

# TWELFTH NIGHT

## READING COMPREHENSION

### ACT 1

### YEAR 5 AND 6

#### Scene 1

Duke Orsino gazed out of the window and sighed. He was excellent at both sighing and gazing. His sighs were dramatic, and his gazes were noble. This particular sigh had been strikingly long and heavy. Anyone listening to it would have thought to themselves, ‘Blimey, that is the sigh of someone in love!’ And they would have been right. It had also been so loud that all the musicians in the room had stopped playing in shock.

Orsino now turned that noble gaze on them, adding a subtle hint of sadness to his expression.

“If music be the food of love, play on, give me excess of it!” he said, and returned to the window. Seconds later, he flung his arm out forcefully, accidentally catching the end of the violinist’s nose.

“Enough, no more! ‘Tis not so sweet now as it was before.”

As the notes faded, Valentine, Orsino’s servant, swept into the room, managing to tread on the violinist’s foot. The hapless musician turned white and, trying to clutch nose, foot and violin all at the same time, slowly keeled over, before being carried out by the rest of his band.

Orsino was eager to have news of the beautiful Olivia, the subject of most of his sighing and gazing. Valentine’s words were not encouraging.

“So please my lord, I might not be admitted.  
The element itself, till seven years’ heat,  
Shall not behold her face at ample view;  
All this to season a brother’s dead love.”

Many of us - me certainly, you perhaps - might have been put off by the news that our beloved was not only *not* keen to see us, but had also decided to spend seven years indoors thinking about their dead brother. Many - even most - of us, would have taken that as a message to give up and find someone else. Orsino was different. Lots of people thought him a fine fellow and liked him greatly. However, no one liked Orsino more than Orsino. So, he actually thought this was great news. If Olivia was able to love her brother - who was, let’s face it, dead – so much, how much more would she love the marvellous, magnificent and thoroughly alive Orsino? At some point she would *realise* this and then it was all going to be great... he should probably start inviting people to the wedding...

## Scene 2

They had had no chance. The storm had been too powerful: the waves like mountains, the wind tearing at the boat like a ravenous beast, pulling it to pieces. Now, those who had survived helped each other wearily out of the water. One amongst them, a young woman named Viola, searched desperately amongst those remaining faces, willing each one to be her brother's. To no avail. At last, her shoulders slumped and she sat down on the sand, her clothes dripping seawater, her face wet with tears. She turned to the captain and the crew that were left.

"What country, friends, is this?" she asked.

Helping her to her feet, the captain answered, "This is Illyria, lady."  
She gripped his hand, staring fiercely at him.

"And what should I do in Illyria? My brother he is in Elysium."  
Then, a flicker of hope crossed her face.

"Perchance he is not drown'd: what think you sailors?"

They all rushed to comfort and reassure her. One claimed to have seen her brother tie himself to the mast, another spoke of how powerfully Sebastian had swum through the waves. Viola thanked them - though, in truth, she was thanking them mostly for their kindness. Deep down, they all knew the chances of surviving in that sea were slim.

Viola shook herself, as if waking from a sleep. Though Death had come to claim her brother, Life did not care. There were problems to be solved: she was shipwrecked on a foreign shore, with no money, no friends and no family.

"Who governs here?" Viola wanted to know.

"Orsino," the captain answered, "a noble duke, in nature as in name."

Then he added what we already know, that Orsino was hopelessly in love with Olivia, who herself was in mourning for a dead father and... a dead brother.

"O that I served that lady!"

Not possible, said the captain; she will admit no one to her house. Well then, thought Viola, perhaps she would have to try and find work at the house of Orsino. As a Duke, he would employ only manservants; so, would the captain and crew help disguise her as a boy? In answer, one of the young sailors held out his coat.

**MACBETH**  
**READING COMPREHENSION**  
**ACT 1**  
**YEAR 5 AND 6**

**Part 1: Scene 1**

**1. Who is gazing out the window at the beginning of the passage**

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**2. What single word describes Duke Orsino's 'sighs'. Quote directly from the text**

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**3. *'He was excellent at both sighing and gazing. His sighs were dramatic, and his gazes were noble.'***

Tick two synonyms for 'noble'

aristocratic

kind

mean

distinguished

**4. Why did the musicians stop playing?**

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**5. Using a direct quote from the text, write down what Duke Orsino says when he no longer wants to hear the music being played**

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**6. What is the name of Orsino's servant?**

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**7. Who is Duke Orsino 'eager to have news of...'**

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**8. "So please my lord, I might not be admitted.  
The element itself, till seven years' heat,  
Shall not behold her face at ample view;  
All this to season a brother's dead love."**

**A. How many years is Olivia going to stay indoors for?**

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**B. Why is Olivia going to stay indoors?**

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**9. What sort of man do you think Duke Orsino is? Justify your answer by giving reference to the text.**

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## Part 2: Scene 2

**10. What has happened at the beginning of this scene? Tick 2 boxes**

A storm

A party

A shipwreck

A dance

**11. Using a direct quote from the text how is 'the wind' personified?**

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**12. Who is searching desperately for her brother?**

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**13. Where have they landed?**

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**14. What is Viola's brother called?**

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**15. Does Viola think her brother is alive. Tick one box and use a direct quote from the text to justify your answer**

YES  NO

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**16. What does Viola decide that she must do?**

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**17. Tick two adjectives that you think best describe Viola**

brave   
weak   
foolish   
determined

**18. Viola is going to disguise herself as a boy**

TRUE  FALSE

**19. How do we know the crew agree to help Viola? Reference the text to justify your answer.**

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**ANSWERS**  
**TWELFTH NIGHT**  
**READING COMPREHENSION**  
**ACT 1**  
**YEAR 5 AND 6**

**Part 1: Scene 1**

- 1. Who is gazing out the window at the beginning of the passage**  
Duke Orzino
- 2. What single word describes Duke Orsino's 'sighs'. Quote directly from the text**  
dramatic
- 3. 'He was excellent at both sighing and gazing. His sighs were dramatic, and his gazes were noble.'**

Tick two synonyms for 'noble'

aristocratic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	kind	<input type="checkbox"/>
mean	<input type="checkbox"/>	distinguished	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- 4. Why did the musicians stop playing?**  
Because Duke Orsino's sigh was so loud!
- 5. Using a direct quote from the text, write down what Duke Orsino says when he no longer wants to hear the music being played**  
"Enough, no more!"
- 6. What is the name of Orsino's servant?**  
Valentine
- 7. Who is Duke Orsino 'eager to have news of...'**  
Olivia

**8. “So please my lord, I might not be admitted.  
The element itself, till seven years’ heat,  
Shall not behold her face at ample view;  
All this to season a brother’s dead love.”**

**A. How many years is Olivia going to stay indoors for?**

7 years

**B. Why is Olivia going to stay indoors?**

To mourn her dead brother/because her brother has died

**9. What sort of man do you think Duke Orsino is? Justify your answer by giving reference to the text.**

A number of answers could be given, as long as they are reasonably justified. For example:

**Determined** because even though Olivia has said she is going to stay indoors for 7 years he still intends on marrying her.

**Vain/arrogant/naive** because it says that “no one liked Orsino more than Orsino” and he thinks that if Olivia loved her brother as much as she did then of course she’ll love him/He’s already thinking about inviting people to the wedding even though Olivia hasn’t agreed to marry him yet!

## **Part 2: Scene 2**

**10. What has happened at the beginning of this scene? Tick 2 boxes**

A storm

A party

A shipwreck

A dance

**11. Using a direct quote from the text how is ‘the wind’ personified?  
‘the wind tearing at the boat like a ravenous beast’**

**12. Who is searching desperately for her brother?**

Viola



**13. Where have they landed?**

Ilyria

**14. What is Viola's brother called?**

Sebastian

**15. Does Viola think her brother is alive. Tick one box and use a direct quote from the text to justify your answer**

YES

NO

*'Deep down, they all knew the chances of surviving in that sea were slim'.*

**16. What does Viola decide that she must do?**

Get work at the house of Duke Orsino

**17. Tick two adjectives that you think best describe Viola**

brave

weak

foolish

determined

**18. Viola is going to disguise herself as a boy**

TRUE

FALSE

**19. How do we know the crew agree to help Viola? Reference the text to justify your answer.**

*'In answer, one of the young sailors held out his coat'.*