

SHAKESPEARIENCE!

Twelfth Night

Act III, scene 1: Viola, Feste

VIOLA

Save thee, friend, and thy music: dost thou live by thy tabour?

Clown

No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA

Art thou a churchman?

Clown

No such matter, sir: I do live by the church; for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

VIOLA

So thou mayst say, the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him; or, the church stands by thy tabour, if thy tabour stand by the church.

Clown

You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence is but a cheveril glove to a good wit: how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!

VIOLA

Nay, that's certain; they that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.

Clown

I would, therefore, my sister had had no name, sir.

VIOLA

Why, man?

Clown

Why, sir, her name's a word; and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.

VIOLA

Thy reason, man?

Clown

Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words; and words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them.

VIOLA

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and carest for nothing.

Clown

Not so, sir, I do care for something; but in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you: if that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you invisible.

VIOLA

Art not thou the Lady Olivia's fool?

Clown

No, indeed, sir; the Lady Olivia has no folly: she will keep no fool, sir, till she be married; and fools are as like husbands as pilchards are to herrings; the husband's the bigger: I am indeed not her fool, but her corrupter of words.

VIOLA

I saw thee late at the Count Orsino's.

Clown

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines every where. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be as oft with your master as with my mistress: I think I saw your wisdom there.

VIOLA

Nay, an thou pass upon me, I'll no more with thee. Hold, there's expenses for thee.

Clown

Now Jove, in his next commodity of hair, send thee a beard!

VIOLA

By my troth, I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for one;

Aside

though I would not have it grow on my chin. Is thy lady within?

Clown

Would not a pair of these have bred, sir?

VIOLA

Yes, being kept together and put to use.

Clown

I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus.

VIOLA

I understand you, sir; 'tis well begged.

Clown

The matter, I hope, is not great, sir, begging but a beggar: Cressida was a beggar. My lady is within, sir. I will construe to them whence you come; who you are and what you would are out of my welkin, I might say 'element,' but the word is over-worn.

[Exit]

VIOLA

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time,
And, like the haggard, cheque at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practise
As full of labour as a wise man's art
For folly that he wisely shows is fit;
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.