

OLIVIA Tell me your mind.

VIOLA I am a messenger.

OLIVIA Sure you have some hideous matter to deliver when the courtesy of it is so fearful. Speak your office.

VIOLA It alone concerns your ear. I bring no overture of war, no taxation of homage. I hold the olive in my hand. My words are as full of peace as matter.

OLIVIA Yet you began rudely. What are you? What would you?

VIOLA The rudeness that hath appeared in me have I learned from my entertainment. What I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead: to your ears, divinity; to any other's, profanation.

OLIVIA Give us the place alone. We will hear this divinity. *Maria and Attendants exit.* Now, sir, what is your text?

VIOLA Most sweet lady—

OLIVIA A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it. Where lies your text?

VIOLA In Orsino's bosom.

OLIVIA In his bosom? In what chapter of his bosom?

VIOLA To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.

OLIVIA O, I have read it; it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text. But we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. *She removes her veil.* Look you, sir, such a one I was this present. Is 't not well done?

VIOLA Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA

'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white  
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.  
Lady, you are the cruel'st she alive  
If you will lead these graces to the grave  
And leave the world no copy.

OLIVIA O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted! I will give out divers schedules of my beauty. It shall be inventoried and every particle and utensil labeled to my will: as, *item*, two lips indifferent red; *item*, two gray eyes with lids to them; *item*, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

VIOLA

I see you what you are. You are too proud.  
But if you were the devil you are fair.  
My lord and master loves you. O, such love  
Could be but recompensed though you were  
crowned

The nonpareil of beauty.

OLIVIA How does he love me?

VIOLA With adorations, fertile tears,

With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.  
OLIVIA  
Your lord does know my mind. I cannot love him.  
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,  
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;  
In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant,  
And in dimension and the shape of nature  
A gracious person. But yet I cannot love him.  
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA  
If I did love you in my master's flame,  
With such a suffering, such a deadly life,  
In your denial I would find no sense.  
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA Why, what would you?

VIOLA  
Make me a willow cabin at your gate  
And call upon my soul within the house,  
Write loyal cantons of contemnèd love  
And sing them loud even in the dead of night,  
Hallow your name to the reverberate hills  
And make the babbling gossip of the air  
Cry out "Olivia!" O, you should not rest  
Between the elements of air and earth  
But you should pity me.

OLIVIA You might do much.  
What is your parentage?

VIOLA  
Above my fortunes, yet my state is well.  
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA Get you to your lord.  
I cannot love him. Let him send no more—  
Unless perchance you come to me again  
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.  
I thank you for your pains. Spend this for me.

*She offers money.*

VIOLA  
I am no fee'd post, lady. Keep your purse.  
My master, not myself, lacks recompense.  
Love make his heart of flint that you shall love,  
And let your fervor, like my master's, be  
Placed in contempt. Farewell, fair cruelty.

*She exits.*

OLIVIA "What is your parentage?"  
"Above my fortunes, yet my state is well.  
I am a gentleman." I'll be sworn thou art.  
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit  
Do give thee fivefold blazon. Not too fast! Soft,  
soft!  
Unless the master were the man. How now?  
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?  
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections  
With an invisible and subtle stealth  
To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.—