

Act 1, Scene 2

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. For saying so, there's gold: 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.

VIOLA. What is the name?

CAPTAIN. 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.

The Shakespeare Theatre Company AUDITION SIDES – Twelfth Night 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.