

Core Assessment-Reading
'Twelfth Night' by William Shakespeare.

How does William Shakespeare create humour in 'Twelfth Night'?

In the play 'Twelfth Night' Shakespeare creates humour in many different ways. He creates humour by using Dramatic irony, Mistaken identity, Disguise, word play and punning. Shakespeare uses these techniques many times throughout the play and also very cleverly in a way that makes you enjoy the book a whole lot more.

One way that Shakespeare uses to create humour is Dramatic irony. There are several occasions in which Shakespeare uses dramatic irony to make the play more exiting as the audience knows something that the characters do not. This also makes the audience want to find out what happens later on in the play. Act 1 Scene 4 is a good example of this as Orsino is convinced that Viola of male gender and praises Viola by saying

'Dear lad, believe it;

For they shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth than rubious, thy small pipe
Is as a maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all semblative to a woman's part.'

This shows that Orsino praises his woman like appearance, but at this moment in time Viola is feeling very uncomfortable as she fears that Orsino may have realised that she is in fact a woman in disguise of a man. It shows this as Orsino is comparing Viola to a woman by pointing out her similarities to a female.

Shakespeare uses Mistaken identity to slowly re unite both Sebastian and Viola after the shipwreck at the beginning of the play. Sebastian and Viola both get mistaken for one another on many occasions such as the scene in Olivia's gardens where Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian. Also among one of the last scenes Viola and Sebastian, the two orphaned brother and sister, re unite as their true identity is uncovered as they both get mistaken for the same youth. Before the end of the play Olivia mistakes both Viola and Sebastian as she believed that she had married Viola, Cesario, but in fact she had married Sebastian. Therefore when Viola was about to go back to the court with Orsino, Olivia became very upset and called out 'Whither, my lord? Cesario, Husband stay!' At this point Orsino became very confused and asked Viola if this was true but Viola knew nothing about this and denied it as she was being mistaken for her brother Sebastian.

Disguise is one of the most exiting story lines in most plays books or novels, and Shakespeare has used disguise as the main story line as it makes the audience want to know