

**ACT 5**

Have you ever had one of those days where everything goes wrong? Your favourite breakfast cereal has run out, there are no clean socks, it's raining, it's Monday and by the time you get to the front of the lunch queue all the ice cream has already gone? Yes? Well, count yourself lucky and stop moaning, you're fine. Things could be a lot worse. You could be Viola...

It still didn't make sense to Orsino. He was the *Duke*, the actual, blooming Duke of Illyria! Plus, he was a jolly good bloke; and funny – I mean, his servants laughed at *all* his jokes. And he was the best-looking man he'd ever seen. He should know – he looked in the mirror often enough. And rich! Why didn't Olivia want to marry him? It must be a misunderstanding. He just needed to explain all those things to her one more time and she'd change her mind. And that was where he and Cesario were going, to see Olivia, when two of his guards appeared, dragging a man in chains.

Viola saw him first. It was the man who had called her Sebastian! She was desperate for news of her brother, and called out to Orsino, reminding him of her duel with Sir Andrew,

“Here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me.”

Orsino came to a halt, his face dark with anger.

“That face of his I do remember well; yet when I saw it last, it was besmear'd as black as Vulcan in the smoke of war.”

His guards explained.

“Orsino, this is that Antonio  
That took the Phoenix and her fraught from Candy;  
And this is he that did the Tiger board,  
When your young nephew Titus lost his leg.”

When Viola tried to defend Antonio, but he turned on her.

“Orsino, noble sir, that most ingrateful boy there by your side, from the rude sea did I redeem!”

Viola flushed scarlet at this accusation, But Orsino wasn't listening; Olivia had arrived. He took a deep breath and ran through his mental checklist: Duke, good bloke, funny, rich, amazingly good looking, it's a no-brainer...

“Gracious Olivia... “and that was as far as he got.

“If it be aught to the old tune, my lord, it is fat and fulsome to mine ear as howling after music.”

It was like a slap in the face. Orsino finally realised that Olivia would never be his.  
“Still so cruel? Come Cesario.”

They turned to leave, but Olivia called out:

“Cesario, husband, stay!”

There was a shocked silence. Orsino and Viola froze like statues. Then Orsino turned, staring at Viola with mounting fury. His voice was low, harsh – full of accusation.

“Husband!”

Viola, confused, stammered her reply.

“No, my lord, not I.”

Now it was Olivia’s turn to freeze.

“Alas! It is the baseness of thy fear that makes thee strangle thy propriety.”

Viola tried to make sense of all these declarations of treachery: Antonio, Orsino and Olivia all shouted accusations at her.

It can’t get much worse than this, she thought. Which you should *never* think, because it always *can* get worse...

Sir Andrew staggered towards the crowd clutching his bloodied head. Behind him limped Sir Toby, also bleeding. Sir Andrew pointed his bony finger at Viola and shouted:

“He has broke my head across and has given Sir Toby a bloody coxcomb too: for the love of God, your help!”

What was Viola to do? She stood accused of ingratitude, treachery, faithlessness and assault. She was guilty of none of these – far from it, a more faithful, loyal and gentle soul never breathed – but to deny these accusations would make her seem a liar too.

She was doomed. Only a miracle could save her.

“I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman.”

All present gasped. There, at Cesario’s side, stood a second Cesario, as if a mirror stood between them.

And, in a matter of minutes, what had been a very bad day for Viola became one of the best days ever. The many confusions were swiftly explained and now, by her side stood: Olivia’s

new husband, Antonio's good friend and, best of all, the precious brother that she thought was gone forever – Sebastian.

And, on top of all this, whilst Sir Andrew and Sir Toby were led away to have their wounds tended, Orsino was undergoing a transformation. The huge love that he had held in his heart all these years was still there, but now bestowed on a different subject: Viola. How could he have been so blind?

“Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times thou never shouldst love woman like to me.”

Viola, of course, had loved him from the start...

“And all those sayings will I overswear; and those swearings keep as true in soul as doth that orb'd continent the fire that severs day from night”

“Give me thy hand; and let me see thee in thy woman's weeds. “

And so they all lived happily ever after.

Well, not quite.

Though Olivia freed Malvolio, and though she exposed the forged letter and told her servant that he would be ‘both the plaintiff and the judge’ when the culprits were found, Malvolio was not appeased.

Seeing the smiling couples in front of him only made him feel more humiliated and more alone. No, there was a far chillier emotion than happiness in Malvolio's heart. He snarled at them all,

“I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.”

But there was too much joy in the air for the mood to stay dark for long. As everyone left, to plan weddings and celebrations, Feste stayed behind, singing quietly to himself.

When that I was and a little tiny boy,  
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
A foolish thing was but a toy,  
For the rain it raineth every day.”