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Twelfth Night

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH DETAILED NOTES

FROM THE WORLD'S

LEADING CENTER FOR

SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT
AND PAUL WERSTINE

ACT 1

Scene 1

*Enter Orsino, Duke of Illyria, Curio, and other Lords,
[with Musicians playing.]*

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 5
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. 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 10
Receiveth as the sea, naught 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. 15

CURIO

Will you go hunt, my lord?

ORSINO

What, Curio?

CURIO

The hart.

ORSINO

Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first, 20

Methought she purged the air of pestilence.
That instant was I turned into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.

Enter Valentine.

How now, what news from her? 25

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, 30
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.

ORSINO

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame 35
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love when the rich golden shaft
Hath killed the flock of all affections else
That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and filled 40
Her sweet perfections with one self king!
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers!
Love thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.
They exit.

Scene 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?

5

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,

10

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 practice)

To a strong mast that lived upon the sea,

15

Where, like 'Arion' on the dolphin's back,

I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves

So long as I could see.

VIOLA, 'giving him money' For saying so, there's gold.

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,

20

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?

25

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.

30

CAPTAIN

And so is now, or was so very late;

For but a month ago I went from hence,

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