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William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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TWELFTH NIGHT:
OR,
WHAT YOU WILL

The scene: Illyria

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

- ORSINO, *Duke of Illyria*
 SEBASTIAN, *brother to Viola*
 ANTONIO, *a sea-captain, friend to Sebastian*
Another sea-captain, friend to Viola
 VALENTINE } *gentlemen attending on the Duke*
 CURIO }
 SIR TOBY BELCH, *kinsman to Olivia*
 SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK
 MALVOLIO, *steward to Olivia*
 FABIAN, *a gentleman in the service of Olivia*
 FESTE, *fool to Olivia*
 OLIVIA, *a rich countess*
 VIOLA, *in love with the Duke*
 MARIA, *Olivia's gentlewoman (small of stature)*
Lords, priests, sailors, officers, musicians,
and other attendants

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[More information](#)

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[I. I.] *A room in the Duke's palace*
The Duke ORSINO, CURIO and Lords,
hearing music; the music ceases

Duke. 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 south
 That breathes upon a bank of violets;
 Stealing and giving odour...[*music again*] 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, nought enters there,
 Of what validity and pitch so'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. What, Curio?

Curio. The hart.

Duke. 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 turned into a hart, 20
 And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
 E'er since pursue me....

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[More information](#)

4 TWELFTH NIGHT: OR, 1.1.22

VALENTINE enters

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 hence,

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

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

And lasting, in her sad remembrance.

Duke. 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 killed the flock of all affections else

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

These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and filled,

Her sweet perfections, with one self king!

Away before me to sweet beds of flowers—

40 Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

[*they go*]

[1. 2.]

Near the sea-coast

VIOLA, 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.

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,

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 William Shakespeare
 Excerpt
[More information](#)

1.2.10	WHAT YOU WILL	5
	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; Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back, I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves So long as I could see.	10
	<i>Viola.</i> 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?	20
	<i>Captain.</i> Ay, madam, well, for I was bred and born Not three hours' travel from this very place.	
	<i>Viola.</i> Who governs here?	
	<i>Captain.</i> A noble duke, in nature as in name.	
	<i>Viola.</i> What is his name?	
	<i>Captain.</i> Orsino.	
	<i>Viola.</i> Orsino: I have heard my father name him. He was a bachelor then.	
	<i>Captain.</i> 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.	30
	<i>Viola.</i> What's she?	
	<i>Captain.</i> 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.	
	<i>Viola.</i> O, that I served that lady, And might not be delivered to the world,	40

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[More information](#)

6 TWELFTH NIGHT: OR, 1.2.42

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 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
 50 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 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,
 60 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. [*they go*]

[1. 3.] *A room in Olivia's house*

*Sir TOBY BELCH seated with drink before him,
 and MARIA*

Sir Toby. 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.

Cambridge University Press
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 Excerpt
[More information](#)

1.3.7 WHAT YOU WILL 7

Sir Toby. Why, let her except before excepted.

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

Sir Toby. Confine? I'll confine myself no finer than 10
 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. Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

Maria. Ay, he.

Sir Toby. He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria. 20

Maria. What's that to th' purpose?

Sir Toby. 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. Fie, that you'll say so! he plays o'th' 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 30
 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. By this hand, they are scoundrels and sub-
 stractors that say so of him. Who are they?

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

Sir Toby. 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 coyrill that will not 40

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[More information](#)

8 TWELFTH NIGHT: OR, 1.3.41

drink to my niece, till his brains turn o'th' toe like a parish-top...[*he seizes her about the waist and they dance a turn*] What, wench! †Castiliano vulgo; for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

Sir ANDREW AGUECHEEK enters

Sir Andrew. Sir Toby Belch! how now, Sir Toby Belch?

Sir Toby. Sweet Sir Andrew!

Sir Andrew. Bless you, fair shrew.

Maria [*curtsies, mocking*]. And you too, sir!

50 *Sir Toby.* Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

Sir Andrew. What's that?

Sir Toby. 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.* You mistake, knight: 'accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her.

(*Sir Andrew.* By my troth, I would not undertake her
 60 in this company. Is that the meaning of 'accost'?)

Maria. Fare you well, gentlemen. [*she turns to go*]

(*Sir Toby.* 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 th'hand.

Sir Andrew. Marry, but you shall have—and here's my hand. [*he holds it out*]

70 *Maria* [*takes it*]. Now, sir, 'thought is free'...[*she looks at his palm*] I pray you, bring your hand to th' buttery-bar, and let it drink.

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 William Shakespeare
 Excerpt
[More information](#)

1.3.73 WHAT YOU WILL 9

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: 80
 marry, now I let go your hand, I am barren.

[she drops his hand, curtsies and trips away]

Sir Toby [sits]. O knight, thou lack'st 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...*[sits beside him]* 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. No question.

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

Sir Toby. 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 [fondles him]. Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.

Sir Andrew. Why, would that have mended my hair? 100

Sir Toby. Past question, for thou seest it will not curl by nature.

Sir Andrew. But it becomes me well enough, does't not?

Sir Toby. Excellent! it hangs like flax on a distaff; and

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[More information](#)

10 TWELFTH NIGHT: OR, 1.3.106

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
110 she'll none of me: the count himself here hard by woos her.

Sir Toby. She'll none o'th' 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'th' strangest mind i'th' world: I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.

Sir Toby. Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?

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

Sir Toby. What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

Sir Andrew. Faith, I can cut a caper.

(*Sir Toby.* 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. 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
130 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 formed under the star of a galliard.

Sir Andrew. Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a †dun-coloured stock. Shall we set about some revels?

Sir Toby. What shall we do else? were we not born under Taurus?