

# **SHAKESPEARIENCE!**

## *Twelfth Night*

### Act I, scene 2: Viola, Captain

**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 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,  
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 practise,  
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.

**VIOLA**

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,  
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?

**Captain**

A noble duke, in nature as in name; Orsino.

**VIOLA**

Orsino! I have heard my father name him:  
He was a bachelor then.

**Captain**

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.

**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,  
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,  
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 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.  
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 shall 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;  
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.