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for  
*Twelfth Night*

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# The Law of Shipwreck



*Viola. O that I might not be delivered to the world,  
Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,  
What my estate is!*

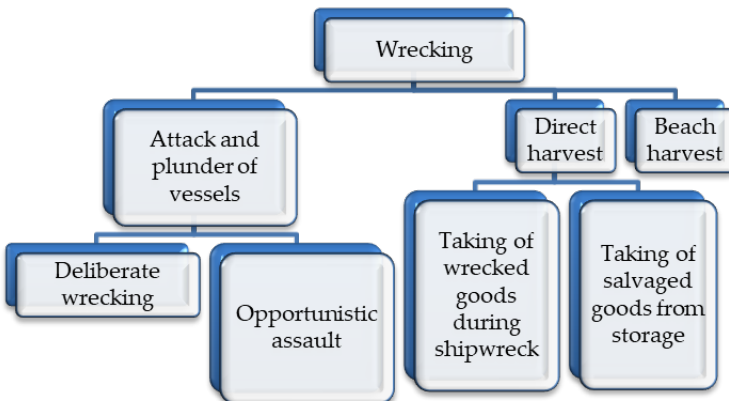
Modern audiences can miss how much danger threatens Viola at the beginning of the play.

In 17<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, shipwrecked foreigners were often treated as invaders, illegal migrants, or sea-borne parasites. Maritime law was typically hostile to survivors like Viola and Sebastian who tried to recover their “estate,” when their own folly caused the disaster.

## “Wrecking” culture of Cornwall



This was a grim scene along the English coast. In Cornwall, locals raced to loot wrecked ships. The law distinguished between salvage without survivors (which the first finders could keep) and distribution by the local authorities if survivors came ashore. Survivors had to find local gentry quickly to get protection from hostile scavengers.



Sebastian and the pirate Antonio have an unsettling exchange on the beach.

Antonio. *If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant.*

Sebastian. *If you will not undo what you have done, that is, kill him whom you have recovered.*

### **The Basque wreck on Iceland 1615**

In the winter of 1615, three Basque whaling ships under Pedro de Aguirre were shipwrecked on the coast of Iceland. Eighty sailors were stranded. After the Basques stole some dried fish, local sheriff Ari Magnusson issued a death warrant based on medieval Viking law: any Basque found in Iceland



would be treated as an invader, to be killed on sight. All 80 Basques were massacred.

Four hundred years later, a local historian realized that Magnusson's order had never been repealed. In 2015, the Icelandic Parliament invited Basque officials to a reconciliation ceremony at the Museum of Icelandic Sorcery, where the law was officially abolished. After 400 years, Basques can now set foot in Iceland without being hunted down by law.



Martin Garitano, Deputy General of Basque Gipuzkoa  
with Icelandic MP Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, 2015



## Modern persecution of shipwrecked refugees



Eritrean shipwreck survivors  
arrested and prosecuted by Italian police

In 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 1,500 people died en route to Italy and Malta trying to get into Europe. “We need to listen to the migrants and hear what they need. Repressive measures will never solve the problem.” -- Laura Boldrini, Italian MP.

Those who support the anti-refugee measures disagree. “I hope they don’t change the law. If anything, the blame lies with the international community who promised to help patrol the coast in the first place. The principle that anyone who comes to Italy must have a job first must be maintained.” – anti-migrant Northern League secretary Roberto Maroni.





# Epiphany





LORD OF MISRULE.

The Lord of Misrule!—in the midst of your sports,  
I'm one of the sort to put all out of sorts;  
I'll swallow you whole when you're all most risible,  
And afterwards bring up the party invisible!

# The Politics of Yellow Hose

*When I was a bachelor I led a merry life,  
but now I am a married man and saddled with a wife*



*I cannot do as I  
have done because I  
live in fear,  
if I should go and  
drink with friends  
they say my wife is  
near*

*Give me my  
yellow hose again  
give me my yellow  
hose*

*for now my wife  
she watches me see  
yonder where she  
goes  
fa la la la la la la.*

## Elizabethan sumptuary laws



Early in Elizabeth's reign, the Privy Council reinstated the medieval sumptuary laws. These were criminal laws of apparel that reserved specific kinds of clothing for the upper classes. This was supposedly a measure to protect the English clothing trade. The main purpose, however, was to stop identity fraud.

### Elizabeth's Sumptuary Statute

Greenwich, 15 June 1574, 16 Elizabeth I

The excess of apparel and the superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares is grown by sufferance to such an extremity that the manifest decay of the whole realm is like to follow (by bringing into the realm such superfluities of silks, cloths of gold, silver, and other most vain devices of so great cost)



but  
also



particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of young gentlemen, and others seeking by show of apparel to be esteemed as gentlemen, who cannot live out of danger of laws without attempting unlawful acts ,  
Which great abuses, the Queen's majesty hath of her own princely wisdom commanded the same to be presently and speedily remedied.

No Englishman other than the son and heir apparent of a knight, or he that hath yearly revenues of £20 or is worth in goods £200, shall wear silk in or upon his hat, cap, night cap, girdles, scabbard, hose, shoes, or spur-leathers, upon



forfeiture of £10 for every day, and imprisonment by three months. If any, knowing his servant to offend, do not put him out of his service within 14 days; or so put out, retain him again within a year after such offense, he shall forfeit £100.

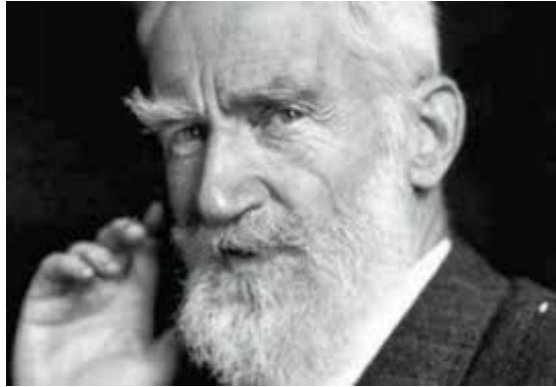
Cloth of gold, silver, tinsel, satin, silk, or cloth embroidered with any gold or silver: except all degrees above viscounts, and viscounts, barons, and other persons of like degree,



Satin, damask, silk, camlet, or taffeta in gown, coat, hose, or uppermost garments; fur whereof the kind groweth not in the Queen's dominions, except foin, grey genets, and budge: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, and men that may dispend £100 by the year, and so valued in the subsidy book.

# Lords of Misrule

Critics of Shakespeare like G.B. Shaw complain that his comedies are “formulaic.” That is, they do not follow classical conventions of comedy, but use lower-class tropes like gender confusion, plot complication and contrived identity swaps for laughs.



This criticism blames Shakespeare not for imitating, but being imitated. Audiences watching *Twelfth Night* are seeing the basis of modern situational comedy. If it seems formulaic, it is because modern comedy is the product of this recipe.



## The *Twelfth Night* recipe

Take two minor gentlemen, not important enough to have responsibilities, but well enough off that they do not work.



Add a brassy, working class woman, able to put the men in their place but conspire with them when trouble must be made.



Turn the group loose on a stuffy authority figure.

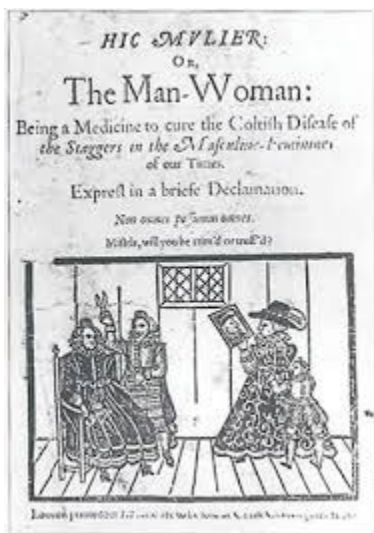


Repeat as needed.



# As I Am Man

Cross-dressing and gender confusion in Elizabethan England



# Puritan Exiled

Go, hang yourselves all! you are idle shallow things: I am not of your element: I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.

Cotton Mather

Cromwell

Rev. Dimmesdale

Captain Ahab



"How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me.

But not my master, man, is even that fair play.  
Who's over me? Truth hath no confines.

# Fool's Progress

Elizabeth encouraged Oxford to function as her “allowed fool,” as Olivia calls Feste the clown in *Twelfth Night*. Telling Malvolio to shake off Feste’s barbs, she reminds him that the jester uses his biting wit because she allows him to do so: “There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail.” Olivia has given Feste permission to slander others; and because her command is law, it follows that Feste’s slander



cannot be slanderous.



Grumio, Bottom

1599 As You Like It --

Touchstone

1601 Twelfth Night – Feste

Gravediggers

1605 King Lear - the Fool

# F O O L E

VPON FOOLE,

OR

*Six sortes of Sottes.*

A flat foole	} and }	A fatt foole.
A leane foole	} and }	A cleane foole.
A merry foole	} and }	A verry foole.

Shewing their liues, humours and behaiours, with their want of wit in their shew of wisdom. Not so strange as true

*Omnia sunt sex.*

Written by one, seeming to haue his mothers witte, when some say he is filld with his fathers fopperie, and hopes he liues not without companie.

*Clannico de Curtanio Smuffe.*

*Not amisse to be read, no matter to regard it:  
Yet stands in some stead, though he that made it mar'd it.*



LONDON

Printed for William Ferbrand, dwelling neere  
Guild-hall gate ouer against the Maiden-head.

1600.



THE KING'S FOOL.

I am a most accredited fool,  
Joking by science, and jesting by rule ;  
But my lord and lady, who there you see,  
Are very much greater fools than me !



# The Subtitle

## *Or, What You Will*

### Meanings of 'Will'

Desire  
Command  
Consent  
Summon  
Invite  
Require  
Claim  
Readiness  
Intention  
Lust  
Penis  
Vagina  
Arousal  
Orgasm  
Testament  
Name of the author

Be where you list, your charter is so strong  
That you yourself may privilege your time  
To what you will; to you it doth belong  
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime. Sonnet 58

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy 'Will,'  
And 'Will' to boot, and 'Will' in overplus;  
More than enough am I that vex thee still,  
To thy sweet will making addition thus.  
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,  
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?  
Shall will in others seem right gracious,  
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?  
The sea all water, yet receives rain still  
And in abundance addeth to his store;  
So thou, being rich in 'Will,' add to thy 'Will'  
One will of mine, to make thy large 'Will' more.  
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;  
Think all but one, and me in that one 'Will.'

Sonnet 135

If thy soul cheque thee that I come so near,  
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy 'Will,'  
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;  
Thus far for love my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.  
'Will' will fulfil the treasure of thy love,  
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.  
In things of great receipt with ease we prove  
Among a number one is reckon'd none:  
Then in the number let me pass untold,  
Though in thy stores' account I one must be;  
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold  
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee:  
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,  
And then thou lovest me, for my name is 'Will.'

Sonnet 136