

Twelfth Night

William Shakespeare

Get this No Fear to go!



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Act 1, Scene 1

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Act 1, Scene 1

Original Text

*Enter ORSINO, CURIO, and other lords;
Musicians playing*

ORSINO

If music be the food of love, play on.
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall.
5 Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more.
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,
10 That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy
15 That it alone is high fantastical.

CURIO

Will you go hunt, my lord?

ORSINO

What, Curio?

Modern Text

*ORSINO, CURIO, and other lords enter with
musicians playing for them.*

ORSINO

If it's true that music makes people more in
love, keep playing. Give me too much of it, so
I'll get sick of it and stop loving. Play that part
again! It sounded sad. Oh, it sounded like a
sweet breeze blowing gently over a bank of
violets, taking their scent with it. That's
enough. Stop. It doesn't sound as sweet as it
did before. Oh, love is so restless! It makes
you want everything, but it makes you sick of
things a minute later, no matter how good they
are. Love is so vivid and fantastical that
nothing compares to it.

CURIO

Do you want to go hunting, my lord?

ORSINO

Hunting what, Curio?

CURIO

The hart.

ORSINO

Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.

Oh, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence.

20 That instant was I turned into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.

CURIO

The [hart](#).

ORSINO

That's what I'm doing—only it's *my* heart that's
being hunted. Oh, when I first saw Olivia, it
seemed like she made the air around her
sweeter and purer. In that instant I was
transformed into a hart, and my desire for her
has hounded me like a pack of vicious dogs.