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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Twelfth Night

Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, was deeply in love with a beautiful Countess named Olivia. Yet all his love was in vain, for she despised him.

The duke longed for someone to whom he could tell his grief and repeat the story of his love over and over. And chance brought him such a companion.



For around this time a beautiful ship was wrecked on the Illyrian coast, and among those who landed safely were the captain and a beautiful young girl named Viola

Still, Viola was not thankful that she had been rescued from the perils of the sea. She was afraid that her twin brother Sebastian had drowned. He was so dear to her and her love for him filled her whole heart. They were barely distinguishable, they were so much alike, except that they wore different clothes. The captain told her that he had seen her brother tied to a strong mast and still alive at sea. So there was hope that he would be saved.

Viola now inquired whose country she was in, and when she learned that the young Duke Orsino reigned there

and was as noble in character as his name was, she decided to disguise herself in male clothes and seek work with him as a servant.

In this she succeeded, and now she had to listen, day by day, to the story of Orsino's love. At first she felt for him, but soon her sympathy grew into love. And finally Orsino realized that it would be better for his hopeless love if he sent this young man to Olivia with a message. Viola reluctantly went to carry out this order. But when she got to the house, Malvolio, Olivia's steward, forbade the messenger from entering the house.



Viola (who was now called Cesario since she was disguised as a boy) did not accept the refusal of entry and vowed to speak to the Countess anyway. Olivia, hearing her instructions being defied, became curious about this brave boy. So she

said: We will listen this time to what this messenger from Orsino has to say."

When Viola was inside and the servants had been sent away, Olivia listened patiently to the reproaches that this bold messenger of the duke poured out on her. And while listening, Olivia fell in love with Cesario. "He left this ring behind," she said to Malvolio, taking a ring

from her own finger. And she ordered Malvolio to follow him.



Malvolio did as he was asked, and then Viola, knowing full well that she had left no ring behind, realized with the quick mind of a woman that Olivia loved her.

Still heartbroken, Orsino, meanwhile, tried to ease his pain by listening to music while Cesario stood next to him.

"Ah," said the duke to his servant that evening, "you must have been in love too."

"A little," Viola replied.

"What kind of woman was it?" he asked.

"Someone who looks like you," she replied.

"How old was she?" was his next question.

To this came the beautiful answer: "As old as you, my lord."

After a while, Orsino again begged Cesario to visit Olivia to convey his declaration of love. But she wanted to advise him against that, so she said, "What if there was a lady who loves you like you love Olivia?"

"Ah! There is no such thing," said the Duke.

But I know," continued Viola, "what kind of love a woman can have for a man. My father had a daughter who, in that way, loved a man. Perhaps if I were a

woman I could love you that way too, my lord," she added, blushing.

But Orsino said "Hurry, quickly go to Olivia and give her this jewel, I want to try it again!

So Viola went, and this time poor Olivia was unable to hide her love, and openly confessed it with passionate truth. But Viola left her hastily, saying, "I'm not right for you."

Olivia's infatuation with Cesario aroused the jealousy of Sir Andrew, a foolish rejected lover. And so it was decided that there should be a duel between Sir Andrew and Cesario. When poor Cesario heard this, he became very frightened. "I will return home, I am not a fighter."

But he was forced to stay. When Sir Andrew appeared, she was terrified, but she drew her sword trembling.

Sir Andrew, who was also afraid, followed suit.

Fortunately for them, at that moment some officers from the court passed by and they stopped the duel. Viola ran off as fast as she could, while she was yelled at, "You're even more cowardly than a hare!"

While all these things were happening, Sebastian, Viola's brother, had meanwhile escaped the perils of the sea and landed safely in Illyria. He was determined to go to the duke's court. On his way there he passed Olivia's house and ran into Sir Andrew. Sir Andrew mistook him for the cowardly Cesario and struck him with his sword: "You have deserved this blow".

"Well, this one's for you and this one too," Sebastian said, hitting back hard until someone came to Sir Andrew's aid. Sebastian broke free and would have killed them both with his sword if Olivia, who had heard the fight, hadn't come. She sent Sir Andrew away. Then she turned to Sebastian, who she also believed to be Cesario, and begged him to come in.

Sebastian, half dazed by the blows and utterly delighted by her beauty and grace, immediately agreed. They married that same day before she discovered he was not Cesario.

Orsino had meanwhile decided to visit Olivia himself one more time and took Cesario with him. Olivia met them both at her doorstep, and when, as she thought, she saw her husband, she reproached him for leaving her. Then Orsino became very angry. He swore to take revenge on her, he would kill Cesario, who he knew loved her. "Come on boy," he said to the servant. A great fear seized Olivia and she cried aloud, "Cesario, husband, stay!"

"Are you her husband?" the duke asked angrily.

"No, my lord, not me," said Viola.

"Call the Holy Father over," cried Olivia. And the priest who had married Sebastian and Olivia came in and declared that Cesario was indeed the groom.

"Oh, you vice!" exclaimed the Duke. "Farewell, and take her away, and you and I will never meet again."

At that moment Sir Andrew came in with a bloodied crown, complaining that Cesario had hit his head.

"I never hurt you!" Viola said firmly. But no one believed her. But they changed their minds when Sebastian came in too.

"I'm sorry," he said to his wife, "it was I who hurt Sir Andrew."

"One face, one voice, one body and two people!" cried the duke, looking first at Viola and then at Sebastian.

"It's like an apple split in two," Orsino said, "these two men are more alike than twins."

"I never had a brother," Sebastian said. "I had a sister, but she was drowned by waves."

Then Viola, delighted to see her dear brother alive, confessed that she was indeed his sister, Viola. And as she spoke, Orsino felt love grow for her.

"Give me your hand," Orsino cried with joy. "You will be my wife!"

Viola and Orsino became very happy together and so did Olivia and Sebastian!