

#1 Maria, Feste, Olivia,

"Twelfth Night"

Exit NARRATOR stage rear.

FESTE, stage right, by bench, is practicing balancing a broom on his chin. Enter MARIA from stage rear. When she enters, FESTE gives a surprised yelp, and the broom drops.

START

MARIA (takes the broom from the ground and sweeps under the table and chair)

Tell me where thou hast been!
My lady will hang thee for thy absence.

FESTE

Let her hang me: he that is well hang'd in this world need to fear no colours.

MARIA

That may you be bold to say in your foolery.
(sweeps FESTE'S shoes playfully)

FESTE

Well, God give them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents. (juggles, center stage, and bows to audience)

MARIA

Peace, you rogue, no more o' that. Here comes my lady: make your excuse wisely, you were best.
(places the broom against the table)

Exit MARIA stage rear.

FESTE (looking upward)

Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling!
(winks at audience)

Enter LADY OLIVIA stage left with ATTENDANTS behind her and

MALVOLIO bringing up the rear. OLIVIA sits in stage left chair, MALVOLIO stands to her right, and ATTENDANTS stand on either side of the table.

FESTE (with a big bow and flourish of his hat)
God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA (to MALVOLIO)
Take the fool away.

MALVOLIO starts to take FESTE'S arm, but the latter nimbly escapes, spins around, and lands on the bench in a cross-legged pose, smiling cleverly.

FESTE

The lady bade take away the fool; therefore, I say again, take her away.

OLIVIA

Sir, I bade them take away you.

FESTE

Lady, I wear not motley in my brain. Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

OLIVIA

Make your proof.

FESTE (approaches the chair and kneels at OLIVIA'S feet)
Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

OLIVIA

Good fool, for my brother's death.

FESTE

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

OLIVIA

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

FESTE

The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen. **STOP**

FESTE stands, puts the fool's cap on OLIVIA'S head, pauses, and puts it on MALVOLIO'S head instead. He begins to lead MALVOLIO out, stage right, but the latter realizes what is happening and indignantly pushes FESTE away. FESTE tumbles over backward, spins around the stage right pole, and finishes leaning against the pole, smiling. MALVOLIO stiffly assumes his position at OLIVIA'S right, and she cracks a small smile at this foolery.

OLIVIA

What think you of this fool, Malvolio? Doth he not mend?

MALVOLIO

Yes, and shall do till the pangs of death shake him. Infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

FESTE

God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly! *(begins to balance the broom on his chin again)*

OLIVIA

How say you to that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal.

MALVOLIO crosses to FESTE and casts the broom across the room with his cane, knocking FESTE to the ground in the process. FESTE shoots him a dirty look.

Look you now, he's out of his guard already.

ATTENDANT picks up the broom, casually sweeping a little dust toward MALVOLIO, places it at the side of the table, and resumes her position.

OLIVIA

O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio.

Exit MALVOLIO stage right, cocking his ear as if hearing a knock at the door.

(calling after the departing MALVOLIO) There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail.

FESTE (regains his composure and grasps the broom once more, dancing around the room)
Now Mercury endue thee with leasing, for thou speak'st well of fools!

Exit FESTE stage right, still dancing with the broom. Enter MALVOLIO stage right, passing the dancing FESTE and giving him a dirty look. FESTE sweeps the feet and pants of MALVOLIO, who hurries away, indignant, and takes his place at OLIVIA'S right.

MALVOLIO

Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires to speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? He's fortified against any denial.