

# Twelfth Night, or What You Will

## 1.2

*Enter Viola, a Captain, and sailors*

**VIOLA**

What country, friends, is this?

**CAPTAIN**

This is Illyria, lady.

**VIOLA**

And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother, he is in Elysium.

Perchance he is not drowned. What think you sailors?

**CAPTAIN**

It is perchance that you yourself were saved. 5

**VIOLA**

O my poor brother!±±and so perchance may he be.

**CAPTAIN**

True, madam, and to comfort you with chance,

Assure yourself, after our ship did split,

When you and those poor number saveÁd with you

Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother, 10

Most provident in peril, bind himself±±

Courage and hope both teaching him the practice±±

To a strong mast that lived upon the sea,

Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,

I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves 15

So long as I could see.

**VIOLA** (*giving money*) For saying so, there's gold.

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,

Whereto thy speech serves for authority,

The like of him. Know'st thou this country?

**CAPTAIN**

Ay, madam, well, for I was bred and born 20

Not three hours' travel from this very place.

**VIOLA**

Who governs here?

**CAPTAIN** A noble duke, in nature

As in name.

**VIOLA** What is his name?

**CAPTAIN**

Orsino.

**VIOLA**

Orsino. I have heard my father name him.  
He was a bachelor then.

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**CAPTAIN**

And so is now, or was so very late,  
For but a month ago I went from hence,  
And then 'twas fresh in murmur±±as, you know,  
What great ones do the less will prattle of±±  
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

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**VIOLA** What's she?

**CAPTAIN**

A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count  
That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her  
In the protection of his son, her brother,  
Who shortly also died, for whose dear love,  
They say, she hath abjured the sight  
And company of men.

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

**CAPTAIN** That were hard to compass,  
Because she will admit no kind of suit,  
No, not the Duke's.

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**VIOLA**

There is a fair behaviour in thee, captain,  
And though that nature with a beauteous wall  
Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee  
I will believe thou hast a mind that suits  
With this thy fair and outward character.  
I pray thee±±and I'll pay thee bounteously±±  
Conceal me what I am, and be my aid  
For such disguise as haply shall become  
The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke.  
Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him.  
It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing,  
And speak to him in many sorts of music  
That will allow me very worth his service.  
What else may hap, to time I will commit.  
Only shape thou thy silence to my wit.

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**CAPTAIN**

Be you his eunuch, and your mute I'll be.  
When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

**VIOLA**

I thank thee. Lead me on.

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*Exeunt*