



TWELFTH NIGHT

Love sought is good, but given unsought, is better.

William Shakespeare

TWELFTH NIGHT

William Shakespeare



William Shakespeare (1564—1616)

was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon." His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Twelfth Night, in full *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, is a comedy in five acts, believed to have been written around 1601–1602 as a Twelfth Night's entertainment for the close of the Christmas season. The play expanded on the musical interludes and riotous disorder expected of the occasion, with plot elements drawn from the short story "Of Apollonius and Silla" by Barnabe Rich, based on a story by Matteo Bandello. One of Shakespeare's finest comedies, it precedes the great tragedies and problem plays in order of composition.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ORSINO	Duke of Illyria
SEBASTIAN	brother to Viola
ANTONIO	a sea-captain, friend to Sebastian
A SEA-CAPTAIN	friend to Viola
VALENTINE	} gentleman attending on the Duke
CURIO	
SIR TOBY BELCH	uncle to Olivia
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK	
MALVOLIO	} steward to Olivia
FABIAN	
FESTE , a clown	servants to Olivia
OLIVIA	a rich Countess
VIOLA	in love with the Duke
MARIA	Olivia's woman

Lords, Priests, Sailors, Officers, Musicians, and other Attendants.

SCENE

A city in Illyria, and the sea-coast near it.

CONTENTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE / 1

SCENE / 1

ACT I / 1

SCENE I A Room in the DUKE's Palace. / 1

SCENE II The Sea-coast. / 3

SCENE III A Room in OLIVIA's House. / 6

SCENE IV A Room in DUKE ORSINO's Palace. / 10

SCENE V A Room in OLIVIA's House. / 12

ACT II / 22

SCENE I The Sea-coast. / 22

SCENE II A Street. / 24

SCENE III A Room in OLIVIA's House. / 26

SCENE IV A Room in the DUKE's Palace. / 32

SCENE V OLIVIA's Garden. / 37

ACT III / 43

SCENE I OLIVIA's Garden. / 43

SCENE II OLIVIA's House. / 49

SCENE III A Street. / 52

SCENE IV OLIVIA's Garden. / 54

ACT IV / 66

SCENE I Before OLIVIA's House. / 66

SCENE II OLIVIA's House. / 69

SCENE III OLIVIA's Garden. / 73

ACT V / 75

SCENE I Before OLIVIA's House. / 75

Act I

SCENE I A Room in the DUKE's Palace.

[Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and other Lords; Musicians attending]

DUKE ORSINO If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

CURIO Will you go hunt, my lord?

DUKE ORSINO What, Curio?

CURIO The hart.

DUKE ORSINO Why, so I do, the noblest that I have:

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence!

That instant was I turn'd into a hart;
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.

[Enter VALENTINE]

How now! what news from her?

VALENTINE So please my lord, I might not be admitted;

But from her handmaid do return this answer:

The element itself, till seven years' heat,

Shall not behold her face at ample view;

But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk

And water once a day her chamber round

With eye-offending brine: all this to season

A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh

And lasting in her sad remembrance.

DUKE ORSINO O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame

To pay this debt of love but to a brother,

How will she love, when the rich golden shaft

Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else

That live in her; when liver, brain and heart,

These sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and fill'd

Her sweet perfections with one self king!

Away before me to sweet beds of flowers:

Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

[Exeunt]

SCENE II The Sea-coast.

[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 drown'd: what think you, sailors?

CAPTAIN It is perchance that you yourself were saved.

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 saved with you

Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,

Most provident in peril, bind himself,

Courage and hope both teaching him the practise,

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

So long as I could see.

VIOLA 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

Not three hours' travel from this very place.

VIOLA Who governs here?

CAPTAIN A noble duke, in nature as in name.

VIOLA What is the name?

CAPTAIN Orsino.

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

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.

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 company
And sight of men.

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.

VIOLA There is a fair behavior 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 prithee, 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 shall 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.

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.

[Exeunt]

SCENE III A Room in OLIVIA's House.

[Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA]

SIR TOBY BELCH What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.

MARIA By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights: your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours.

SIR TOBY BELCH Why, let her except, before excepted.

MARIA Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order.

SIR TOBY BELCH Confine! I'll confine myself no finer than I am: these clothes are good enough to drink in; and so be these boots too: an they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps.

MARIA That quaffing and drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it yesterday; and of a foolish knight that you brought in one night here to be her wooer.

SIR TOBY BELCH Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA Ay, he.

SIR TOBY BELCH He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.

MARIA What's that to the purpose?

SIR TOBY BELCH Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.

MARIA Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats: he's a very fool and a prodigal.

SIR TOBY BELCH Fie, that you'll say so! he plays o' the viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature.

MARIA He hath indeed, almost natural: for besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreller: and but that he hath the gift of a coward

to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

SIR TOBY BELCH By this hand, they are scoundrels and subtractors that say so of him. Who are they?

MARIA They that add, moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

SIR TOBY BELCH With drinking healths to my niece: I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria: he's a coward and a coystrell that will not drink to my niece till his brains turn o' the toe like a parish-top. What, wench! *Castiliano vulgo!* for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

[Enter SIR ANDREW]

SIR ANDREW Sir Toby Belch! how now, Sir Toby Belch!

SIR TOBY BELCH Sweet Sir Andrew!

SIR ANDREW Bless you, fair shrew.

MARIA And you too, sir.

SIR TOBY BELCH Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

SIR ANDREW What's that?

SIR TOBY BELCH My niece's chambermaid.

SIR ANDREW Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

MARIA My name is Mary, sir.

SIR ANDREW Good Mistress Mary Accost,—

SIR TOBY BELCH You mistake, knight; 'accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her.

SIR ANDREW By my troth, I would not undertake her in this company. Is that the meaning of 'accost'?

MARIA Fare you well, gentlemen.

SIR TOBY BELCH An thou let part so, Sir Andrew, would thou mightst never draw sword again.

SIR ANDREW An you part so, mistress, I would I might never draw sword again. Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?

MARIA Sir, I have not you by the hand.

SIR ANDREW Marry, but you shall have; and here's my hand.

MARIA Now, sir, 'thought is free:' I pray you, bring your hand to the buttery-bar and let it drink.

SIR ANDREW Wherefore, sweet-heart? what's your metaphor?

MARIA It's dry, sir.

SIR ANDREW Why, I think so: I am not such an ass but I can keep my hand dry. But what's your jest?

MARIA A dry jest, sir.

SIR ANDREW Are you full of them?

MARIA Ay, sir, I have them at my fingers' ends: marry, now I let go your hand, I am barren.

[Exit]

SIR TOBY BELCH O knight! thou lackest a cup of canary: when did I see thee so put down?

SIR ANDREW Never in your life, I think; unless you see canary put me down. 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 harm to my wit.

SIR TOBY BELCH No question.

SIR ANDREW An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home to-morrow, Sir Toby.

SIR TOBY BELCH *Pourquoi*, my dear knight?

SIR ANDREW What is '*pourquoi*'? do or not do? I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing and bear-baiting: O! had I but followed the arts!

SIR TOBY BELCH Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.

SIR ANDREW Why, would that have mended my hair?

SIR TOBY BELCH Past question; for thou seest it will not curl by nature.

SIR ANDREW But it becomes me well enough, does't not?

SIR TOBY BELCH Excellent; it hangs like flax on a distaff; and I hope to see a housewife take thee between her legs and spin it off.

SIR ANDREW Faith, I'll home to-morrow, Sir Toby: your niece will

not be seen; or if she be, it's four to one she'll none of me: the count himself here hard by woos her.

SIR TOBY BELCH She'll none o' the count: she'll not match above her degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit; I have heard her swear't. Tut, there's life in't, man.

SIR ANDREW I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o' the strangest mind i' the world; I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.

SIR TOBY BELCH Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?

SIR ANDREW As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the degree of my betters; and yet I will not compare with an old man.

SIR TOBY BELCH What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

SIR ANDREW Faith, I can cut a caper.

SIR TOBY BELCH And I can cut the mutton to't.

SIR ANDREW And I think I have the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria.

SIR TOBY BELCH Wherefore are these things hid? wherefore have these gifts a curtain before 'em? are they like to take dust, like Mistress Mall's picture? why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig; I would not so much as make water but in a sink-a-pace. What dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think, by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was form'd under the star of a galliard.

SIR ANDREW Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a flame-coloured stock. Shall we set about some revels?

SIR TOBY BELCH What shall we do else? were we not born under Taurus?

SIR ANDREW Taurus! That's sides and heart.

SIR TOBY BELCH No, sir; it is legs and thighs. Let me see thee caper; ha! higher: ha, ha! excellent!

[Exeunt]

SCENE IV A Room in DUKE ORSINO's Palace.

[Enter VALENTINE and VIOLA in man's attire]

VALENTINE If the duke continue these favours towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced: he hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger.

VIOLA You either fear his humour or my negligence, that you call in question the continuance of his love: is he inconstant, sir, in his favours?

VALENTINE No, believe me.

VIOLA I thank you. Here comes the count.

[Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and Attendants]

DUKE ORSINO Who saw Cesario, ho?

VIOLA On your attendance, my lord; here.

DUKE ORSINO Stand you a while aloof. Cesario,
Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasp'd
To thee the book even of my secret soul:
Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her;
Be not denied access, stand at her doors,
And tell them, there thy fixed foot shall grow
Till thou have audience.

VIOLA Sure, my noble lord,
If she be so abandon'd to her sorrow
As it is spoke, she never will admit me.

DUKE ORSINO Be clamorous and leap all civil bounds
Rather than make unprofited return.

VIOLA Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

DUKE ORSINO O! then unfold the passion of my love,