

SHAKESPEARENCE!

Twelfth Night

Act I, scene 5: Olivia, Feste, Malvolio

Clown

Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling!
Those wits, that think they have thee, do very oft
prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack thee, may
pass for a wise man: for what says Quinapalus?
'Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit.'

[Enter OLIVIA with MALVOLIO]

God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA

Take the fool away.

Clown

Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

OLIVIA

Go to, you're a dry fool; I'll no more of you:
besides, you grow dishonest.

Clown

Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel
will amend: for give the dry fool drink, then is
the fool not dry: bid the dishonest man mend
himself; if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if
he cannot, let the botcher mend him. Any thing
that's mended is but patched: virtue that
transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that
amends is but patched with virtue. If that this
simple syllogism will serve, so; if it will not,
what remedy? As there is no true cuckold but
calamity, so beauty's a flower. The lady bade take
away the fool; therefore, I say again, take her away.

OLIVIA

Sir, I bade them take away you.

Clown

Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, cucullus non
facit monachum; that's as much to say as I wear not
motley in my brain. Good madonna, give me leave to
prove you a fool.

OLIVIA

Can you do it?

Clown

Dexterously, good madonna.

OLIVIA

Make your proof.

Clown

I must catechise you for it, madonna: good my mouse
of virtue, answer me.

OLIVIA

Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your proof.

Clown

Good madonna, why mournest thou?

OLIVIA

Good fool, for my brother's death.

Clown

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

OLIVIA

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Clown

The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

OLIVIA

What think you of this fool, Malvolio? doth he not mend?

MALVOLIO

Yes, and shall do till the pangs of death shake him: infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

Clown

God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly! Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox; but he will not pass his word for two pence that you are no fool.

OLIVIA

How say you to that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest, I take these wise men, that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies.

OLIVIA

Oh, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets: there is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove.

Clown

Now Mercury endue thee with leasing, for thou speakest well of fools!