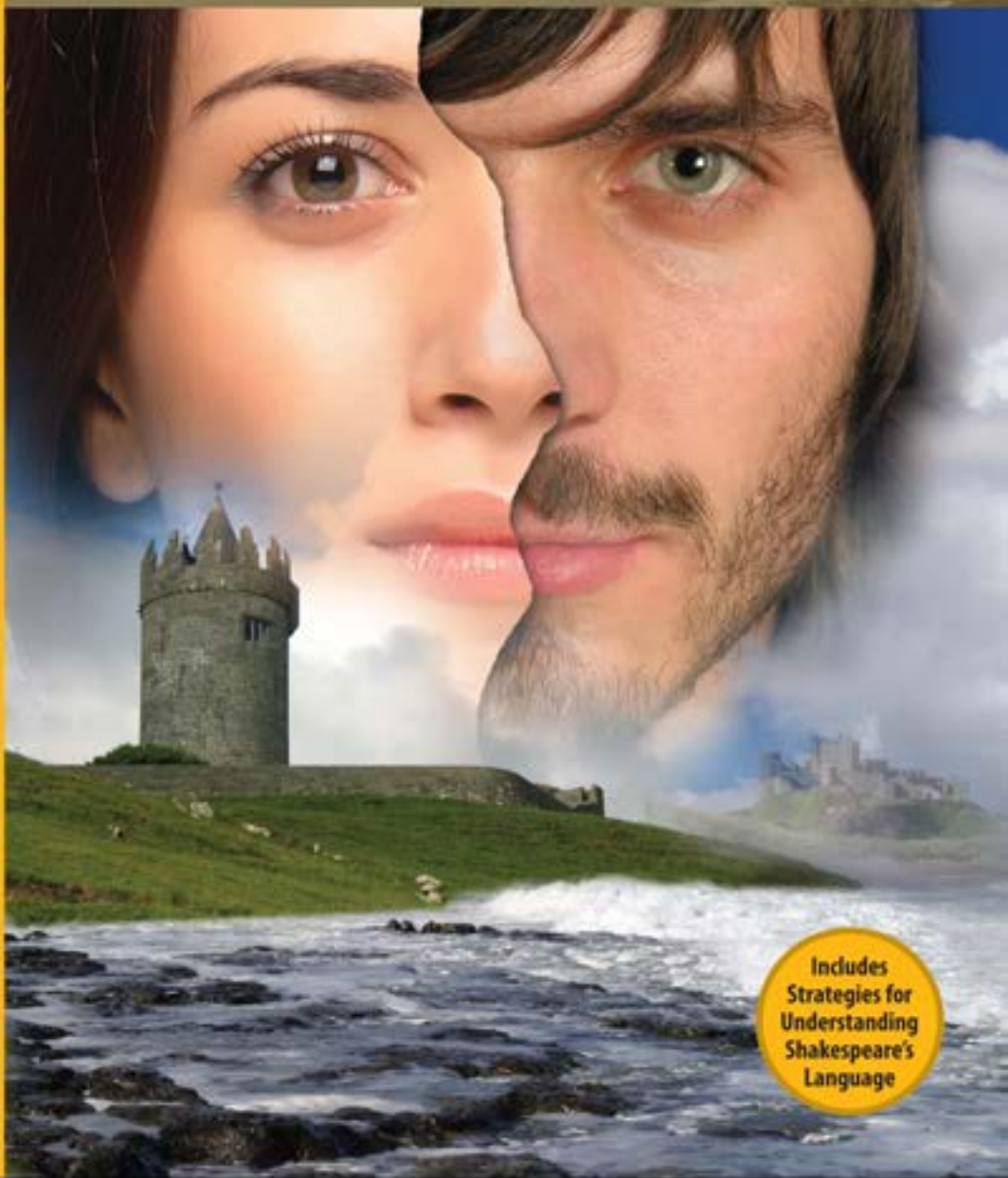


TWELFTH NIGHT

or, What You Will

by William Shakespeare

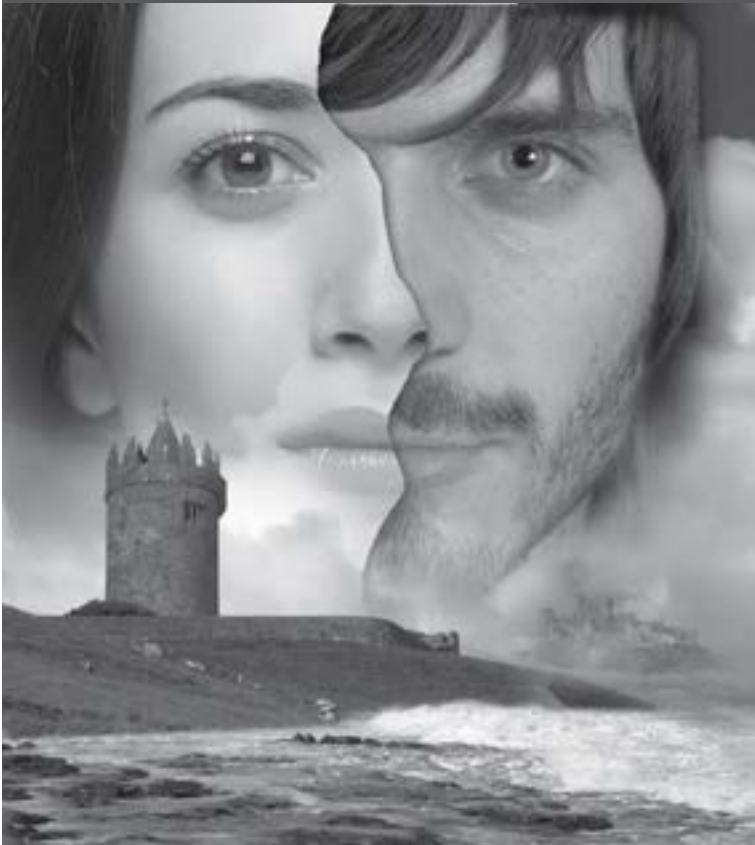


Includes
Strategies for
Understanding
Shakespeare's
Language

UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

TWELFTH NIGHT

or, What You Will



William Shakespeare



Prestwick House

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STRATEGIES

Strategies for Understanding Shakespeare's Language

1. When reading verse, note the appropriate phrasing and intonation.

DO NOT PAUSE AT THE END OF A LINE unless there is a mark of punctuation. Shakespearean verse has a rhythm of its own, and once a reader gets used to it, the rhythm becomes very natural to speak in and read. Beginning readers often find it helpful to read a short pause at a comma and a long pause for a period, colon, semicolon, dash, or question mark.

Here's an example from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene i:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd, (*short pause*)
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: (*long pause*) it is twice blest; (*long pause*)
It blesseth him that gives, (*short pause*) and him that takes; (*long pause*)
'Tis mightiest in the mighties; (*long pause*) it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown; (*long pause*)

2. Read from punctuation mark to punctuation mark for meaning.

In addition to helping you read aloud, punctuation marks define units of thought. Try to understand each unit as you read, keeping in mind that periods, colons, semicolons, and question marks signal the end of a thought.

Here's an example from *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I, Scene i:

LUC. Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,
And with her breath she did perfume the air;
Sacred, and sweet, was all I saw in her.
TRA. Nay, then, 'tis time to stir him from his trance.
I pray, awake, sir: if you love the maid,
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her.

The first unit of thought is from "Tranio" to "air":

He saw her lips move, and her breath perfumed the air.

The second thought (“Sacred, and sweet...”) re-emphasizes the first.

Tranio replies that Lucentio needs to awaken from his trance and try to win “the maid.” These two sentences can be considered one unit of thought.

3. In an **inverted sentence**, the verb comes before the subject. Some lines will be easier to understand if you put the subject first and reword the sentence. For example, look at the line below:

“*Never was seen so black a day as this:*” (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act IV, Scene v)

You can change its inverted pattern so it is more easily understood:

“*A day as black as this was never seen:*”

4. An **ellipsis** occurs when a word or phrase is left out. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Benvolio asks Romeo’s father and mother if they know the problem that is bothering their son. Romeo’s father answers:

“*I neither know it nor can learn of him*” (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene i)

This sentence can easily be understood to mean,

“*I neither know [the cause of] it,
nor can [I] learn [about it from] him.*”

5. As you read longer speeches, keep track of the subject, verb, and object—who did what to whom.

In the clauses below, note the subject, verbs, and objects:

Ross: The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebel’s fight... (*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene iii)

1st clause: *The king hath happily received, Macbeth, / The news of thy success:*
SUBJECT – The king
VERB – has received
OBJECT – the news [of Macbeth’s success]

READING POINTERS

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

To better appreciate Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, consider the following points:

Setting:

Twelfth Night takes place during the Christian celebration of Epiphany, which occurs on January 6th, the twelfth night after Christmas. The holiday celebrates the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus, symbolizing Christ's divinity to the world. During Elizabethan times, the celebration consisted of feasts, gift-giving, and general merry-making. Most importantly, however, the Epiphany celebration was marked by a reversal of the normal order of things. There were masquerades, role reversals, and a general sense of things being turned upside down. This spirit of light-hearted insanity and foolishness is a central element of the play.

Thematic Concepts:

- love as a form of insanity
- love as suffering or illness
- the uncertainty of identity
- the uncertainty of gender
- the folly of prideful ambition
- the fickle nature of love
- the fleeting nature of youth and beauty
- the comic and tragic effects of deception
- the idea that events are controlled by fate

Symbols and Motifs:

- the darkness of Malvolio's prison
- Olivia's gifts to Cesario
- disguises and altered identities
- songs and poems
- courtship and romantic speeches
- nautical references and sailing metaphors
- hunting references and metaphors
- references to Greek and Roman mythology
- puns and wordplay
- sexual innuendoes and vulgar jokes
- the satirizing of philosophers and intellectuals

TWELFTH NIGHT

or, What You Will

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria.
SEBASTIAN, a young Gentleman, brother to Viola.
ANTONIO, a Sea Captain, friend to Sebastian.
A SEA CAPTAIN, friend to Viola.
VALENTINE, Gentleman attending on the Duke.
CURIO, Gentleman attending on the Duke.
SIR TOBY BELCH, Uncle to Olivia.
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK.
MALVOLIO, Steward to Olivia.
FABIAN, Servant to Olivia.
FESTE, CLOWN, Servant 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.*

ACT I

T W E L F T H N I G H T
O R , W H A T Y O U W I L L

ACT I

SCENE I Duke Orsino's Palace.

[Enter Duke, Curio, 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 strain¹ again! it had a dying fall:²
5 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,
10 That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought³ enters there,
Of what validity and pitch⁴ soe'er,⁵
But falls into abatement and low price,^{6†}
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy
15 That it alone is high fantastical.†

CURIO: Will you go hunt, my lord?

DUKE ORSINO: What, Curio?

CURIO: The hart.⁷

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

20 O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence!
That instant was I turn'd into a hart;
And my desires, like fell⁸ and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.†

¹musical note

²cadence

³nothing

⁴height

⁵soever (as in
whatsoever)

⁶diminished value

⁷deer

⁸fierce

†Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

[Enter Valentine.]

25 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 element⁹ itself, till seven years' heat,[†]
 Shall not behold her face at ample view;
 30 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.

35 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,[†]
 40 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, 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.[†]

5 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,

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,

⁹sky, air

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: For saying so, there's gold.

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,
 20 Where to 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.

30 He was a bachelor then.

CAPTAIN: And so is now, or was so very late;
 For but a month ago I went from hence,¹
 And then 'twas fresh in murmur,² —as, you know,
 What great ones do the less will prattle of,—
 35 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,
 40 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,
 45 Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,
 What my estate is![†]

CAPTAIN: That were hard to compass;³
 Because she will admit no kind of suit,⁴
 No, not the Duke's.

50 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.

¹from this place

²it was rumored

³That will be hard
to achieve

⁴request or peti-
tion

⁵I beg you

- 55 I prithee,⁵ 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:
 60 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 hap⁶ to time I will commit;
 Only shape thou silence to my wit.⁷
- 65 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.]

⁶happen⁷cleverness

SCENE III
 Olivia's House.

[Enter Sir Toby Belch[†] 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,¹ Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o'
 nights: your cousin,[†] my lady, takes great exceptions to
 5 your ill hours.

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 I am:
 10 these clothes are good enough to drink in; and so be these
 boots too: an² 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
 15 brought in one night here to be her wooer.³

SIR TOBY: Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?[†]

MARIA: Ay, he.

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

MARIA: What's that to the purpose?

- 20 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.

¹Truly²if³suitor

Glossary

Act I, Scene I

“If music be the food of love...and so die.” – Orsino is saying that since music is the food of love, he wants it to continue playing so his appetite for love will be filled so much that it will eventually die. This opening line reveals a lot about Orsino’s character and also about one of the themes of the play. Orsino is melodramatic about his love for Olivia, as the above line illustrates. Throughout the play, it seems as though he is more in love with the *idea* of being in love than with Olivia herself. The line also establishes the theme of love as a sickness or a force that strikes people without warning or invitation. Both Orsino and Olivia are self-involved people who actually enjoy the suffering and drama that being in love brings.

“O spirit of love!...low price...” – Orsino means that love is so great that it has the capacity of the sea. However, anything that falls into love (as if love is a great ocean) eventually loses its value, no matter how priceless it had been before. Just as things are transformed into insignificance by the sea, they are also swallowed up and made unimportant by love.

“...so full of shapes is fancy...high fantastical.” – Orsino means that love (*fancy*) is deceptive, can take many forms, and can be more about fantasy than about reality. Instead of being truly in love, Orsino seems to be a victim of the *fantasy* of love.

“Why, so I do, the noblest that I have...” – Curio has just asked Orsino about hunting the hart, a male deer. Orsino, however, gives the word a double meaning. By “the noblest that I have,” he refers to both a *hart* and a *heart* (Olivia’s).

“That instant was I turn’d into a hart...pursue me.” – Orsino is referring to the ancient Greek myth of Actaeon and Artemis. Actaeon was out hunting when he saw the naked Artemis bathing. As punishment for watching her, she turned him into a deer. Actaeon was then chased and torn to pieces by his own hounds. In this metaphor, Orsino compares himself to Actaeon and compares his desires to the destructive hounds.

“...till seven years’ heat...” – until seven years of the sun’s course across the sky

“...she will veiled walk...eye-offending brine...” – Valentine is explaining that Olivia wears a veil and stays in her room all day mourning for her dead brother. The “eye-offending brine” refers to tears that she cries at least once a day.

“the rich golden shaft” – a reference to the golden arrow of Cupid, the Roman god of love

“liver, brain, and heart” – While Elizabethans considered the brain the center of thought, both the liver and the heart were believed to be the locations of love and emotion.

Vocabulary

Act I, Scene I

abatement – a lessening
cloistress – a nun
fantastical – unreal, fanciful
handmaid – a female attendant
hart – a male deer
pestilence – disease
surfeiting – filling to excess

Act I, Scene II

abjured – renounced; gave up
bounteously – plentifully, abundantly
prattle – mindless chatter
provident – wise

Act I, Scene III

allay – to calm; to put to rest
barren – empty
bestowed – granted, gave
distaff – a rod that holds flax or other fiber during spinning
flax – a type of fiber used in making textiles
forswear – to renounce; to give up
prodigal – wasteful; reckless
prudent – sensible, practical
quaffing – drinking, guzzling
revels – parties
shrew – a scolding woman

Act I, Scene IV

aloof – detached, distant
belie – to contradict or disprove
clamorous – noisy, boisterous
discourse – talk, discussion
gait – a manner of walking
inconstant – changeable
negligence – carelessness, neglect

Act I, Scene V

amend – to improve; to alter
assurance – a guarantee or promise