



ST. LAWRENCE HIGH SCHOOL

A JESUIT CHRISTIAN MINORITY INSTITUTION



STUDY MATERIAL 7

Sub: ENGLISH 'B'

Class: XI

Topic : Twelfth Night

Date: 20.07.2020.

Summary of the Play: *Twelfth Night* is a story of love and confused identity. At the beginning of the play, after having survived a shipwreck, Viola (the play's protagonist) finds herself stranded in Illyria. She disguises herself as Cesario, a young man, and enters into the service of Duke Orsino. Orsino is in love with the countess Olivia, but she does not return his affections. In order to woo Olivia, Orsino sends Cesario (who is actually Viola) to serve as his representative, but Olivia falls in love with Cesario instead. Meanwhile, Viola, in her service to Orsino, is drawn into close friendship with him and finds herself falling in love. Thus, the story of *Twelfth Night* revolves around this love triangle fuelled by mistaken identities, by which Viola is in love with Orsino, who is in love with Olivia, who is in love with Cesario (who is actually Viola). Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, is also travelling to Illyria with his friend Antonio. When they reach their destination, they separate. Later, Antonio stumbles upon the scene where Viola, disguised as Cesario, is challenged to a duel. Mistaking Viola for her twin brother, Sebastian, he comes to her defense, only to be arrested. Antonio looks towards the man he believes to be Sebastian for support—only to find, of course, that he does not know Antonio or anything about him. Antonio curses his friend as a betrayer as he is dragged away. Finally, the real Sebastian stumbles upon Olivia, who marries him, mistaking him for Cesario. As the play comes to a close, this comedy of mistaken identities is resolved, with the full truth brought to light. Brother and sister are reunited, Viola reveals her true identity, and Orsino proposes marriage to Viola.

Genre of the Play: *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will* was composed by William Shakespeare in either 1600 or 1601 as the last of his three "mature comedies" (the other two being *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It*). Like his early comedies, *The Comedy of Errors* or *The Taming of the Shrew* for instance, *Twelfth Night* is essentially a celebration of romantic love and can be viewed as a traditional romantic comedy. The play has many of the elements common to Elizabethan romantic comedy, including the devices of mistaken identity, separated twins, and gender-crossing disguise, and its plot revolves around overcoming obstacles to "true" love. *Twelfth Night* can be considered a model Shakespearean comedy in that it employs nearly every feature of the genre: a wedding, mistaken identities, misunderstandings, physical comedy, and a happy ending. Like all of Shakespeare's comedies, the play ends with a wedding – in this case, the joint wedding of two sets of lovers: Olivia and Sebastian, and Viola and Orsino. Also as in many other comedies, the lovers are initially kept apart through misunderstandings, which lead to plot complications. Olivia falls in love with Cesario, (who is really Viola in disguise) but Viola can't return Olivia's love. Similarly, Viola falls in love with Orsino, who, believing Viola is Cesario, refuses to return her love. Only once true identities are revealed can the lovers unite with their appropriate partners. In addition to the preposterous plot, cross-dressing, and misunderstandings, the play abounds in silliness.

Significance of the Title: The title of *Twelfth Night* refers to the twelfth night of Christmas, also referred to as the eve of Epiphany, a day that commemorates the visit of the Magi (or three wise kings from the East) to the baby Jesus and is often celebrated with a temporary suspension of rules and social orders. As in the play, *Twelfth Night* revels in the overturning of convention and general merriment. In the Church of England, the Twelfth Night (or the eve of the Epiphany) was celebrated on January 5th, when celebrants sang songs, defaced doors with chalk, and ate Three Kings' or Twelfth Night cake. One of the most popular Twelfth Night traditions was to hide a pea and a bean within the cake. The man who discovered the bean would be proclaimed Lord or King of Misrule, while the lady who found the pea would be Lady or Queen of Misrule. The Lord of Misrule was usually a peasant or commoner who lead the drinking and merrymaking, as Twelfth Night was one of the few times of the year where servants were allowed to mix with their masters, sometimes even switching roles through disguises or by virtue of the coveted bean. Although Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* clearly mimics the conventions of the Twelfth Night celebrations, with the social order of the play suspended and characters easily crossing social classes, there is no obvious reference to the holiday within the play itself. While Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* makes no mention of the three magi or the birth of Christ, it channels the rowdiness of the holiday revelries. Twelfth Night is usually considered to be a reference to Epiphany, or the twelfth night of the Christmas celebration (January 6), as in the popular song "Twelve Days of Christmas". It marks the Feast of the Epiphany, a culmination of the Christmas period, a holiday in Western Christian theology that celebrates the day that the magi (or three wise men from the East) presented gifts to the newborn Jesus. It represents the manifestation of Light, or Truth, to those who have enough understanding to perceive it. This revelation of Light, or Truth, is the subject of the play, with Viola eventually revealing her true identity as a woman. Twelfth Night, in Shakespeare's day, was a holiday celebrated by a festival in which everything was turned upside down. Elizabethan communities often appointed young boys as "Lords of Misrule"; it was a chance to play king for a day - much like the upside-down, chaotic world of Illyria. Twelfth Night is a festival in some branches of Christianity marking the coming of the Epiphany. Different traditions mark the date of Twelfth Night on either 5 January or 6 January; the Church of England, Mother Church of the Anglican Communion, celebrates Twelfth Night on the 5th and refers to the night before Epiphany, the day when the nativity story tells us that the wise men visited the infant Jesus. Twelfth Night, the last day of Christmas feasting, the last night of holiday, is the day before normal life resumes. It is the time to put on masks and disrupt the normal order of life. This carnival mood that prevailed in England celebrated temporary liberation from prevailing truth and from established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, the feast of change and renewal. The play *Twelfth Night* itself is likewise, a suspension in time, but a conscious one, making the spectator aware of the interplay between festivity on one hand and real life on the other. This is because, while the plot is both preposterous and entertaining, its implications are far more serious. Historically, the twelfth night refers to the festivities of the sixth day of January - a festival of the " Epiphany or the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles". The play was specially composed for performance at the court of Queen Elizabeth on the twelfth night of Christmas of 1601-02. However this apparently simple explanation of the title is challenged by the sub-title (*Or What You Will*). All the comic elements being as it where, thrown out simultaneously and held in a sort of equipoise so that, the audience is left to fix the preponderance according to their will. Thus every single spectator may, within certain limits and conditions take the work in whatever sense he wills. This is because,

where no special prominence is given to any one aspect of a play, there is a wider scope for individual preference and greater freedom for each to select for virtual prominence such parts as will best knit in with what is uppermost in his thoughts.

TEXTUAL WORDS & MEANINGS :

WORDS	MEANINGS
1.Voyage	1. a long journey involving travel by sea or space.
2. Tempest	2. a violent windy storm.
3. Verge	3. an extreme limit beyond which something specific will happen.
4. Console	4. comfort someone at a time of grief or disappointment.
5. Confessed	5. admit to a crime or wrongdoing.
6. Camouflage	6. disguise.
7. Confided	7. tell someone about a secret or private matter in confidence.
8. Effeminate	8. unmanly.
9. Sufferance	9. toleration.
10. Evasive	10. avoid dealing with or discussing.
11. Cloister	11. a covered passage round an open courtyard in a convent , monastery etc.
12. Fidelity	12. continuing faithfulness to a person, cause or belief.
13. Recompensed	13. compensation or reward.
14. Valiant	14. showing courage or determination.
15. Persuade	15. use reasoning or argument to make someone do or believe something.
16. Unrequited	16. not returned.
17. Duel	17. a contest between two people or parties to settle to settle a point of honour.
18. Benevolent	18. well meaning and kindly.

19. Conjectured	19. formed an opinion not based on firm evidence.
20. Solemnized	20. mark with a ceremony.
21. Peril	21. a situation of serious and immediate danger.
22. Abjured	22. renounce.
23. Peremptory	23. insisting on immediate obedience.
24. Feigned	24. pretended.
25. Page	25. young attendant.

SHORT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS :

1. Who were Sebastian and Viola?

Ans: Sebastian and Viola were identical twins. Sebastian was a young man of Elysium and his twin sister was the lady of Messalina.

2. Why did Olivia abjure the company of men?

Ans: At the untimely death of her loving brother, Olivia suffered such a shocking blow that she abjured the company of men.

3. What impression did Cesario bring on the duke?

Ans: Cesario impressed the duke with ready observance and faithful attachment.

4. How did Orsino appreciate a woman's love in comparison to a man's?

Ans: Orsino thought that no woman's heart is big enough to hold so much love as a man's heart does.

5. When Olivia confirmed her identity, what request did Viola make to Olivia?

Ans: When Olivia confirmed her identity, Viola requested Olivia to unveil her face.

6. What message of the song touched Viola's mind?

Ans: The message of frustrated youthful love easily touched Viola's heart and her face reflected her feelings.

7. Who was the person who saved Viola from suffering a shameful defeat at the duel?

Ans: The person who saved Viola from suffering a shameful defeat at the duel was Antonio, the captain of a ship that rescued Sebastian from the sea.

8. Who was brought by the officers of justice before Duke Orsino ?

Ans: The officers of justice brought Antonio before Duke Orsino.

9. What did Duke Orsino conclude after viewing Viola with great attention?

Ans: After viewing Viola with great attention Orsino concluded that she would look very beautiful in a woman's attire.

10. How did the story of twin brother and sister come to an end?

Ans: The story of twin brother and sister came to an end with their marriage on the same day—brother Sebastian with a rich and noble countess , Lady Olivia and his sister Viola with Orsino, Duke of Illyria.

DESCRIPTIVE & ANALYTICAL QUESTION-ANSWERS :

1.What information about Duke Orsino did Viola get from the Captain of the ship?

Ans: The Captain of the ship told Viola and Duke Orsino who governed Illyria , was noble in nature and dignity. Orsino sought the love of fair Olivia, a virtuous lady who was the daughter of a count who died twelve months ago, leaving Olivia to the protection of her brother. As Olivia had not accepted his proposal of marriage, Orsino was still unmarried.

2. How did Viola become the most favoured attendant of Duke Orsino?

Ans: The Captain of the ship presented Viola to Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, under the feigned name of Cesario. The duke was very pleased with the graceful behavior of the handsome youth and made him his page. Viola showed such a ready observance and attachment to Duke Orsino that in a very short time she became his most favoured attendant.

3. What impression did Cesario leave on Olivia when he departed?

Ans: Cesario left a deep impression on the mind of Oliver after he departed from her house. Olivia realized that she had suddenly fallen in love with this youth. Olivia forgot the fact that she and Cesario did not belong to the same strata of society. She fell madly in love with him and even sent a servant after him with a diamond ring.

4. How did Viola as young Cesario react to Olivia's open confession of love towards young Cesario?

Ans: When Olivia openly confessed her love for Cesario , Viola in disguise was displeased and perplexed. She hurriedly left Olivia's house and also informed that she would never visit the lady to plead love on Orsino's behalf. Cesario also declared that he would not love any woman.

5. What prompted Duke Orsino decide on marrying Viola?

Ans: When Duke Orsino heard of Cesario's true identity he was extremely surprised. He remembered how often she had said that she loved him but at that point in time he couldn't fathom the true meaning of Cesario's words. The Duke resolved to make Viola his wife and proposed marriage to her.

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