



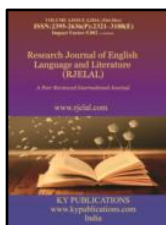
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## VITAL ROLE OF DISGUISE IN SHAKESPEARE'S "TWELFTH NIGHT"

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### ABSTRACT

Many romantic comedies are gifted by William Shakespeare. Twelfth Night is one among them. Story starts with Viola's decision to voluntarily conceal her identity and go to work as a servant for the lovesick Orsino. This disguise and gender confusion are there in the beginning of the play and finishes with happy ending. This paper tries to ascertain how Viola in Twelfth Night perform her disguise and become an ideal woman of Shakespeare's own concept. There may be many reasons why, he keeps his female characters in disguise position. Shakespeare's subjectivity can easily be seen at many places in the play. Viola disguises her identity, self-involved behaviour, beauty, nobility, sincerity, and loyalty etc. to her profession and manage her quality till the end of the play. Thus this article elucidates the disguise play a vital role in her life and end in marriage with Orsino.

**Keywords:** interesting, melodrama, influence, loyalty, embedded, disguises.

### Introduction

Twelfth night is one of the comedy play written by William Shakespeare. The play is believed to have been written around 1601-02 as a Twelfth night entertainment for the close of the christmas season. Shakespeare has become the cornerstone of classical education in English literature.

William Shakespeare seems to be neither born great nor acquired greatness by education. But he attained greatness before he die. His self acquired wisdom in art of using words made him to live by his works till date. Even though about 400 years are over after Shakespearean era, his works are read, performed, and adapted all over the world.

As the ship wrecked on the coast of Illyria, Viola reach ashore with the help of a sea captain. She could not find her twin brother, and eventually came to a conclusion that he had drowned. She then disguised as a page servant named Cesario. She

joined to work for Duke Orsino. Duke loved Olivia but Olivia rejected his proposal. So the Duke send Cesario as intermediary to get her convinced to accept his love. Olivia believed the disguised Viola as man and fell in love with Cesario. Meanwhile Viola love Duke Orsino. Thus a love triangle is formed as Viola to Duke Orsino, Duke Orsino to Olivia and Olivia to Cesario (Viola in disguise).

Olivia was overwhelmingly in love with Cesario, even though Viola continued to be in lovesick with Orsino. Events lead Viola and Sir Andrew prepare for a fight. Antonio arrested Sebastian believing Sebastian as Cesario (Viola). But Viola, did not recognize Antonio. Olivia mistaking Sebastian for Viola/Cesario ask for marriage. Sebastian agreed to marry her. After brother and sister recognize each other and they got reunited. At the end of the play Orsino and Viola agree to love and marry. Olivia and Sebastian also pledged their love to marry.

Cross-dressing enables Viola to fulfil the male roles such as acting as a messenger between Orsino and Olivia as well as being Orsino's confidant. Viola did not use her disguise to intervene directly in the plot and her persistence in transvestism in her betrothal of the final scene of the play often engenders a homoerotic relationship between Viola and Orsino.

The disguises, mask and mistaken identities are used to add the comical nature of the play without this important element, the play would slow down dramatically making the story much less intriguing. So the majority of the plot lines depend on the disguise, without it the main theme of the play would not occur. The confusion that Sebastian creates when he return would not occur without Viola's disguise. What ever difficulties appear with in the play could be solved and end in fun and happiness.

Disguise is one of the favorite phenomenon in Shakespeare's plays. These disguises alters the identities of the individual and uses irony, develop theme and enhance the character of the play. The disguise is used to create comedies and also take many different shapes from physical disguise to mental disguise. Disguise in Twelfth night brings in confusion and comedy as well as the darker and sadder side of the play which is disguised as fun and happiness.

Although there occur much difficulties in the play the genre of comedy is expected. All the difficulties would be solved towards the traditional happy-ending such as celebration or a marriage in the last scene of the play.

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