

Twelfth Night

William Shakespeare

What makes the forged letter convincing to Malvolio even when its clues are weak?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Malvolio solves the forged letter
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Act II, Scene V
START	To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes:
END	I will smile; I will do every thing that thou wilt have me.
PASSAGE ID	sec-tn-03

THE MOVE

Track confirmation bias as a character manufactures evidence

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The forged letter gives Malvolio weak and ambiguous clues, but he repeatedly adjusts them until they fit what he already wants to believe—that Olivia loves him. His desire supplies the certainty the evidence lacks.

MARK

Underline each clue in the letter before Malvolio interprets it. Circle the explanation he invents to make that clue point toward himself. Put a star beside the weakest clue he treats as decisive.

NOTICE

- Which clue would remain ambiguous to someone who did not already want the same conclusion?
- How does Malvolio change or stretch evidence rather than test his belief against it?
- At what point does his interpretation become self-confirming?

THINK

Answer provisionally: What makes the forged letter convincing to Malvolio even when its clues are weak? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: What makes the forged letter convincing to Malvolio even when its clues are weak? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The letter convinces Malvolio because he already wants the conclusion. He stretches initials, handwriting, commands, and ambiguous clues until they fit the belief that Olivia loves him.
EVIDENCE	Use at least two weak clues and show the interpretive work Malvolio performs to make each point toward himself.
WATCH FOR	Do not blame the forged letter alone. The comedy depends on Malvolio manufacturing confirmation from evidence that is not strong enough by itself.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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What makes the forged letter convincing to Malvolio even when its clues are weak?

START ANCHOR	To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes:
END ANCHOR	I will smile; I will do every thing that thou wilt have me.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline each clue in the letter before Malvolio interprets it. Circle the explanation he invents to make that clue point toward himself. Put a star beside the weakest clue he treats as decisive.
2. NOTICE - Which clue would remain ambiguous to someone who did not already want the same conclusion? How does Malvolio change or stretch evidence rather than test his belief against it? At what point does his interpretation become self-confirming?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: What makes the forged letter convincing to Malvolio even when its clues are weak?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.