

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

VIOLA, dressed as a boy, has been sent by her master Duke Orsino to win the heart of Olivia on his behalf. Olivia however has fallen in love with the disguised Viola. In this scene Olivia has sent a messenger after Viola to give her a ring.

VIOLA:

I left no ring with her: what means this lady? Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her! She made good view of me; indeed, so much, that sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue, for she did speak in starts distractedly.

She loves me, sure. The cunning of her passion invites me in this churlish messenger. None of my lords ring! Why, he sent her none. I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis. Poor lady, she were better love a dream. Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness wherein the pregnant enemy does much. How easy it is for the proper-false in women's waxen hearts to set their forms!

Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we! For such as we are made of, such we be. How will this cadge? My master loves her dearly; and I, poor monster, fond as much on him; And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.

What will become of this? As I am a man my state is desperate for my master's love. As I am woman - now alas the day! - what thriftless sighs shall Olivia breathe!

O time! Thou must untangle this, not I. It is too hard a knot for me to untie!