



## **Twelfth Night, or What You Will: The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford World's Classics)**

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# Twelfth Night, or What You Will: The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford World's Classics)

*William Shakespeare*

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Roger Warren & Stanley Wells (Editors) Twelfth Night is one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays in the modern theatre, and this edition places particular emphasis on its theatrical qualities throughout. Peopled with lovers misled either by disguises or their own natures, it combines lyrical melancholy with broad comedy. The introduction analyses its many views of love and the juxtaposition of joy and melancholy, while the detailed commentary pays particular attention to its linguistic subtleties. Music is particularly important in Twelfth Night, and this is the only modern edition to offer material for all the music required in a performance. Publisher: Oxford University Press Paperback ISBN 9780199536092

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256 pages

Amazon Review

One of Shakespeare's finest comedies, *Twelfth Night* was written at the same time as *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and whilst it shares their fascination with sex, death and confused identities, its exuberant comedy and linguistic inventiveness rises above the introspection of these plays. Viola and her twin brother Sebastian are separated in a storm, which washes them both up at different points on the shores of Illyria. Believing each other to be dead, both attempt to survive by using their wits. Viola cross-dresses and enters the service of the lovesick Orsino, in love with Olivia, an heiress in mourning for the loss of her brother. Orsino's saucy young page Cesario (Viola) soon falls in love with "his" master, who tells "him", "all is semblative a woman's part". Unfortunately, whilst Viola falls in love with Orsino, Olivia falls in love with her alter ego, Cesario, whilst also being pursued at the same time by her pompous servant Malvolio. Olivia's house is also turned upside down by the antics of her drunken uncle, Sir Toby Belch, and the whole crazy situation reaches boiling point when Sebastian reappears. Despite the madcap plot, *Twelfth Night* remains one of Shakespeare's most complex and inventive comedies, fascinated with questions of cross-dressing, gender confusion, language and inversion, as well as retaining a darker edge to some of its laughter. --*Jerry Brotton*

Review

The commentary on *Twelfth Night* is alive with the editors' feeling for the play in performance. (*M.M. Mahoud, University of Kent, YES, 27, 1996*)

From the Back Cover

'Twelfth Night' is the happiest and most lyrical of Shakespeare's comedies. In this delightful romp of deception and romance, when the lovely Viola (played by Siobhan McKenna) disguises herself as a young man, she quickly falls in love with the Duke she serves. The Duke in turn sends the disguised Viola to woo his lady – the feisty and impetuous Olivia (portrayed by Vanessa Redgrave). Olivia becomes smitten with the young man Viola impersonates, and all careens to a happy resolution by the play's end. Supported by Paul Scofield, Willoughby Goddard and John Neville, who undertake the play's comic parts, this is a joyful and engaging recording.

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