

Worksheets: Character Deep Dive

WS 6: Who is Malvolio?

- senior servant of Countess Olivia – the steward

Olivia: What do you think of this fool, Malvolio. Doth he not mend?

Malvolio: Yes, and shall do, till the pangs of death shake him. (CSS I, v, l. 61-62)

Malvolio seems to dislike the fool Feste and his foolishness/clownery. It suggests that Malvolio is a little uptight.

O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon bullets. (Olivia; CSS, I, v, l. 73-76)

Olivia calls Malvolio arrogant, narcissistic, and overall rude.

Have you no wit, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you? (Malvolio; CSS, II, iii, l. 75-79)

Another instance of Malvolio being uptight. He dislikes parties, drinking, and loud noises.

Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favor at anything more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule; she shall know of it, by this hand. (Malvolio; CSS, II, iii, l. 103-105)

Malvolio hates uncivility and disrespectfulness.

The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass, that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths. The best persuaded of himself: so crammed (as he thinks) with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him. (Maria; CSS, II, iii, l. 124-128)

Malvolio thinks he is better than everyone else and thinks he can use language to make himself important.

Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of **puritan**. (Maria; CSS, II, iii, l. 119)



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What is a Puritan?

Puritans were members of an English religious group back in the 16th and 17th century¹. They believed that church ceremonies had become too extravagant and lavish, and instead demanded a return to more simplistic forms of worship¹. They viewed entertainment and pleasure as something sinful by their nature, with many seeking a ban to the theatre, winter festivals, and other forms of 'frivolous' activities². Puritans believed that for a godly and divine⁴ life, one would have to work hard, be moral and be able to control oneself and one's urges³.

- 1) Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). *Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/puritan
- 2) Bremer, Francis J. (2009). *Puritanism: A very short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, p. 58.
- 3) Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/puritan
- 4) Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus*. Retrieved August 16, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/divine>

lavish
frivolous
urge
divine

here: expensive; more than is necessary
not having any serious use or value; of little importance
a strong desire or wish that is difficult to control
connected with a god or like a god

What does Mary's comparison tell us about Malvolio?

It further highlights that Malvolio dislikes excess, whether that be partying or drinking. It also tells us that Malvolio sees himself to be morally superior and the better of the four characters, since he controls his urges.



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WS 7: Who is Sir Toby Belch?

- Countess Olivia's uncle

By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights. Your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours. (Maria; CSS, I, iii, l. 3-4)

Sir Toby often stays out late - partying, disregarding what his cousin Countess Olivia thinks.

That quaffing and drinking will undo you. (Maria; CSS, I, iii, l. 11)

Sir Toby drinks a lot / Sir Toby is a drunk.

With drinking healths to my niece! I'll drink to her as long as there is passage in my throat and drink in Illyria. (Sir Toby; CSS, I, iii, l. 31-32)

Sir Toby does not seem to think his excessive drinking is a problem. He likes to drink.

Sir Toby: Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

Maria: Ay, he.

Sir Toby: He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.

Maria: What's that to th' purpose?

Sir Toby: Why, he has three thousand ducats a year. (CSS, I, iii, l. 14-18)

Sir Toby is greedy and likes to exploit Sir Andrew for his money.

(*To Malvolio*) Go sir, rub your chain with crumbs. (Sir Toby; CSS, II, iii, l. 101)

As Olivia's steward, Malvolio wears a chain of office. What does it say about Sir Toby that he reminds Malvolio of this? And what does it say about their relationship?

Sir Toby strongly dislikes Malvolio. He likes to remind Malvolio of his lower social status.

(*About Maria*) She's a beagle, true bred, and one that adores me. (Sir Toby; CSS, II, iii, l. 151)

I could marry this wench for this device – (Sir Toby; CSS, II, v, l. 150)

Sir Toby strongly admires Maria, and seems to be fond of her.



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WS 8: Who is Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

- a knight
- acquainted with Sir Toby
- 'wannabe' suitor to Olivia

He's a very fool and a prodigal. (Maria, CSS, I, iii, l. 19-20)

Sir Andrew is dumb and likes to spend his money unwisely.

For besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreller; and but that he hath the gift of a coward. (Maria; CSS, I, iii, l. 24-25)

Sir Andrew is an idiotic coward.

Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has, but I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does not harm my wit. (Sir Andrew; CSS, I, iii, l. 70-72)

Sir Andrew thinks he is not smarter than the average man, as well as eating a lot of beef, which was thought to make you dumb.

I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting. (Sir Andrew; CSS, I, iii, l. 77-79)

Sir Andrew thinks he could and should have invested time in masculine activities of the time, rather than languages.

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o'th'strangest mind i'th'world: I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether. (Sir Andrew; CSS, I, iii, l. 92-93)

Sir Andrew likes to party and dance.

Sir Andrew: Faith. I'll home tomorrow, Sir Toby; your niece will not be seen [...].

Sir Toby: She'll none o'th'count; she'll not match above her degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit. [...]

Sir Andrew: I'll stay a month longer. (CSS, I, iii, l. 84-93)

Sir Andrew is easily gullible.

If I cannot recover your niece, I am a foul way out. (Sir Andrew; CSS, II, iii, l. 155)

Sir Andrew is desperately trying to woo Countess Olivia.



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WS 9: Who is Fabian?

- a servant in Countess Olivia's household
- a character sometimes replaced with Maria in performances, because he does not have many appearances

Sir Toby Belch: Come thy ways, Signior Fabian.

Fabian: Nay, I'll come. If I lose a scruple of this sport, let me be boiled to death with melancholy.

'Sir Toby Belch: Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?

Fabian: I would exult, man. You know, he brought me out o'favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here. (CSS, II, v, l. 1-7)

Fabian is looking forward to the prank and dislikes Malvolio, as he told Olivia about the bear-baiting. Olivia got mad at Fabian and fell out of favor with her.

O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him; how he jets under his advanced plumes! (Fabian; CSS, II, v, l. 26-27)

Further evidence that Fabian dislikes Malvolio and holds a grudge against him. He cannot wait to see the prank work.

I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the sophy. (Fabian; CSS, II, v, l. 148-149)

Fabian enjoys playing pranks.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek: 'Slight, will you make an ass o' me?

Fabian: I will prove it legitimate, sir, upon the oaths of judgment and reason. (CSS, III, ii, l. 9-11)

Fabian also enjoys making a fool out of Sir Andrew.

Maria: Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint.

Fabian: Why, we shall make him mad indeed. (CSS, III, iv, l. 111-112)

Fabian is somewhat cruel, and would rather torture a person than let the prank be known.



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Viola: Pray you, sir, do you know of this matter?

Fabian: I know the knight is incensed against you, even to a mortal arbitrement; but nothing of the circumstance more. (CSS, III, iv, l. 220-222)

He also readily instigates the fight between Sir Andrew and Viola. Fabian does not seem to have a regard for other people's wellbeing, only for his own amusement and fun.

