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# GENDER ROLES REVIEWED THROUGH SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT WITH 21ST CENTURY APPLICATIONS

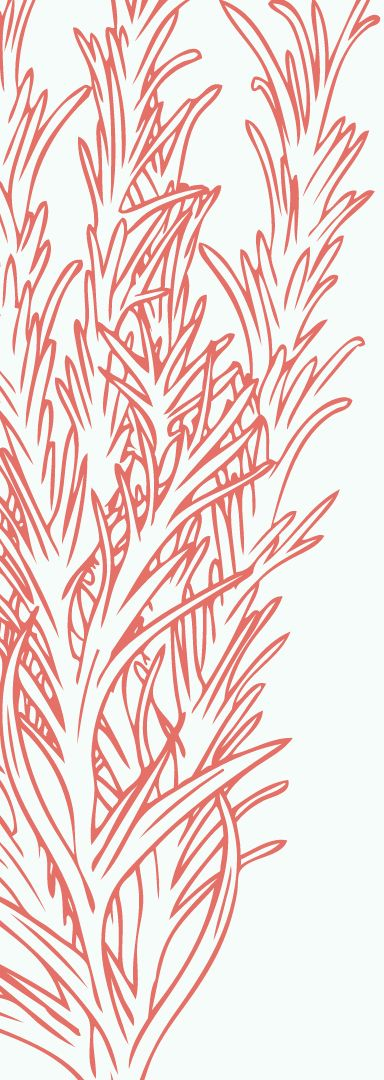
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# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

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## TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

- Introduction
- Background of  
Gender Roles
- Purpose of Project
- Review of Characters
- Script Process
- Character  
Development





# SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT

- Shakespeare's portrayal of moral truths has been analyzed by both readers and critics and still has a great impact towards the contemporary age.
  - In Twelfth Night, Shakespeare defies assigned gender roles through the creation of a successful, intelligent female protagonist.
  - Shakespeare makes use of the characterization of Viola in Twelfth Night to demonstrate how female stereotypes are false.
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# Making of a Modern Adaptation

- Why write a modern adaptation of Twelfth Night?
  - Original play is ahead of its time.
    - Success story of a female protagonist.
  - Work with a play that is often misunderstood or unpopular.
  - Demonstrate how the moral truths in Shakespeare's plays can be applied to the modern-day world.
    - Gender Equality
    - Love
    - Respect
  - Uses the topic of gender roles and Shakespeare's characters in a new way.



# CRITIC REVIEWS

- Critical vs. Admirative Reviews.
  - an "outrageous old bore, full of tiresome and gritty complications, incomprehensible Elizabethan jokes, and a troop of low-comedy characters of really paralyzing inanity..." (Swander 115).
  - "Shakespeare means not only to entertain but to instruct, that one of his purposes is to celebrate certain virtues and to ridicule certain follies, to nourish the good life and defeat the bad" (Swander 120).

## CRITIC REVIEWS

- Most critics recognize Shakespeare's moral standards in Twelfth Night; however, the question of Viola's relevance within gender roles are still left unanswered.
  - They fail to understand the protagonist as a woman who rejects the traditional female role.
- Thus, the topic of gender roles in relation to Viola in Twelfth Night is still a subject of debate.

How do gender roles in  
Shakespeare's time contrast with the  
21st century view?

# BACKGROUND OF GENDER ROLES: ELIZABETHAN ERA VS. 21ST CENTURY



# ELIZABETHAN ERA

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- A woman's role had little significance in both theater, and in life.
- Man's role vs. Woman's role
  - Men = complete authority
  - Women= complete submission
- In a male-dominated society, a woman was described to be the weaker sex.
- These roles were primarily based on what the society labeled as "beliefs, ethics, values and standards" (Kastan 10)








# 21ST CENTURY

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- Men and women are given equal rights and both genders play significant roles in the world today.
  - Roles of leadership are given to anyone who demonstrates notable qualities, regardless of gender.
  - Men and women have the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and abilities in life, and in the workplace.
    - Discrimination of gender is greatly disapproved of.
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# THE PROBLEM

- However, there are issues that surround the topic of gender roles, especially among women. There are problems such as:
  - Ongoing gender disparities in pay
  - The struggle to work up the social ladder
  - Pushback on women's rights
  - Stereotypical assumption that women cannot be held responsible due to their emotional nature
- How does Shakespeare's Twelfth Night tackle female stereotypes that are still in question today?


# PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT



The purpose of my project is to reveal how stereotypical female gender roles have existed from the Elizabethan era to the 21st century with a close observation of Shakespeare's representation of Viola through her characterization.



# Thesis



Shakespeare's critique of stereotypical gender roles in Twelfth Night are still relevant in the 21st century, through his representation of Viola. By writing an original adaptation of Twelfth Night, this project draws attention to gender equality as a significant moral truth that is often opposed by negative stereotypes in the modern day



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# REVIEW OF CHARACTERS

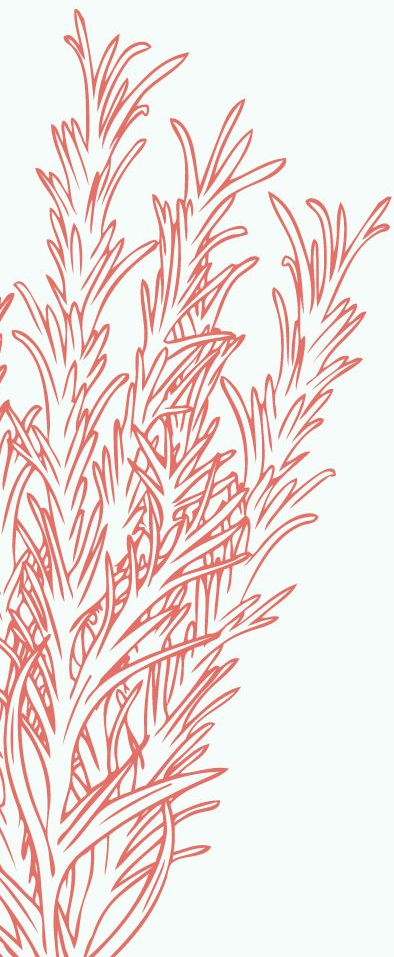




# REVIEW OF CHARACTERS

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- Shakespeare uses the characterization of Viola in Twelfth Night to defy gender stereotypes of the Elizabethan era.
  - At the beginning of the play, Viola is "no longer restricted by the fiction of femininity..." (Kietzman 263).
- Instead of marrying into the upper class, she takes matters into her own hands by dressing up as a man and working for the Duke.
  - Defies the typical outlook that people had on women during Shakespeare's time.
- Her unique traits of dignity and strength drive the plot line forward.
- Shakespeare's creation of Viola demonstrates his opposition to the image of the traditional Elizabethan woman.



## STORYLINE

How did I form the plot?

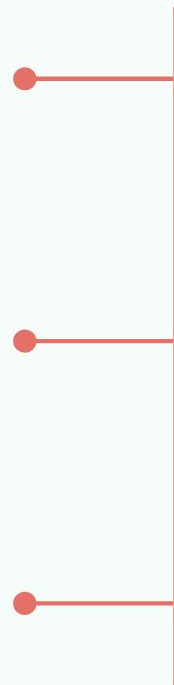
## CHARACTERS

How were the characters portrayed?

## COMPARISON

How does the 21st century Viola compare with the other characters?

# SCRIPT PROCESS



# STORYLINE

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## PLOT

- Read the play with gender roles in mind.
- Created an outline of the script, including location, number of scenes, and transitional scenes.
- Added soliloquies from different characters to include the audience.

## SCENES

- Omitted scenes from the original script that were unimportant to the storyline
- Added new scenes that further develop Viola and Orsino's character.

## BLOCKING

- Experimented with different types of blocking that would best fit each scene.
- Studied how blocking can affect the scene.





# CHARACTERS IN ADAPTATION



VIVIAN DAVIS:  
Owen's assistant,  
dreams of owning a  
tailoring business.

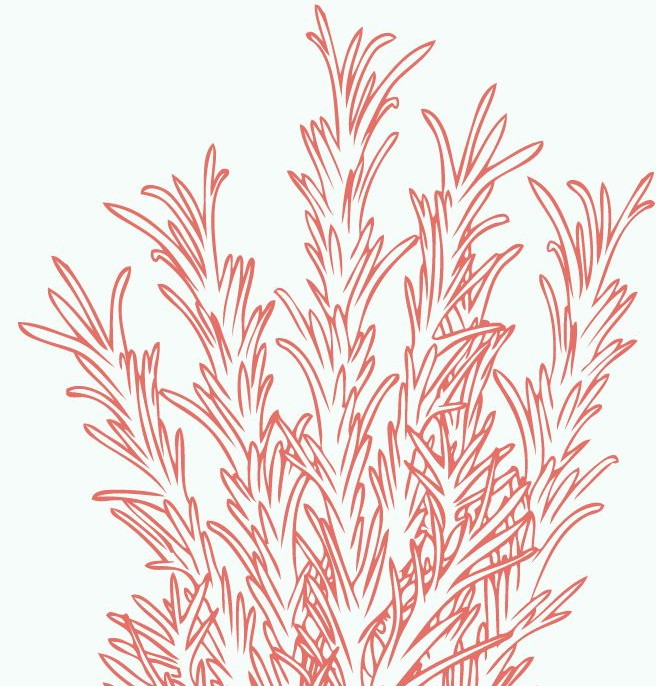


OWEN BECKETT:  
CEO of a famous tech  
company.



OLIVIA WILSON:  
Famous model in New York  
City.

# Vivian & Owen



## VIVIAN DAVIS

- Uses her position as Owen's assistant to give him advice.
- Sees Owen as her equal.
- Described as a head-strong woman.
- Has the ability to interpret people's words and actions.

## OWEN BECKETT

- Represents the central conflict of the play.
- Described to be immature and childish.
- Believes that love is like a business deal.
- Has redemptive qualities that Vivian brings out towards the end of the play.

# EXCERPT

I know what you're thinking. I probably shouldn't waste my time on someone like him. But for the first time, I think I saw a new side of Owen that maybe no one has seen before. Even though he may be immature, he's not a bad guy. I guess he never got the opportunity to experience the bliss of youthfulness. He genuinely believes that success is the only way to happiness and the only relationship he knew, fell apart. No wonder he had become so cold and close-minded. Maybe just maybe, I can change that.



# Vivian & Olivia

## VIVIAN

- Has a humble beginning and goes out of her comfort zone to obtain financial security and make her dream a reality.
- A unique female protagonist
- Convicts Olivia of her behavior so she may better understand the fault of her actions.

## OLIVIA

- Lacks maturity and self-awareness.
- Bares similarity to other strong female characters.
  - Lady Macbeth
  - Cleopatra
- Like Owen, Olivia is given an opportunity of redemption at the end of the play.



# ORIGINAL SCRIPT

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**VIOLA**

By innocence I swear, and by my youth  
I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth,  
And that no woman has, nor never none  
Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.  
And so adieu, good madam. Nevermore  
Will I my master's tears to you deplore.

# ADAPTATION

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**VIVIAN DAVIS**

You should stop filling your  
head with fantasies like true  
love. How could you fall in love  
with someone you just met?  
You're only denying who you  
truly are. You're driven by your  
loneliness and desperation. You  
use people to satisfy your  
needs, and then you toss them  
out. Why should I be another  
pawn in your game?

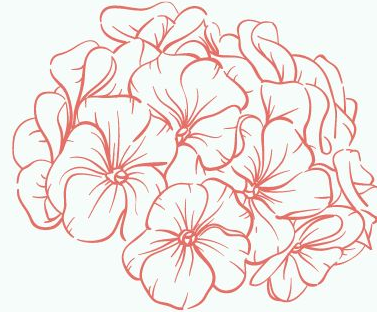
# Conclusion



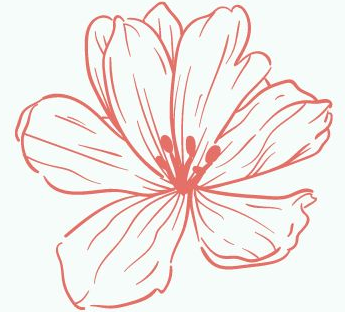
Both the original script and the modern adaptation call attention to gender equality as a moral truth.



Viola possesses character traits that make her independent from patriarchal tradition.



Vivian makes the audience aware of gender stereotypes that are still in existence today.



Viola & Vivian draw attention to gender stereotypes as an opportunity to alter them.

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"SHAKESPEARE WAS NOT  
OF AN AGE, BUT FOR ALL  
TIME."

- Ben Jonson (Wagner 180).





# QUESTIONS?

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# — Works Cited

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