BELCH

Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?

SIR ANDREW

Or o' mine either?

SIR TOBY BELCH

Shall I play my freedom at traytrip, and become thy
bond-slave?

SIR ANDREW

I' faith, or I either?

SIR TOBY BELCH

Why, thou hast put him in such a dream, that when
the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

MARIA

Nay, but say true; does it work upon him?

SIR TOBY BELCH

Like aqua-vitae with a midwife.

MARIA

If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark
his first approach before my lady: he will come to
her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a colour she
abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests;
and he will smile upon her, which will now be so
unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a
melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him
into a notable contempt. If you will see it, follow
me.

SIR TOBY BELCH

To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit!

SIR ANDREW

I'll make one too.

Exeunt

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 5
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)