Tales from Shakespeare

by

Charles and Mary Lamb

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The upper intermediate level books in the Longman Fiction series are simplified to the 2,000 word level of the Longman Defining Vocabulary, as researched for the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*.

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Contents

Introduction

Charles and Mary Lamb, who wrote *Tales from Shakespeare*, were brother and sister. They came from a poor family, but Charles (1775–1834), as a boy, had the chance of a better education than Mary, his elder sister (1764–1847). For Charles, writing was something that he did in his spare time (his main job was as a clerk in a company that traded goods from India); he became very well known for his essays on personal as well as literary subjects. He was a friend of many of the most famous writers of his time, including the poets Wordsworth and Coleridge. Mary, who was clearly very intelligent, had much less formal education, and trained to be a dressmaker. She had severe mental problems, however, and one day, in an attack of madness, killed their mother. Charles (who at times also suffered from mental problems, although his were less severe) saved her from spending the rest of her life in an asylum by promising that he would look after her and take full responsibility for her and her actions. For the rest of her life she was troubled from time to time by attacks of madness, and Charles kept his promise. He described her as "my sister and my friend", and their affection for each other was very important in both their lives.

Together they wrote other books for children, including poetry, but the most famous book that they worked on together is *Tales from Shakespeare*, which has been popular from the time they wrote it (1807) to the present day. Of the stories in this collection, Charles wrote *Macbeth* and Mary wrote the others.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the growth of the idea that Shakespeare was not just a great writer but the greatest writer who had ever lived, a figure who in many ways was greater than ordinary people and whose knowledge and understanding of human nature was so wide and deep that it

was close to God's. Charles Lamb certainly shared this view; he writes of Shakespeare as having a "godlike mind". This view of Shakespeare, however, regards him as a poet rather than a writer of plays: Lamb remarks that the real greatness of Shakespeare's plays is best understood by a reader, not a member of an audience. He feels that when they are read the plays have a greater effect on the reader's mind and feelings, and that when we see a play performed, the actors and the stage scenery take our attention from the "heavenly poetry".

The fact that at this time some of Shakespeare's plays were either very rarely performed or were performed with a different story from the one Shakespeare wrote, meant that young people might not have seen the plays performed as Shakespeare wrote them. The Lambs' stories, therefore, keep very close to the original words of Shakespeare's plays wherever this is possible, sometimes copying the words of the play directly and in other places merely making the language a little simpler to enable readers to understand it (since the English language had changed in many ways in the two hundred years since Shakespeare wrote and his own particular variety of English is often very complicated). The Lambs also cut out the second stories from some of the plays — *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example — to prevent these *Tales* from becoming too complicated for their young readers.

At the time when the Lambs were writing, there were very strong ideas about the importance of giving young people moral education, and much of the literature written for them was intended to teach clear moral lessons. The *Tales from Shakespeare* for example, tell readers very clearly which are the "good" characters in a story and which are "bad", which means that some of the stories become a fight between good and evil, rather than stories about particular people who do particular things. The characters are presented in very simple terms, and readers are not given a chance to decide for themselves what they think about them. In *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, Shylock is presented as "merciless", "cruel" and "unfeeling",

whereas all the descriptions of Antonio talk of his kindness; we are even told that he was "the kindest man that ever lived". The way in which Shylock is presented as "a merciless Jew", while only Christians show mercy and kindness also reflects the age when the stories were written.

It is interesting that all the stories in this collection show some characters deceiving others. Sometimes this is done by a character pretending to be a different person (in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*), sometimes by the plan of a group of characters to deceive others (*Much Ado About Nothing*) and sometimes by magic, whether this is controlled by a human being (*The Tempest*), or by non-human forces for good (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or evil (*Macbeth*). Sometimes the fact that people are deceived leads to a happy ending and in others it leads to misery, but in every case it is important that the truth should be made clear at the end so that there is a sense that right and justice have returned. This is an important part of the Lambs' intention in writing the stories: they wanted them to teach young readers a moral lesson by showing that, even if there is deceit and unhappiness along the way, the "good" characters will be happy at the end of the story while the "bad" characters will be punished or suffer in some way. Truth and justice must be seen to win in the end.

Along the way to this "happy" ending, however, there is often a great deal of confusion and pretence, and many of the characters (including "good" ones) spend a lot of time deceiving the others. Sometimes the characters deceive others by the clothes they wear as well as the way in which they behave (in *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*, the chief female character dresses like a man and behaves as men are thought to behave), but the most important means by which the characters are deceived is language. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, for example, Beatrice and Benedick are deceived by conversations they hear about each other's feelings, and the words they hear, which were said as lies, turn out in the end to be true. In *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*, words which are understood at the

time to have one meaning turn out in the end to have a very different one. Macbeth thinks he is safe when the witches tell him that no man born of woman can hurt him, while Viola promises Olivia that she will never love any woman, and tells Orsino of her father's daughter who loved a man in the same way as she, if she were a woman, would love Orsino himself. Both these remarks of Viola's are understood in one meaning by the readers or audience, who know that Viola is a woman, and in another way by the characters in the play who think she is a man. In *The Tempest*, Prospero uses the magic he has learned from his books to create the tempest which brings his enemies to the island, and to call both the spirit Ariel and the monster Caliban (who could not speak until Prospero taught him his language) to serve him. At the end of the play, when he has succeeded in his plans, he buries his magic books deep in the earth, as if to prevent anyone else from possessing the same power through language that he himself had had.

Some of the most interesting examples of the power of language appear in *The Merchant of Venice*. At the trial, Portia first makes a powerful speech on the quality of mercy and then, when Shylock refuses to show mercy, shows the court that, since the words of the bond do not include any mention of blood with the pound of flesh, and that they require that the piece of flesh be cut from Antonio's body to exactly the weight of a pound, Shylock has been caught in the trap he had planned for Antonio. He had thought that the words of the bond meant that Antonio was at his mercy, but in fact he is at the mercy of Antonio, and he has been defeated by the words which he himself had chosen.

The *Tales from Shakespeare* not only present some of Shakespeare's best-known plays so that their stories are clear and easy to read, but also suggest that whatever problems and difficulties there may be, justice and order will return in the end. In this they have the ancient purpose of literature: to give moral teaching at the same time that they give pleasure.

The Tempest

The People in the Story

Prospero, the true duke of Milan
Antonio, his brother who is the wrongful duke
The king of Naples
Ferdinand, his son
Miranda, daughter of Prospero
Ariel, a spirit serving Prospero
Caliban, a monster

The Tempest

The Island of Spirits

There was a certain island in the sea, on which there lived only an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady.

They lived in a cave made out of a rock: it was divided into several parts, one of which Prospero called his study. There he kept his books, which chiefly dealt with magic; and the knowledge of this art he found very useful to him. For being thrown by a strange chance upon this island, which had been put under a charm by a witch called Sycorax, Prospero, by the power of his art, set free many good spirits that Sycorax had shut up in the bodies of large trees, because they had refused to do her wicked commands. These gentle spirits were ever after obedient to the will of Prospero. Of these Ariel was the chief.

The lively little spirit Ariel had no evil in his nature, except that he took rather too much pleasure in troubling an ugly monster called Caliban, whom he hated because he was the son of his old enemy Sycorax. Prospero had found this Caliban in the woods, a strange twisted thing, far less like a man than a large monkey. He took him home to his cave, and taught him to speak; and Prospero would have been very kind to him, but the bad nature which Caliban had from his mother Sycorax, would not let him learn anything good or useful. Therefore he was employed like a slave, to fetch wood, and do the most laborious tasks; and Ariel had the duty of forcing him to these services.

When Caliban was lazy and did not do his work, Ariel (who could be seen by no eyes but Prospero's) would come quietly up and take hold of him painfully, and sometimes throw him down in the mud; and then Ariel, in the likeness of a monkey, would make mouths at him. Then quickly changing his shape, in the

likeness of a hedgehog he would lie rolling in Caliban's way, who feared the hedgehog's sharp points would prick his bare feet. With many such cruel tricks Ariel would often trouble him, whenever Caliban failed to do the work which Prospero commanded him to do.

The Tempest

Having these powerful spirits obedient to his will, Prospero could by their means command the winds, and the waves of the sea. By his orders they raised a great storm, in the middle of which he showed his daughter a large ship struggling with the wild waves that every moment seemed about to swallow it up. The ship, he told her, was full of living beings like themselves.

"O my dear father," said she, "if by your art you have raised this dreadful storm, have pity on their sad trouble. See! the ship will be broken to pieces. Poor souls! they will all be drowned. If I had power, I would sink the sea beneath the earth, rather than that the good ship should be destroyed, with all the precious souls within her."

"Be not so troubled, daughter Miranda," said Prospero; "there is no harm done. I have so ordered it, that no person in the ship shall receive any hurt. What I have done has been in care of you, my dear child. You do not know who you are, or where you came from, and you know no more of me, but that I am your father, and live in this poor cave. Can you remember a time before you came here? I think you cannot, for you were not then three years of age."

"Certainly I can, sir," replied Miranda.

"By what?" asked Prospero; "by any other house or person? Tell me what you can remember, my child."

Miranda said, "It seems to me like the memory of a dream. But had I not once four or five women who served me?"

Prospero answered, "You had, and more. How is it that this still lives in your mind? Do you remember how you came here?"

"No, sir," said Miranda, "I remember nothing more."

A Wicked Brother

"Twelve years ago, Miranda," continued Prospero, "I was duke of Milan, and you were a princess and my only child. I had a younger brother, whose name was Antonio, to whom I trusted everything; and as I was fond of quiet and deep study, I commonly left the management of my state affairs to your uncle, my false brother (for so indeed he proved). I, careless of all worldly ends, buried among my books, gave my whole time to the bettering of my mind. My brother Antonio being thus in possession of my power, began to think himself the duke indeed. The opportunity I gave him of making himself popular among my subjects awakened in his bad nature a proud ambition to rob me of my dukedom. This he soon did with the help of the king of Naples, a powerful prince, who was my enemy."

"Why did they not that hour destroy us?" asked Miranda.

"My child," answered her father, "they dared not, so dear was the love that my people bore me. Antonio carried us on board a ship, and when we were some miles out at sea, he forced us into a small boat, without either sails or ropes: there he left us, as he thought, to die. But a kind lord of my court, one Gonzalo, who loved me, had privately placed in the boat water, food, clothing and some books which I value above my dukedom."

"O my father," said Miranda, "what a trouble must I have been to you then!"

"No, my love," said Prospero, "you were a little angel that preserved me. Your smiles made me bear my misfortunes bravely. Our food lasted until we landed on this desert island; and since then my chief delight has been in teaching you, Miranda, and from these lessons you have gained much."

"Heaven thank you, my dear father," said Miranda. "Now tell me, sir, your reason for raising this storm?"

"I will," said her father. "By means of this storm, my enemies, the king of Naples and my cruel brother, are driven onto this island."

Having so said, Prospero gently touched his daughter with his

magic stick, and she fell fast asleep; for the spirit Ariel just then appeared before his master, to give an account of the tempest, and of what he had done with the ship's company; and though the spirits could never be seen by Miranda, Prospero did not wish her to hear him speaking (as would seem to her) with the empty air.

Ariel

"Well, my brave spirit," said Prospero to Ariel, "how have you performed your task?"

Ariel gave a lively story of the storm, and of the fears of the sailors; and how the king's son, Ferdinand, was the first who jumped into the sea; and his father thought he saw his dear son swallowed up by the waves, and lost.

"But he is safe," said Ariel, "in a corner of the island, sitting with his arms folded, sadly crying out for the loss of the king, his father, whom he thinks drowned. Not a hair of his head is touched, and his princely garments, though wet from the sea-waves, look fresher than before."

"That's my good Ariel," said Prospero. "Bring him here: my daughter must see this young prince. Where is the king, and my brother?"

"I left them," answered Ariel, "searching for Ferdinand, whom they have little hopes of finding, thinking they saw him drown. Of the ship's company not one is missing; though each one thinks himself the only one saved: and the ship, though out of sight, is safe in the harbour."

"Ariel," said Prospero, "your work is faithfully performed: but there is more to do."

"Is there more work?" said Ariel. "Let me remind you, master, you have promised me my freedom. I have done you faithful service, told you no lies, made no mistakes, served you without evil word or thought."

"What?" said Prospero, "You do not remember what pain I freed you from. Have you forgotten the wicked witch Sycorax,

who with age and envy was almost bent double? Where was she born? Speak; tell me."

"Sir, in Algiers," said Ariel.

"Oh, was she?" said Prospero. "I must tell you what you have been, which I find you have forgotten. This witch, Sycorax, for her bad deeds, too terrible for human ears, was driven from Algiers, and here left by the sailors; and because you were a spirit too delicate to do her wicked commands, she shut you up in a tree, where I found you crying out. This pain, remember, I freed you from."

"Pardon me, dear master," said Ariel, ashamed to seem ungrateful; "I will obey your commands."

"Do so," said Prospero, "and I will set you free." He then gave orders what further he would have him do; and away went Ariel, first to where he had left Ferdinand, and found him still sitting on the grass in the same sad state.

"O my young gentleman," said Ariel, when he saw him, "I will soon move you. You must be brought, I find, for the lady Miranda to have a sight of your pretty figure. Come, sir, follow me."

He began to sing, and the prince followed in wonder the sound of Ariel's voice until it led him to Prospero and Miranda, who were sitting under the shade of a large tree. Now Miranda had never seen a man before, except her own father.

Miranda and Ferdinand

"Miranda," said Prospero, "tell me what you are looking at over there."

"O father," said Miranda, in a strange surprise, "surely that is a spirit. Lord! how it looks about! Believe me, sir, it is a beautiful creature. Is it not a spirit?"

"No, girl," answered her father; "it eats, and sleeps, and has senses such as we have. This young man you see was in the ship. He is rather changed by grief, or you might call him beautiful. He has lost his companions, and is wandering about to find them."

Miranda, who thought all men had serious faces and grey beards like her father, was delighted with the appearance of this beautiful young prince. And Ferdinand, seeing such a lovely lady in this desert place, thought he was upon a charmed island, and that Miranda was the goddess of the place, and as such he began to address her.

She answered a little fearfully that she was no goddess, but a simple maid, and was going to give him an account of herself, when Prospero broke in upon her. He was well pleased to find they admired each other, for he plainly saw they had (as we say) fallen in love at first sight: but to test Ferdinand's faithfulness, he decided to throw some difficulties in their way. So coming forward, he addressed the prince with a severe air, telling him he came to the island as a spy, to take it from its real master, himself.

"Follow me," said he, "I will tie you, neck and feet together. You shall drink sea-water; shellfish and dead roots shall be your food."

"No," said Ferdinand, "I will fight against that until I see a more powerful enemy," and drew his sword; but Prospero, waving his magic stick, fixed him to the spot where he stood, so that he had no power to move.

Miranda hung upon her father, saying, "Why are you so unkind? Have pity, sir; I will promise for him. This is the second man I ever saw, and to me he seems a true one."

Prospero is Angry

"Silence," said the father: "one word more will make me angry with you, girl! What! speak for a spy? You think there are no more such fine men, having seen only him and Caliban. I tell you, foolish girl, most men as far pass him in beauty, as he does Caliban."

This he said to test his daughter's faithfulness; and she replied, "I have no wish to see a finer man."

"Come on, young man," said Prospero to the prince; "you

have no power to disobey me."

"I have not indeed," answered Ferdinand; and not knowing that it was by magic he was robbed of all power to fight, he was astonished to find himself so strangely forced to follow Prospero. Looking back on Miranda as long as he could see her, he said, as he went after Prospero into the cave, "My spirits are all bound up, as if I were in a dream; but this man's threats, and the weakness which I feel, would seem light to me, if from my prison I might once a day see this fair maid."

Prospero did not keep Ferdinand shut up long within the cave. He soon brought out his prisoner, and set him a hard task to perform, taking care to let his daughter know what he had done, and then pretending to go into his study, he secretly watched them both.

Prospero had commanded Ferdinand to pile up some heavy logs of wood. Kings' sons not being much used to laborious work, Miranda soon after found her lover almost dying with weariness.

"O sir!" said she, "do not work so hard; my father is at his studies, he is safe for these three hours: please rest yourself."

"O my dear lady," said Ferdinand, "I dare not. I must finish my task before I take my rest."

"If you will sit down," said Miranda. "I will carry your logs for a little while." But this Ferdinand would by no means agree to. Instead of helping Ferdinand with his task, Miranda prevented him from doing it, for they began a long conversation, so that the business of log-carrying went on very slowly.

Prospero, who had set Ferdinand this task merely as a trial of his love, was not at his books, as his daughter thought, but was standing by them unseen, to overhear what they said.

Ferdinand asked her name, which she told, saying it was against her father's command she did so.

Prospero only smiled at this first example of his daughter's disobedience, for having by his magic art caused his daughter to fall in love so suddenly, he was not angry that she showed her love by forgetting to obey his commands. And he listened well

pleased to a long speech of Ferdinand's, in which he said he loved her above all the ladies he ever saw.

In answer to his praises of her beauty, which he said was greater than any other in the world, she replied, "I do not remember the face of any woman, nor have I seen any more men than you, my good friend, and my dear father. But, believe me, sir, I would not wish any companion in the world but you, nor can my imagination form any shape but yours that I could like. But, sir, I fear I talk to you too freely, and my father's commands I forget."

At this Prospero smiled, and nodded his head, as much as to say, "This goes on exactly as I could wish; my girl will be queen of Naples."

And then Ferdinand, in another fine long speech (for young princes speak in courtly language), told the innocent Miranda he was the next to be king of Naples, and that she should be his queen.

"Ah! sir," said she, "I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of. I will answer you in plain and holy innocence. I am your wife, if you will marry me."

Before Ferdinand could thank her Prospero appeared before them.

"Fear nothing, my child," said he; "I have overheard, and like all you have said. And Ferdinand, if I have too severely used you, I will make you rich payment by giving you my daughter. All your troubles were only trials of your love, and you have nobly stood the test. Then take my daughter, as my gift, which your true love has bought, and do not smile when I tell you she is above all praise."

He then, telling them that he had business in another place asked them to sit down and talk together, until he returned; and this command Miranda seemed not at all willing to disobey.

Antonio and the King

When Prospero left them, he called his spirit Ariel, who quickly appeared before him, eager to tell him what he had done with Prospero's brother and the king of Naples. Ariel said he had left them almost out of their senses with fear, at the strange things he had caused them to see and hear. When weary with wandering about, and half dead for want of food, he had suddenly set before them a delightful feast. And then, just as they were going to eat, he appeared before them in the shape of a hungry monster with wings, and the feast disappeared. Then, to their great astonishment, this monster spoke to them, reminding them of their cruelty in driving Prospero from his dukedom, and leaving him and his little daughter to die at sea; saying, that for this cause these terrors had come upon them.

The king of Naples, and Antonio the false brother, were filled with sorrow for the injustice they had done to Prospero, and Ariel told his master he was certain their sorrow was real, and that he, though a spirit, could not help pitying them.

"Then bring them here, Ariel," said Prospero. "If you, who are but a spirit, feel for their grief, shall not I, who am a human being like themselves, have pity on them? Bring them quickly, my pretty Ariel."

Ariel soon returned with the king, Antonio, and old Gonzalo, who had followed him, wondering at the wild music he played in the air to draw them on to his master's presence. This Gonzalo was the same who had so kindly provided Prospero formerly with books and food, when his wicked brother left him, as he thought, to die in an open boat in the sea.

Grief and terror had so deadened their senses, that they did not know Prospero. He first made himself known to the good old Gonzalo, calling him the preserver of his life; and then his brother and the king knew that he was the Prospero they had tried to kill.

Antonio with tears, and sad words of sorrow and true shame, begged his brother's forgiveness, and the king said he, too, was

very sorry that he had helped Antonio to drive out his brother. And Prospero forgave them; and when they promised to give back his dukedom, he said to the king of Naples, "I have a gift in store for you too"; and opening a door, showed him his son Ferdinand with Miranda.

Nothing could have been greater than the joy of the father and the son at this unexpected meeting, for they each thought the other drowned in the storm.

"O wonder!" said Miranda, "what noble creatures these are! It must surely be a fine world that has such people in it."

The king of Naples was almost as much astonished at the beauty and excellent graces of the young Miranda as his son had been. "Who is this maid?" said he. "She seems the goddess that has parted us, and brought us thus together."

"No, sir," answered Ferdinand, smiling to find his father had fallen into the same mistake that he had made when he first saw Miranda, "she is only a woman, but by God's goodness she is mine. I chose her when I could not ask you, my father, for your permission, not thinking you were alive. She is the daughter of this Prospero, who is the duke of Milan, of whose fame I have heard so much, but never saw him until now. Of him I have received a new life: he has made himself to me a second father, giving me this dear lady."

"Then I must be her father," said the king; "but oh! how strangely will it sound, that I must ask my child forgiveness."

Forgiveness

"No more of that," said Prospero: "let us not remember our troubles past, since they so happily have ended." And then Prospero kissed his brother, and again gave him his forgiveness; and said that a wise, over-ruling God had permitted him to be driven from his poor dukedom of Milan, that his daughter might have the crown of Naples, since by their meeting in this desert island it had happened that the king's son had loved Miranda.

These kind words which Prospero spoke, meaning to comfort his brother, so filled Antonio with shame and sorrow, that he wept and was unable to speak. And the kind old Gonzalo wept to see this joyful union of hearts, and prayed for blessings on the young people.

Prospero now told them that their ship was safe in the harbour, and the sailors all on board her, and that he and his daughter would go home with them the next morning.

"Meanwhile," says he, "take such food as my poor cave provides; and for your evening's entertainment I will tell the history of my life from my first landing in this desert island." He then called for Caliban to prepare some food, and set the cave in order; and the company were astonished at the strange form and wild appearance of this ugly monster, who (Prospero said) was the only servant he had to wait upon him.

Before Prospero left the island, he let Ariel go from his service, to the great joy of that lively little spirit. For, though he had been a faithful servant to his master, he was always longing to enjoy his freedom, to wander without a master in the air, like a wild bird, under green trees, among pleasant fruits and sweet-smelling flowers.

"My pretty Ariel," said Prospero to the little spirit when he made him free, "I shall miss you; yet you shall have your freedom."

"Thank you, my dear master," said Ariel; "but give me leave to attend your ship home with favourable winds, before you say goodbye to your faithful spirit. And then, master, when I am free, how merrily I shall live!"

Prospero then buried deep in the earth his magical books, and stick, for he was resolved never more to make use of the magic art. And having thus defeated his enemies, and being united to his brother and the king of Naples, nothing now remained to complete his happiness, but to see his homeland again, to take possession of his dukedom, and to be present at the happy marriage of his daughter Miranda and Prince Ferdinand, which the king said should at once take place with

great splendour on their return to Naples. And at Naples, under the safe guidance of the spirit Ariel, they, after a pleasant voyage, soon arrived.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The People in the Story

Theseus, duke of Athens
Egeus, a citizen of Athens
Demetrius, a young Athenian
Lysander
A country fellow

Hermia, daughter of Egeus
Helena, her friend

Oberon, king of the fairies
Titania, his queen
Puck, adviser to Oberon
Fairies attending Titania

A Midsummer Night's Dream

A Cruel Law

There was a law in the city of Athens which gave to its citizens the power of forcing their daughters to marry whomsoever they pleased. For if a daughter refused to marry the man her father had chosen to be her husband, the father might by this law cause her to be put to death. But as fathers do not often desire the death of their own daughters, even though they do happen to prove a little disobedient, this law was seldom or never put into force.

There was one case, however, of an old man, whose name was Egeus, who actually did come before Theseus (at that time the duke of Athens), to complain that his daughter Hermia, whom he had commanded to marry Demetrius, a young man of a noble Athenian family, refused to obey him, because she loved another young Athenian, named Lysander. Egeus demanded justice of Theseus, and desired that this cruel law might be put in force against his daughter.

Hermia's defence was that Demetrius had formerly said that he loved her dear friend Helena, and that Helena loved Demetrius to madness. But this very good reason which Hermia gave for not obeying her father's command did not move the severe Egeus at all.

Theseus, though a great and merciful prince, had no power to change the laws of his country. Therefore he could only give Hermia four days to consider the matter: and at the end of that time, if she still refused to marry Demetrius, she was to be put to death.

When Hermia left the presence of the duke, she went to her lover Lysander, and told him the danger she was in, and that she must either give him up and marry Demetrius, or lose her life in four days.

Lysander was in great grief at hearing this bad news. But remembering that he had an aunt who lived at some distance from Athens, and that at the place where she lived the cruel law could not be put in force against Hermia, he suggested to Hermia that she should creep secretly out of her father's house that night, and go with him to his aunt's house, where he would marry her.

"I will meet you," said Lysander, "in the wood a few miles outside the city; in that delightful wood where we have so often walked with Helena in the pleasant month of May."

To this suggestion Hermia joyfully agreed; and she told no one of her intended flight but her friend Helena. Helena (as maidens will do foolish things for love) very unkindly resolved to go and tell this to Demetrius, though she could hope to gain nothing by giving away her friend's secret, but the poor pleasure of following her faithless lover to the wood; for she well knew that Demetrius would go there after Hermia.

The Fairy King and Queen

The wood, in which Lysander and Hermia planned to meet, was the favourite meeting-place of those little beings known by the name of *Fairies*.

Oberon the king, and Titania the queen of the fairies, with all their company of tiny followers, in this wood held their midnight dances.

Between this little king and queen of the fairies there happened, at this time, a sad disagreement. They never met by moonlight in the shady walks of this pleasant wood, but they were quarrelling, until all their followers would creep away and hide themselves for fear.

The cause of this unhappy disagreement was Titania's refusing to give Oberon a little boy. His mother had been Titania's friend, and upon her death the fairy queen stole the child from its nurse, and brought him up in the woods.

The night on which the lovers were to meet in this wood, as Titania was walking with some of her maids of honour, she met Oberon attended by his company of fairy courtiers.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania," said the fairy king.

The queen replied, "What, jealous Oberon, is it you? Fairies, run hence; I have sworn to avoid his company."

"Wait, foolish fairy," said Oberon; "am I not your lord? Why do you oppose me so? Give me that little boy to be my slave."

"Set your heart at rest," answered the queen; "your whole fairy kingdom will not buy the boy from me." She then left her lord in great anger.

"Well, go your way," said Oberon: "before the morning comes I will make you suffer from this harm you have done me."

Puck

Oberon then sent for Puck, his chief favourite and adviser.

Puck was a clever fairy that used to play funny games in the neighbouring villages: sometimes getting into the dairies and taking the cream from the milk, sometimes throwing his light and airy form into the butter-machine, and while he was dancing in it, in vain the dairymaid would labour to change her cream into butter. Nor had the village men any better success: whenever Puck chose to play his games in the beer-pan the beer was sure to be spoiled. When a few good neighbours were met to drink some comfortable ale together, Puck would jump into the bowl of ale in the likeness of a roasted wild apple, and when some old woman was going to drink, he would jump against her lips, and spill the ale over her old chin. And presently after, when the same old woman was solemnly seating herself to tell her neighbours a sad and sorrowful story, Puck would slip her three-legged seat from under her, and down would fall the poor old thing, and then the old women would hold their sides and

laugh at her, and swear they never spent a merrier hour.

"Come here, Puck," said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night; "fetch me the flower which maids call Love in Idleness; the juice of that little purple flower, laid on the eyelids of those who sleep, will make them, when they awake, love madly the first thing they see. Some of the juice of that flower I will drop on the eyelids of my Titania when she is asleep; and the first thing she looks upon when she opens her eyes she will fall in love with, even though it's a lion, a bear, or a monkey. And before I will take this charm from off her sight, which I can do with another charm I know of, I will make her give me that boy to be my servant."

Puck, who loved such things dearly, was highly pleased with this joke of his master, and ran to search for the flower. While Oberon was waiting for the return of Puck, he saw Demetrius and Helena enter the woods. He overheard Demetrius complaining to Helena for following him, and after many unkind words on his part, and gentle replies from Helena, reminding him of his former love and promises to her, he left her (as he said) to the mercy of the wild animals, and she ran after him as quickly as she could.

The fairy king, who was always friendly to true lovers, felt great pity for Helena. So when Puck returned with the little purple flower, Oberon said to his favourite, "Take a part of this flower; there has been a sweet Athenian lady here, who is in love with a cruel youth. If you find him sleeping, drop some of the love-juice in his eyes. But see that you do it when she is near him, that the first thing he sees when he awakes may be this lady. You will know the man by the Athenian garments which he wears." Puck promised to do this very cleverly; and then Oberon went, unseen by Titania, to her resting-place, where she was preparing to go to sleep. This was a bank, where grew many kinds of sweetly smelling, prettily coloured wild flowers, under a roof of climbing roses. There Titania always slept some part of the night; her bedcover the skin of a snake, which, though a small thing, was wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

He found Titania giving orders to her fairies, how they were to busy themselves while she slept. "Some of you," said Titania, "must kill the worms that eat the young rose flowers; and some make war on the bats for their leathern wings, to make my small fairies coats; and some of you keep watch that the noisy owl come not near me: but first sing me to sleep."

When the fairies had sung their queen asleep with a pretty song, they left her to perform the important services she had laid upon them. Oberon then softly drew near his Titania, and dropped some of the love-juice on her eyelids, saying,

What thou seest when thou dost wake
Do it for thy true-love take.

But we must return to Hermia. Hermia quietly crept out of her father's house that night, to escape the death that was hanging over her for refusing to marry Demetrius. When she entered the wood, she found her dear Lysander waiting for her, to take her to his aunt's house. But before they had passed half through the wood, Hermia was so weary, that Lysander made her rest till morning on the soft green bank. And lying down himself on the ground at some little distance, they soon fell fast asleep.

Puck's Mistake

Here they were found by Puck. Puck saw a good-looking young man asleep, and noticed that his clothes were made in the Athenian way, and that a pretty lady was sleeping near him; he thought that this must be the Athenian maid and her cruel lover whom Oberon had sent him to seek. And he naturally enough supposed that, as they were alone together, she must be the first thing he would see when he awoke; so, without delay, he poured some of the juice of the little purple flower into his eyes. But it so happened, that Helena came that way, and, instead of Hermia, was the first thing Lysander saw when he opened his eyes. And strange to say, so powerful was the love-charm, all his

love for Hermia disappeared, and Lysander fell in love with Helena.

Had he first seen Hermia when he awoke, the mistake Puck committed would have been no matter, for he could not love that faithful lady too well. But for poor Lysander to be forced by a fairy love-charm to forget his own true Hermia, and to run after another lady, and leave Hermia asleep quite alone in a wood at midnight, was a sad chance indeed.

Poor Helena

The misfortune happened in this way. Helena tried to keep up with Demetrius when he ran away so rudely from her; but she could not continue this unequal race long, men being always better runners in a long race than women. Helena soon lost sight of Demetrius; and as she was wandering about sorrowful and lonely, she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping.

"Ah!" said she, "this is Lysander lying on the ground: is he dead or asleep?" Then gently touching him, she said, "Good sir, if you are alive, awake."

Upon this Lysander opened his eyes, and (the love-charm beginning to work) immediately spoke to her words of the wildest love and admiration; telling her she passed Hermia in beauty, and that he would run through fire for her sweet sake; and many more such lover-like speeches. Helena, knowing Lysander was her friend Hermia's lover, and that he had solemnly promised to marry her, was very, very angry when she heard herself addressed in this manner; for she thought (as well she might) that Lysander was making a fool of her.

"Oh!" said she, "why was I born to be laughed at and thought nothing of by every one? Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I can never get a sweet look or a kind word from Demetrius; but you, sir, must pretend in this cruel manner to love me? I thought, Lysander, you were too kind for that." Saying these words in great anger, she ran away; and Lysander

followed her, quite forgetful of his own Hermia, who was still asleep.

Poor Hermia

When Hermia awoke, she was in a sad fright at finding herself alone. She wandered about the wood, not knowing what was become of Lysander, or which way to go to search for him. Meanwhile Demetrius, not being able to find Hermia, and his rival Lysander, and weary with his useless search, was noticed by Oberon fast asleep. Oberon had learnt by some questions he had asked of Puck, that he had put the love-charm on the wrong person's eyes. And now, having found the person first intended, he touched the eye-lids of the sleeping Demetrius with the love-juice, and he instantly awoke; and the first thing he saw being Helena, he, like Lysander before him, began to make love-speeches to her. Just at that moment Lysander, followed by Hermia (for through Puck's unlucky mistake it was now become Hermia's turn to run after her lover), made his appearance. Then Lysander and Demetrius, both speaking together, made love to Helena, each one being in the power of the same strong charm.

The astonished Helena thought that Demetrius, Lysander, and her once dear friend Hermia, had made a plan together to make a fool of her.

Hermia was as much surprised as Helena: she did not know why Lysander and Demetrius, who both before loved her, were now become the lovers of Helena; and to Hermia the matter seemed to be no laughing matter.

The ladies, who had always been the dearest of friends, now fell to angry words together.

"Unkind Hermia," said Helena, "it is you who have set Lysander on to trouble me with pretended praises; and your other lover Demetrius, who used almost to kick me with his foot, have you not told him call me Goddess, precious, beautiful and heavenly?

He would not speak thus to me whom he hates, if you had not set him on to make a fool of me. Unkind Hermia, to join with men in laughing at your poor friend. Have you forgotten our schoolday friendship? How often, Hermia, have we two, sitting on one seat, both singing one song, with our needles working the same flower, both worked on the same cloth; growing up together like a double cherry, hardly seeming parted? Hermia, it is not friendly in you, it is not maidenly, to join with men in laughing at your poor friend."

"I am filled with wonder at your angry words," said Hermia: "I do not laugh at you; it seems you laugh at me."

"Yes, do," returned Helena, "go on; pretend serious looks, and make mouths at me when I turn my back; then smile at each other. If you had any pity, grace, or manners, you would not treat me thus."

While Helena and Hermia were speaking these angry words to each other, Demetrius and Lysander left them, to fight together in the wood for the love of Helena.

When they found the gentlemen had gone, they left, and once more wandered weary in the wood in search of their lovers.

As soon as they were gone, the fairy king, who with little Puck had been listening to their quarrels, said to him, "This is your carelessness, Puck; or did you do it purposely?"

"Believe me, king of shadows," answered Puck, "it was a mistake; did you not tell me I should know the man by his Athenian garments? However, I am not sorry this has happened, for I think their quarrelling makes an excellent game."

"You heard," said Oberon, "that Demetrius and Lysander are gone to look for a place to fight in. I command you to fill the night with a thick fog, and lead these quarrelsome lovers so far from one another in the dark, that they shall not be able to find each other. See you do this, till they are so weary they can go no farther; and when you find they are so asleep, drop the juice of this other flower into Lysander's eyes. When he awakes he will forget his new love for Helena, and return to his old love for Hermia; and then the two fair ladies may each one be happy with

the man she loves, and they will think all that has passed an ugly dream. Go about this quickly, Puck, and I will go and see what sweet love my Titania has found."

Titania Punished

Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon seeing a country fellow near her, who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep: "This fellow," said he, "shall be my Titania's true love"; and putting an ass's head over the country fellow's, he made it fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Though Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and he rose up, not knowing what Oberon had done to him, and went towards the resting-place where the fairy queen slept.

"Ah! what beautiful creature is this I see?" said Titania, opening her eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect: "are you as wise as you are beautiful?"

"Why, mistress," said the foolish fellow with the ass's head, "if I have wisdom enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my purpose."

"Out of the wood do not desire to go," said the love-sick queen. "I am a spirit of no common kind. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you."

She then called four of her fairies; their names were Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustard-seed.

"Attend," said the queen, "upon this sweet gentleman; go with him in his walks, and play in his sight; feed him with fruit, and steal for him the honey-bags from the bees. Come, sit with me," said she to him, "and let me play with your pretty hairy cheeks, my beautiful ass! and kiss your fair large ears, my gentle joy!"

"Where is Pease-blossom?" said the ass-headed fellow, not paying much attention to the fairy queen's love, but very proud of his new servants.

"Here, sir," said little Pease-blossom.

"Scratch my head," said he. "Where is Cobweb?"

"Here, sir," said Cobweb.

"Good Mr Cobweb," said he, "please kill the red bee on the top of that plant; and, good Mr Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Take care the honey-bag does not break; I should be sorry to have you covered with a honey-bag. Where is Mustard-seed?"

"Here, sir," said Mustard-seed: "what is your wish?"

"Nothing," said the fellow, "good Mr Mustard-seed, but to help Mr Pease-blossom to scratch: I must go to a barber's, Mr Mustard-seed, for I think I am extremely hairy about the face."

"My sweet love," said the queen, "what will you have to eat? I have a fairy who shall fetch you some new nuts."

"I had rather have a handful of dried peas," said the fellow who with his ass's head had got an ass's taste. "But, I pray, let none of your people trouble me, for I have a mind to sleep."

"Sleep, then," said the queen, "and I will wind you in my arms. O how I love you! how I love you madly!"

When the fairy king saw the fellow sleeping in the arms of the queen, he advanced within her sight, and blamed her for showing kindness to an ass.

This she could not deny, as the fellow was then sleeping, within her arms, with his ass's head crowned by her with flowers.

When Oberon had laughed at her for some time, he again demanded the boy; and she, ashamed of being found by her lord with her new favourite, did not dare to refuse him.

Oberon, having thus obtained the little boy he had so long wished for to be his page, took pity on his Titania, and threw some of the juice of the other flower into her eyes. The fairy queen immediately recovered her senses, and wondered at her late foolishness, saying how she now hated the sight of the strange monster.

Oberon then took the ass's head from off the fellow, and left him to finish his sleep with his own fool's head upon his shoulders.

Oberon and his Titania being now perfectly reunited, he told

her the history of the lovers, and their midnight quarrels; and she agreed to go with him, and see the end of their adventures.

All's Well

The fairy king and queen found the lovers and their fair ladies, at no great distance from each other, sleeping on a piece of grass. For Puck, to repay them for his former mistake, had very carefully brought them all to the same spot, unknown to each other; and he had carefully removed the charm from off the eyes of Lysander with the medicine the fairy king had given to him.

Hermia first awoke, and finding her lost Lysander asleep so near her, was looking at him and wondering at his strange unfaithfulness. Lysander presently opening his eyes, and seeing his dear Hermia, recovered his reason which the fairy-charm had before clouded, and with his reason his love for Hermia. And they began to talk over the adventures of the night, doubting if these things had really happened, or if they had both been dreaming the same confusing dream.

Helena and Demetrius were by this time awake; and a sweet sleep having quieted Helena's troubled and angry mind, she listened with delight to the words of love which Demetrius still spoke to her, and which, to her surprise as well as pleasure, she began to see were truly meant.

These fair night-wandering ladies, now no longer rivals, became once more true friends. All the unkind words which had passed were forgiven, and they calmly planned together what was best to be done in their present condition. It was soon agreed that, as Demetrius had given up his claim to Hermia, he should try to persuade her father to take back the cruel sentence of death which had been passed against her. Demetrius was preparing to return to Athens for this friendly purpose, when they were surprised to see Ægeus, Hermia's father, who had come to the wood to find his runaway daughter.

When Egeus understood that Demetrius would not now marry his daughter, he no longer opposed her marriage with Lysander, but gave his permission that they should be joined together on the fourth day from that time (the same day on which Hermia had been told she would lose her life). And on that same day Helena joyfully agreed to marry her beloved and now faithful Demetrius.

The fairy king and queen, who, unseen, were present at this union, received so much pleasure, that they resolved to honour the marriages with sports and games throughout their fairy kingdom.

And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their tricks, judging it strange and beyond belief, they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were things which they saw in their sleep. And I hope none of my readers will be so hard to please as to be offended with a pretty, harmless Midsummer Night's Dream.

Much Ado About Nothing

The People in the Story

Leonato, governor of Messina
Don Pedro, the prince of Aragon
Claudio, a lord of Florence
Benedick, a lord of Padua
Don John, half-brother of Don Pedro
Borachio
A priest

Hero, daughter of Leonato
Beatrice, niece of Leonato
Margaret, *Ursula* } gentlewomen waiting on Hero

Much Ado About Nothing

Benedick and Beatrice

There lived in the palace at Messina two ladies, whose names were Hero and Beatrice. Hero was the daughter, and Beatrice the niece, of Leonato, the governor of Messina.

Beatrice was of a lively temper, and loved to amuse her cousin Hero, who was more serious, with her clever talk. Whatever was happening was sure to make matter of laughter for the light-hearted Beatrice.

At this time some young men of high rank in the army came to visit Leonato. Among these were Don Pedro, the prince of Arragon; and his friend Claudio, who was a lord of Florence; and with them came the wild and witty Benedick, and he was a lord of Padua.

These strangers had been at Messina before, and the governor presented them to his daughter and his niece as their old friends.

Benedick, the moment he entered the room, began a lively conversation with Leonato and the prince. Beatrice, who did not like to be left out of any talk, interrupted Benedick by saying, "I wonder that you are still talking, signor Benedick; nobody listens to you."

Benedick was just as talkative and witty as Beatrice; yet he was not pleased at this free speech. He thought it did not become a lady to be so light with her tongue; and he remembered, when he was last at Messina, that Beatrice used to choose him to make her merry jests upon. And as there is no one who so little likes to be laughed at as those who like to laugh at others, so it was with Benedick and Beatrice. These two sharp wits never met in former times but a perfect war of clever talk was kept up between them, and they always parted equally displeased with

each other. Therefore when Beatrice stopped him in the middle of his speech with telling him nobody listened to what he was saying, Benedick, pretending not to have seen before that she was present, said, "What, my dear lady Disdain, are you still living?" And now war broke out again between them. Beatrice, although she knew he had so well proved his courage in the late war, said that she would eat all he had killed there: and seeing the prince take pleasure in Benedick's conversation, she called him "the prince's jester". This biting word sank deeper into the mind of Benedick than all Beatrice had said before. There is nothing that great wits so much fear as the charge that they are jesters, because that comes sometimes a little too near the truth; therefore Benedick perfectly hated Beatrice, when she called him "the prince's jester".

Claudio and Hero

The lady Hero was silent before the noble guests; and while Claudio was carefully observing the improvement in her beauty, and the graces of her fine figure (for she was an admirable young lady), the prince was listening with pleasure to the talk of Benedick and Beatrice; and he said in a whisper to Leonato, "This is a pleasant-spirited young lady. She would be an excellent wife for Benedick." Leonato replied to this, "O my lord, my lord, if they were only a week married, they would talk themselves mad." But though Leonato thought they would make a quarrelsome pair, the prince did not give up the idea of matching these two keen wits together.

When the prince returned with Claudio from the palace, he found that the marriage he had planned between Benedick and Beatrice was not the only one that had been thought of there. For Claudio spoke of Hero in such a way as made the prince guess at what was passing in his heart. He liked it well, and he said to Claudio, "Do you think of Hero?" To this question Claudio replied, "O my lord, when I was last at Messina, I liked, but had no time for loving; but now, in this happy time of peace, thoughts

of war have left their places empty in my mind, and in their room come crowding soft and pleasant thoughts, all telling me how fair young Hero is, reminding me that I liked her before I went to the wars." These words of Claudio's so moved the prince, that he lost no time in asking Leonato to accept Claudio as his son-in-law. Leonato agreed, and the prince found no great difficulty in persuading the gentle Hero herself to listen to the noble Claudio, who was a lord of great gifts, and wise and skilled. And Claudio, helped by his kind prince, soon persuaded Leonato to fix an early day for his marriage with Hero.

Claudio was to wait only a few days before he was to be married to his fair lady; yet he complained of the time being long. The prince, therefore, to make the time seem short to him, suggested as a kind of merry game, that they should think out some clever plan to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with each other. Claudio entered with great satisfaction into this strange idea of the prince; and Leonato promised them his help, and even Hero said she would do anything she could to help her cousin to find a good husband.

A Strange Plan

The prince's plan was that the gentlemen should make Benedick believe that Beatrice was in love with him, and Hero should make Beatrice believe that Benedick was in love with her.

The prince, Leonato and Claudio began to work first. Watching their chance when Benedick was quietly seated reading in the garden, the prince and his helpers took their position among the trees, so near that Benedick could not help hearing all they said. After some careless talk the prince said, "Come here, Leonato. What was it you told me the other day — that your niece Beatrice was in love with Benedick? I did not think that lady would have loved any man."

"No, nor I either, my lord," answered Leonato. "It is most wonderful that she should so love Benedick, whom she in all

outward ways seemed always to dislike."

Claudio then said that Hero had told him Beatrice was so in love with Benedick that she would certainly die of grief, if he could not be brought to love her; which Leonato and Claudio seemed to agree was impossible, since he had always spoken against all fair ladies, and in particular against Beatrice.

The prince pretended to listen to all this with great pity for Beatrice, and he said, "It would be good if Benedick were told of this."

"Why?" said Claudio. "He would only make laughter of it, and trouble the poor lady worse."

"And if he should," said the prince, "it would be a good deed to hang him; for Beatrice is an excellent sweet lady, and very wise in everything but in loving Benedick."

Then the prince made a sign to his companions that they should walk on, and leave Benedick to think about what he had overheard.

The Trick Succeeds

Benedick had been listening with great eagerness to this conversation; and he said to himself when he heard Beatrice loved him, "Is it possible? Does the wind blow that way?"

And when they were gone, he began to reason in this way with himself: "This can be no trick! They were very serious, and they have the truth from Hero, and seem to pity the lady. Love me! Why, it must be returned! I did never think to marry. But when I said I should die single, I did not think I should live to be married. They say the lady is virtuous and fair. She is so. And wise in everything but loving me. Why, that is no great proof of her foolishness. But here comes Beatrice. By my word, she is a fair lady. I do see some marks of love in her."

Beatrice now approached him, and said with her usual sharpness, "Against my will I am sent to ask you to come in to dinner."

Benedick, who never felt himself willing to speak so politely to

her before, replied, "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your trouble." When Beatrice, after two or three more rude speeches, left him, Benedick thought he observed a hidden meaning of kindness under the hard words she spoke, and he said aloud, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a bad man. If I do not love her, I am a bad man. I will go and get her picture."

Now Beatrice

The gentleman being thus caught in the net they had spread for him, it was now Hero's turn to play her part with Beatrice. And for this purpose she sent for Ursula and Margaret, two gentlewomen who waited upon her; and she said to Margaret, "Good Margaret, run to the sitting room; there you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with the prince and Claudio. Whisper in her ear that I and Ursula are walking in the garden, and that our talk is all of her. Tell her to come and listen."

"I will make her come, I promise you, at once," said Margaret.

Hero, then taking Ursula with her into the garden, said to her, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice comes, we will walk up and down this path, and our talk must be only of Benedick, and when I name him, let it be your part to praise him more than ever man deserved. My talk to you must be how Benedick is in love with Beatrice. Now begin; for look where Beatrice like a shy bird runs close by the ground, to hear our speech."

They then began, Hero saying, as if in answer to something which Ursula had said, "No, truly, Ursula. She is too proud; she is as shy as wild birds of the rock."

"But are you sure," said Ursula, "that Benedick loves Beatrice so completely?"

Hero replied, "So says the prince, and my lord Claudio, and they begged me to tell her; but I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick, never to let Beatrice know of it."

"Certainly," replied Ursula, "it would not be a good thing for her to know his love, in case she made fun of it."

"Why," said Hero, "I never yet saw a man, however wise, or noble, young, or beautiful, whom she would not find fault with."

"Sure, sure, such cruel judgments are not good," said Ursula.

"No," replied Hero, "but who dare tell her so? If I should speak, she would laugh me into air."

"Oh! you wrong your cousin," said Ursula: "she cannot be so much without true judgment as to refuse so fine a gentleman as signor Benedick."

"He has a very good name," said Hero: "indeed, he is the first man in Italy, always excepting my dear Claudio."

Hero then told Ursula that she was to be married to Claudio the next day, and asked her to go in with her, and look at some new clothes, as she wished to ask her advice about what she should wear.

Beatrice, who had been listening very eagerly indeed to this talk, when they went away cried out, "What fire is in my ears? Can this be true? Benedick, love on! I will repay you, taming my wild heart to your loving hand."

It must have been a pleasant sight to see these old enemies turned into new and loving friends, and to see their first meeting after being tricked into liking one another by the merry plan of the good-humoured prince. But a sad change in the fortunes of Hero must now be thought of. The next day, which was to have been her wedding-day, brought sorrow on the heart of Hero and her good father Leonato.

Villainy

The prince had a half-brother, who came from the wars along with him to Messina. This brother (his name was Don John) was a sad, discontented man, whose spirits seemed to labour in the planning of evil deeds. He hated the prince his brother, and he hated Claudio, because he was the prince's friend. He decided to prevent Claudio's marriage with Hero, only for the cruel pleasure of making Claudio and the prince unhappy, for he knew the

prince had set his heart upon this marriage, almost as much as Claudio himself. To carry out this wicked purpose, he employed Borachio, a man as bad as himself, whom he encouraged with the offer of a great reward. This Borachio made himself pleasant to Margaret, Hero's attendant. Don John, knowing this, persuaded him to make Margaret promise to talk with him from her lady's bedroom window that night, after Hero was asleep, and also to dress herself in Hero's clothes, in order to make Claudio believe that it was Hero. For that was the end he meant to reach by this wicked plan.

Don John then went to the prince and Claudio, and told them that Hero was a careless lady, and that she talked with men from her window at midnight. Now this was the evening before the wedding, and he offered to take them that night, where they should themselves hear Hero talking with a man from her window. They agreed to go along with him, and Claudio said, "If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her, tomorrow in the church, where I intended to marry her, there will I shame her." The prince also said, "And as I helped you to get her, I will join with you to shame her."

When Don John brought them near Hero's room that night, they saw Borachio standing under the window, and they saw Margaret looking out of Hero's window, and heard her talking with Borachio. And Margaret being dressed in the same clothes they had seen Hero wear, the prince and Claudio believed it was the lady Hero herself.

Nothing could equal the anger of Claudio, when he had made (as he thought) this discovery. All his love for the innocent Hero was at once turned into hatred, and he decided to shame her in the church, as he had said he would, the next day. The prince agreed to this, thinking no punishment could be too severe for the wicked lady, who talked with a man from her window the very night before she was going to be married to the noble Claudio.

No Wedding

The next day they all met in church for the marriage; and Claudio and Hero were standing before the priest, and the priest was about to make them man and wife. Claudio, in the most angry language, announced the guilt of the blameless Hero, who, astonished at the strange words he spoke, said quietly, "Is my lord well, that he speaks so?"

Leonato, greatly shocked, said to the prince, "My lord, why do you not speak?"

"What should I say?" said the prince. "I stand dishonoured, for I have tried to join my dear friend to an unworthy woman. Leonato, upon my honour, myself, my brother, and this poor Claudio here saw and heard her last night at midnight talk with a man at her window."

Benedick, in wonder at what he heard, said, "This looks not like a marriage."

"True, O God!" replied the heart-struck Hero; and then this unhappy lady sank down in a faint, to all appearance dead.

The prince and Claudio left the church, without staying to see if Hero would recover, or at all considering the sorrow into which they had thrown Leonato. So hard-hearted had their anger made them.

Benedick remained, and helped Beatrice to recover Hero from her faint, saying, "How is the lady?"

"Dead, I think," replied Beatrice in great grief, for she loved her cousin; and knowing her goodness, she believed nothing of what she had heard spoken against her.

Not so the poor old father! He believed the story of his child's shame, and it was pitiful to hear him weeping over her, as she lay like one dead before him, wishing she might never more open her eyes.

But the old priest was a wise man, and full of knowledge of human nature, and he had carefully noted the lady's face when she heard herself accused. He said to the sorrowing father,

"Call me a fool; trust not my reading, nor my knowledge of men; trust not my age nor my calling, if this sweet lady lie not here most falsely accused."

When Hero had recovered from the faint into which she had fallen, the priest said to her, "Lady, what man is he you are accused of?"

Hero replied, "They that accuse me know; I know of none." Then turning to Leonato, she said, "O my father, if you can prove that any man has ever talked with me at unsuitable hours, or that I last night changed words with any creature, refuse me, hate me, punish me to death."

A Wise Priest

"There is," said the priest, "some strange misunderstanding in the prince and Claudio." And then he advised Leonato that he should report that Hero was dead; that he should make a grave for her, and do all the burial ceremonies.

"What shall become of this?" said Leonato. "What will this do?"

The priest replied, "This report of her death shall change evil thoughts into pity; that is some good; but that is not all the good I hope for. When Claudio shall hear she died upon hearing his words, the idea of her life shall sweetly creep into his mind. Then shall he grieve, and wish that he had not so accused her: yes, even though he thought his accusation true."

Benedick now said, "Leonato, let the priest advise you; and though you know how well I love the prince and Claudio, yet on my honour I will not tell this secret to them."

Leonato, thus persuaded, gave way. So the kind priest led him and Hero away to comfort them, and Beatrice and Benedick remained alone. And this was the meeting from which their friends, who had made the merry plan against them, expected so much laughter; those friends who were now beaten down with grief, and from whose minds all thoughts of merriment seemed for ever driven away.

Benedick and Beatrice

Benedick was the first who spoke, and he said, "Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?"

"Yes, and I will weep a while longer," said Beatrice.

"Surely," said Benedick, "I do believe your fair cousin is wronged."

"Ah!" said Beatrice, "how much might that man deserve of me who would right her!"

Benedick then said, "Is there any way to show such friendship? I love nothing in the world so well as you; is not that strange?"

"It would be as possible," said Beatrice, "for me to say I loved nothing in the world so well as you; but do not believe me, and yet I do not lie. I admit nothing, and I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin."

"By my sword," said Benedick, "you love me, and I swear I love you. Come, tell me to do anything for you."

"Kill Claudio," said Beatrice.

"Ha! not for the wide world," said Benedick; for he loved his friend Claudio, and he believed he had been deceived.

"Is not Claudio a bad man that has wronged and dishonoured my cousin?" said Beatrice. "O that I were a man!"

"Hear me, Beatrice!" said Benedick.

But Beatrice would hear nothing in Claudio's defence; and she continued to urge on Benedick to right her cousin's wrongs. She said, "Talk with a man out of the window — a likely thing! Sweet Hero! She is wronged; she is undone. O that I were a man for Claudio's sake! Or that I had any friend, who would be a man for my sake! But bravery is melted into pleasant words. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving."

"Wait, good Beatrice," said Benedick: "by this hand, I love you."

"Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it," said Beatrice.

"Do you think on your soul that Claudio has wronged Hero?" asked Benedick.

"Yes," answered Beatrice; "as sure as I have a thought, or a soul."

"Enough," said Benedick; "I am satisfied, I will call him out and fight him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall pay me a dear account! As you hear from me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin."

While Beatrice was thus powerfully urging Benedick, and working his brave temper by the spirit of her angry words to help her in the cause of Hero, and fight even with his dear friend Claudio, Leonato was calling upon the prince and Claudio to answer with their swords the wrong they had done his child, who, he said, had died for grief. But they respected his age and his sorrow, and they said. "No, do not quarrel with us, good old man." And now came Benedick, and he also called upon Claudio to answer with his sword the wrong he had done to Hero: and Claudio and the prince said to each other, "Beatrice has set him on to do this."

But at this moment the justice of Heaven brought to pass a better proof of the innocence of Hero than the uncertain fortune of a fight.

While the prince and Claudio were still talking about Benedick, Borachio was brought as a prisoner before the prince. He had been overheard talking with one of his companions of the wrong he had been employed by Don John to do.

Borachio made a full statement to the prince in Claudio's hearing, that it was Margaret dressed in her lady's clothes that he had talked with from the window, whom they had mistaken for the lady Hero herself. And so no doubt remained in the minds of Claudio and the prince of the goodness of Hero. Don John, finding his wickedness was discovered, escaped from Messina to avoid the just anger of his brother.

The heart of Claudio was sorely grieved when he found he had falsely accused Hero, who, he thought, had died upon hearing his cruel words. The memory of his beloved Hero's image

came over him; and he said that he felt as if he had taken poison while Borachio was speaking.

Claudio therefore asked forgiveness of the old man Leonato for the wrong he had done his child; and promised that whatever punishment Leonato would lay upon him for his fault in believing the false accusation against his promised wife, for her dear sake he would bear it.

The punishment which Leonato put upon him was to marry the next morning a cousin of Hero's, who, he said, was now his heir, and in appearance very like Hero. Claudio, respecting the solemn promise he made to Leonato, said he would marry this unknown lady, however plain she might be. But his heart was very sorrowful, and he passed that night in tears, and bitter grief, at the stone cross which Leonato had built for Hero.

When the morning came, the prince went with Claudio to the church. There the good priest, and Leonato and his niece, were already met together for the marriage. And Leonato presented to Claudio his promised bride; but her face was covered, so that Claudio could not see her. And Claudio said to her, "Give me your hand before this holy priest; I am your husband if you will marry me."

"And when I lived, I was your other wife," said this unknown lady; and, uncovering her face, she proved to be no niece (as was pretended), but Leonato's very daughter, Hero herself.

We may be sure that this proved a most pleasant surprise to Claudio, who thought her dead. He could hardly believe his eyes for joy. And the prince, who was equally surprised at what he saw, cried out, "Is not this Hero, Hero that was dead?"

Leonato replied, "She died, my lord, but only while the charge against her lived."

The priest promised to explain this miracle when the service was ended; and was going to marry them, when he was interrupted by Benedick, who wanted to be married at the same time to Beatrice. Beatrice at first said "No" to this; but Benedick said she could not deny her love for him, which he had learned from Hero. So then a pleasant explanation took place; and they found

they had both been tricked into a belief of love, which had never existed, and had become lovers in truth by the power of a false jest. But the love which a trick had sown, was grown too powerful to be shaken by a serious explanation. Benedick refused to consider anything that the world could say against his marriage; and he merrily kept up the jest, and swore to Beatrice that he took her out of pity, and because he heard she was dying of love for him. Beatrice on her side said that she gave way only to great persuasion, and partly to save his life, for she heard he was dangerously sick.

So these two mad wits became friends, and were married, too, after Claudio and Hero were married. To finish the story, Don John was taken in his flight, and brought back to Messina; and a fine punishment it was to this dark, unhappy man, to see the joy and feastings which, at the failure of his wicked plans, took place at the palace in Messina.

As You Like It

The People in the Story

Frederick, the wrongful duke
The true duke, his elder brother
Orlando, younger son of Sir Rowland de Boys
Oliver, his elder brother
Adam, a servant of Sir Rowland de Boys
A wrestler
A shepherd
Rosalind, daughter of the true duke who pretends to be the young man Ganymede
Celia, daughter of Frederick who pretends to be Aliena sister of Ganymede

As You Like It

A long time ago there ruled in a certain part of France a duke, who had taken the dukedom from his elder brother, the lawful ruler.

In the Forest

The duke, who was thus driven away, went with a few faithful followers to the forest of Arden; and here lived with his loving friends, who had left home willingly for his sake, while their land and property made the false brother rich. The life of careless ease they led here soon seemed sweeter to them than the splendour of a court. Here they lived like the old Robin Hood of England, and to this forest many noble youths daily came from the court, and passed the time carelessly, like those who lived in the golden age long, long ago. In the summer they lay under the fine shade of the large forest trees, watching the playful sports of the wild deer; and so fond were they of these poor creatures, that they did not like killing them for their food. When the cold winds of winter made the duke feel the change of his fortune, he would bear it, and say, "These cold winds which blow upon my body are true friends; they tell me my condition truly; and though they bite sharply, their tooth is nothing like so keen as that of the unkind and ungrateful." In this manner did the duke draw a useful lesson from everything that he saw. He could find tongues in trees, books in the running streams, wise words in stones, and good in everything.

At Court

The true duke had an only daughter, named Rosalind, whom the wrongful duke Frederick, when he drove out her father, still kept in his court as a companion for his own daughter Celia. A close friendship had grown up between these ladies, which the quarrels of their fathers did not break. Celia tried by every kindness in her power to repay Rosalind for the injustice of her own father; and whenever the thoughts of her father's sorrow made Rosalind sad, Celia's whole care was to comfort and cheer her.

One day, when Celia was talking in her usual kind manner to Rosalind, a message came from the duke, to tell them that if they wished to see a wrestling match, which was just going to begin, they must come at once to the court before the palace; and Celia, thinking it would amuse Rosalind, agreed to go and see it.

In those times wrestling was a favourite sport even in the courts of princes, and before fair ladies and princesses. To this wrestling match, therefore, Celia and Rosalind went. They found that it was likely to prove a very terrible sight. For a large and powerful man, who had been long practised in the art of wrestling, and had killed many men in matches of this kind, was just going to wrestle with a very young man, who, it seemed, would certainly be killed.

When the duke saw Celia and Rosalind, he said, "What, daughter and niece, have you come to see the wrestling? You will take little delight in it, there is such a difference between the men. In pity for this young man, I would wish to turn him from wrestling. Speak to him, ladies, and see if you can move him."

The ladies were well pleased to try. First Celia begged this young stranger that he would leave the attempt; and then Rosalind spoke so kindly to him, that instead of giving up his purpose, he only thought how he could prove his courage in this lovely lady's eyes. And he said: "I am sorry to deny such beau-

tiful ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial. If I am conquered, well, I was never happy; if I am killed, well, I am willing to die. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to weep for me. I shall do the world no harm, for in it I have nothing. For I only take up a place in the world which may be better filled when I have made it empty."

The Match

And now the wrestling match began. Celia wished the young stranger might not be hurt; but Rosalind felt most for him. She thought that he was like herself, unfortunate; and she pitied him so much, and took so deep an interest in his danger while he was wrestling, that she was almost in love with him already.

The kindness shown to this unknown youth by these noble ladies gave him courage and strength, so that he did wonders. In the end his opponent was defeated and so much hurt, that for a while he could not speak or move.

The duke Frederick was much pleased with the courage and skill shown by this young stranger and wished to know his name and family, meaning to take him under his care.

The stranger said his name was Orlando, and that he was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

Sir Rowland de Boys, the father of Orlando, had been dead some years; but when he was living, he had been a true subject and dear friend of the former duke. Therefore, when Frederick heard Orlando was the son of his brother's friend, all his liking for this brave young man was changed into dislike, and he left the place in anger. Hating to hear the very name of any of his brother's friends, and yet still admiring the courage of the youth, he said, as he went out, that he wished Orlando had been the son of any other man.

Rosalind was delighted to hear that her new favourite was the son of her father's old friend; and she said to Celia, "My father loved Sir Rowland de Boys, and if I had known this young man

was his son, I would have not only begged but wept before he should have risked himself."

The ladies then went up to him; and seeing him troubled by the sudden anger shown by the duke, they spoke kind words to him. And Rosalind, when they were going away, turned back to speak again to the brave young son of her father's old friend. Taking a chain from off her neck, she said, "Sir, wear this for me. I wish I could give you a more valuable present."

Orlando

When the ladies were alone, Rosalind's talk was still of Orlando; and Celia began to see her cousin had fallen in love with him. So she said to Rosalind, "Is it possible you should fall in love so suddenly?"

Rosalind replied, "The duke, my father, loved his father dearly."

"But," said Celia, "does it therefore follow that you should love his son dearly? For then I ought to hate him, for my father hated his father; yet I do not hate Orlando."

Frederick was angry at the sight of Sir Rowland de Boys' son, which reminded him of the many friends his brother had among the nobles. He had been for some time displeased with his niece, because the people praised her for her goodness, and pitied her for her good father's sake. So now he suddenly broke out against her: and while Celia and Rosalind were talking of Orlando, he came into the room, and with looks full of anger ordered Rosalind at once to leave the palace, and follow her father; and told Celia, who in vain spoke for her, that he had only allowed Rosalind to stay for her sake.

"I did not then," said Celia, "ask you to let her stay, for I was too young at that time to value her; but now I know her worth. We have so long slept together, risen at the same instant, learned, played, and eaten together; I cannot live without her."

Frederick replied, "She is too clever for you; she makes the people pity her. You are a fool to beg for her, for you will seem

more bright and virtuous when she is gone; therefore do not open your lips in her favour, for the judgment which I have passed upon her cannot be changed."

Flight

When Celia found she could not persuade her father to let Rosalind remain with her, she decided to go with her; and leaving her father's palace that night, she went along with her friend to seek Rosalind's father, the true duke, in the forest of Arden.

Before they set out, Celia thought that it would be unsafe for two young ladies to travel in the rich clothes they then wore; she therefore said that they should dress themselves like country maids. Rosalind said it would be a still better thing if one of them was to be dressed like a man; and so it was quickly agreed between them, that Rosalind should wear the dress of a young countryman, and Celia that of a country girl, and that they should say they were brother and sister. Rosalind said she would be called Ganymede, and Celia chose the name of Aliena.

In this dress, then, these fair princesses set out on their long travel; for the forest of Arden was a long way off, beyond the borders of the dukedom.

The lady Rosalind (or Ganymede as she must now be called) with her manly clothes seemed to have put on a manly courage. The faithful friendship that Celia showed in walking with her so many weary miles, made Rosalind put on a cheerful face, as if she were indeed Ganymede, the courageous brother of the gentle village girl, Aliena.

Suffering

When at last they came to the forest of Arden, they no longer found the comfortable lodging-houses that they had met with on the road, but were in want of food and rest. Ganymede, who had so merrily cheered his sister with pleasant speeches all the way,

now said he was so weary he could bring shame to his man's dress, and cry like a woman. Aliena said she could go no farther; and then again Ganymede tried to remember that it was a man's duty to comfort and cheer a woman, so he said, "Come, have a good heart, my sister Aliena; we are now at the end of our travel, in the forest of Arden." But such pretended courage would no longer help them; for though they were in the forest of Arden, they did not know where to find the duke. And here the travel of these weary ladies might have come to a sad end, for they might have lost themselves, and have died for want of food. But happily, as they were sitting on the grass, nearly dead with weariness and hopeless of any help, a countryman chanced to pass that way, and Ganymede once more tried to speak with a manly confidence, saying, "Shepherd, will love or gold in this lonely place bring us food and shelter? I pray you take us where we may rest ourselves; for this young maid, my sister, is tired with travelling, and faint for want of food."

The man replied that he was only a servant to a shepherd, and that his master's house was just going to be sold, and therefore they would find but poor lodging; but that if they would go with him, they should be welcome. They followed the man, the thought of rest giving them fresh strength. They bought the house and sheep from the shepherd, and took the man who had led them to wait on them; and so having a pleasant cottage, and good food, they agreed to stay there until they could learn in what part of the forest the duke lived.

When they were rested after their journey, they began to like their new way of life, and almost thought they were the shepherd and shepherdess they pretended to be. Yet sometimes Ganymede remembered he had once been the same lady Rosalind who had so dearly loved the brave Orlando, because he was the son of old Sir Rowland, her father's friend. And though Ganymede thought that Orlando was many miles distant, yet it soon was found that Orlando was also in the forest of Arden; and in this way this strange event came to pass.

Oliver

Orlando was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, who, when he died, left him (Orlando being then very young) to the care of his eldest brother Oliver, telling him to give Orlando a good education, and provide for him in a manner worthy of their old family. Oliver was a bad brother; he never sent his brother to school, but kept him at home untaught and quite neglected. But in his nature Orlando was so much like his father, that even without any good education he seemed well educated. Oliver so hated him, that at last he wished to kill him; and so sent him to wrestle with the famous wrestler, who had killed so many men. Now, it was this cruel brother's neglect of him which made Orlando say he wished to die, being so friendless.

When Orlando threw the wrestler, instead of being killed by him, Oliver swore he would burn the room where Orlando slept. He was overheard saying this by one who had been an old and faithful servant to their father, and who loved Orlando because he was like Sir Rowland. This old man went out to meet Orlando when he returned from the duke's palace, and when he saw him, his dear young master's danger made him cry out, "O my gentle master, my sweet master, O you memory of old Sir Rowland! Why are you virtuous? Why are you gentle, strong, and brave? And why would you be so foolish as to defeat the famous wrestler? Your praise is come too quickly home before you."

Orlando, wondering what all this meant, asked him what was the matter. And then the old man told him how his wicked brother, hearing the fame he had won by his victory in the duke's palace, intended to kill him, by setting fire to his room that night; and he warned him to leave at once. Knowing Orlando had no money, Adam (for that was the good old man's name) had brought out with him his own little bag of savings, and he said, "I have five hundred pounds, saved under your father, and laid by to keep me when my old limbs should become unfit for service; take that, and may He that feeds the birds be comfort to my age! Here is the gold; all this I give to you: let me be your

servant; though I look old, I will do the service of a younger man in all your need."

"O good old man!" said Orlando, "how well appears in you the faithful service of the old world! You are not for these times. We will go along together, and before your youthful wages are spent, I shall find some way to support us both."

Together, then, this faithful servant and his loved master set out; and Orlando and Adam travelled on, uncertain which way to go, until they came to the forest of Arden. There they found themselves in the same pain for want of food as Ganymede and Aliena. They wandered on till they were almost dead with hunger and weariness. Adam at last said, "O my dear master, I die for want of food, I can go no farther!" He then laid himself down, thinking to make that place his grave, and bade his dear master goodbye. Orlando, seeing him in this weak state, took his old servant up in his arms, and carried him under the shelter of some pleasant trees, and he said to him, "Do not despair, old Adam; rest your weary limbs here for a while; and do not talk of dying."

Orlando then searched about to find some food, and he happened to arrive at that part of the forest where the duke was. He and his friends were just going to eat their dinner, seated on the grass, under the shade of some large trees.

Orlando and the Duke

Orlando, whom hunger had made half-mad, drew his sword, intending to take their food by force, and said, "Eat no more; I must have your food!" The duke asked him if trouble had made him so bold, or if he were a rough fellow who thought nothing of good manners? So then Orlando said he was dying of hunger; and then the duke told him he was welcome to sit down and eat with them. Orlando, hearing him speak so gently, put up his sword, and grew red with shame at the rude manner in which he had spoken.

"Pardon me, I pray you," said he. "I thought that all things

had been wild here, and therefore I put on this hard, commanding look. But whoever you are, if ever you have looked on better days; if ever you have been where bells have rung to church; if you have ever sat at any good man's feast; if ever from your eyelids you have wiped a tear, and know what it is to pity or be pitied, may gentle speeches now move you to do me kindness!"

The duke replied, "True it is that we are men (as you say) who have seen better days. Though we now live in this wild forest, we have lived in towns and cities, and have with holy bell been rung to church, have sat at good men's feasts, and from our eyes have wiped tears of pity: therefore sit you down, and take of our food as much as you need."

"There is an old poor man," answered Orlando, "who has walked after me many a weary step in pure love, suffering from both age and hunger; until he be satisfied, I must not touch a bit."

"Go, find him out, and bring him here," said the duke; "we will not eat till you return." Then Orlando ran as a deer runs to find its young and give it food; and presently returned, bringing Adam in his arms. The duke said, "Set him down; you are both welcome." And they fed the old man, and cheered his heart, and he got back his health and strength again.

The duke asked who Orlando was; and when he found that he was the son of his old friend, Sir Rowland de Boys, he took him under his care, and Orlando and his old servant lived with the duke in the forest.

Orlando arrived in the forest not many days after Ganymede and Aliena came there and (as has been before told) bought the shepherd's cottage.

Poems on Trees

Ganymede and Aliena were much surprised to find the name of Rosalind cut on the trees, and love-poems fastened to them, all addressed to Rosalind. While they were wondering how this could be, they met Orlando, and they saw the chain which

Rosalind had given him about his neck.

Orlando did not know that Ganymede was the fair princess Rosalind, who by her noble kindness and favour had so won his heart that he passed his whole time in cutting her name upon the trees, and writing poems in praise of her beauty. But being much pleased with the graceful air of this pretty shepherd-youth, he began to talk with him. He thought he saw a likeness in Ganymede to his beloved Rosalind, but that he had none of the fine manners of that noble lady, for Ganymede put on the manners often seen in youths when they are between boys and men. With much laughter he talked to Orlando of a certain lover, "who," said he, "lives in our forests, and spoils our young trees with cutting Rosalind upon them; and he hangs poems on the bushes, all praising this same Rosalind. If I could find this lover, I would give him some good advice that would soon cure him of his love."

Orlando said that he was the foolish lover of whom he spoke, and asked Ganymede to give him the good advice he talked of. The cure Ganymede offered, and the advice he gave him, was that Orlando should come every day to the cottage where he and his sister Aliena lived: "And then," said Ganymede, "I will pretend that I am Rosalind, and you shall pretend to make love to me in the same manner as you would do if I was Rosalind. And then I will copy the strange ways of ladies to their lovers, till I make you ashamed of your love; and this is the way I plan to cure you."

Orlando had no great faith in the cure, yet he agreed to come every day to Ganymede's cottage, and do as he said, and every day Orlando visited Ganymede and Aliena, and Orlando called Ganymede his Rosalind, and every day talked over all the fine words which young men delight to use to their ladies. It does not appear, however, that Ganymede made any progress in curing Orlando of his love for Rosalind.

Though Orlando thought all this was only a game (not dreaming that Ganymede was his own true Rosalind), yet it pleased him almost as well as it did Ganymede, who was secretly pleased

that these fine love-speeches were all spoken to the right person.

In this way many days passed pleasantly on with these young people; and the good-natured Aliena, seeing it made Ganymede happy, let him have his own way, and did not care to remind him that the lady Rosalind had not yet made herself known to the duke her father. Ganymede met the duke one day, and had some talk with him, and the duke asked of what family he came. Ganymede answered that he came of as good a family as he did. This made the duke smile, for he did not think the pretty shepherd-boy came of royal blood. Then seeing the duke looking well and happy, Ganymede was content to put off her story for a few days longer.

Good for Evil

One morning, as Orlando was going to see Ganymede, he saw a man lying asleep on the ground, with a large green snake twisted about his neck. The snake, seeing Orlando approach, went quietly away among the bushes. Orlando went nearer, and then he found a lioness lying, with her head on the ground, with a cat-like watch, waiting until the sleeping man awoke (for it is said that lions will seize nothing that is dead or sleeping). It seemed as if Orlando was sent by God to free the man from the danger of the snake and the lioness. When Orlando looked in the man's face, he saw that the sleeper was his own brother Oliver, who had so cruelly used him; and he was almost tempted to leave him to be eaten by the hungry lioness. But brotherly love was stronger than his first anger against his brother. He drew his sword, and attacked the lioness, and killed her, and thus saved his brother's life both from the poisonous snake and from the fierce lioness; but before Orlando could kill her, she had torn one of his arms.

While Orlando was fighting with the lioness, Oliver awoke, and seeing that his brother Orlando, whom he had so cruelly treated, was saving him from a wild animal at the risk of his own

life, shame at once seized him, and he was sorry for his wicked conduct, and begged with many tears his brother's pardon for the wrong he had done him. Orlando was glad to see him so sorry, and willingly forgave him. They kissed each other, and from that hour Oliver loved Orlando with a true brotherly love, though he had come to the forest to kill him.

The wound in Orlando's arm having bled very much, he found himself too weak to go to visit Ganymede, and therefore he asked his brother to go, and tell Ganymede of the accident which had befallen him.

So Oliver went, and told Ganymede and Aliena how Orlando had saved his life. When he had finished the story of Orlando's bravery, and his own escape, he owned to them that he was Orlando's cruel brother; and then he told them of their new-found love.

The true sorrow that Oliver spoke for his wrongdoings so touched the kind heart of Aliena, that she at once fell in love with him; and Oliver, seeing how much she pitied him, fell in love as suddenly with her. But Ganymede, hearing of the danger Orlando had been in, and that he was wounded by the lioness, fainted; and when he recovered, he pretended that he had only pretended to faint. But Oliver saw by the paleness of his face that he had really fainted, and much wondering at the weakness of the young man, he said, "Well, if you did pretend, take a good heart, and pretend to be a man."

"So I do," replied Ganymede, truly, "but I should have been a woman by right."

Oliver made his visit a very long one, and when at last he returned back to his brother, he had much news to tell him. He told him of Ganymede's fainting at hearing that Orlando was wounded, and of how he had fallen in love with the fair shepherdess Aliena, and that she had listened to him kindly even at this their first meeting. And he talked to his brother as of a thing almost settled, that he should marry Aliena, saying, that he so well loved her, that he would live there as a shepherd, and give his lands and house to Orlando.

As You Like It

"I accept," said Orlando. "Let your wedding be tomorrow, and I will invite the duke and his friends. Go and ask your shepherdess to agree to this; she is now alone; for look, here comes her brother." Oliver went to Aliena; and Ganymede, whom Orlando had seen coming, came to ask after the health of his wounded friend.

When Orlando and Ganymede began to talk over the sudden love which had taken place between Oliver and Aliena, Orlando said he had advised his brother to ask his fair shepherdess to marry him the next day, and then he added how much he could wish to be married on the same day to his Rosalind.

Ganymede said, that if Orlando really loved Rosalind as well as he said, he should have his wish. For on the next day he would make Rosalind appear in her own person, and Rosalind should be willing to marry Orlando.

This, he said, he would bring to pass with the help of magic which he had learnt from an uncle who was a famous magician.

The hopeful lover Orlando, half believing and half doubting what he heard, asked Ganymede if he spoke truly. "By my life I do," said Ganymede, "therefore put on your best clothes, and call the duke and your friends to your wedding; for if you desire to be married tomorrow to Rosalind, she shall be here."

The next morning, Oliver and Aliena came into the presence of the duke, and with them also came Orlando.

When they had all come together for this double marriage, there was much wondering, for only one of the brides had appeared, but they mostly thought that Ganymede was making fun of Orlando.

The duke, hearing that it was his own daughter that was to be brought in this strange way, asked Orlando if he believed the shepherd-boy could really do what he had promised. And while Orlando was answering that he knew not what to think, Ganymede entered, and asked the duke whether he would agree to his daughter's marriage with Orlando.

"That I would," said the duke, "If I had kingdoms to give her."

Ganymede then said to Orlando, "And you say you will marry her if I bring her here."

"That I would," said Orlando, "if I were king of many kingdoms."

Ganymede and Aliena then went out together, and Ganymede throwing off his man's dress, and being once more dressed as a woman, quickly became Rosalind without the power of magic; and Aliena, putting on her own rich clothes, was with no more trouble changed into the lady Celia.

While they were gone, the duke said to Orlando, that he thought the shepherd Ganymede very like his daughter Rosalind; and Orlando said, he thought so too.

They had no time to wonder how all this would end, for Rosalind and Celia in their own clothes entered; and no longer pretending that it was by the power of magic that she came there, Rosalind threw herself on her knees before her father, and begged his blessing. It seemed so wonderful to all present that she should so suddenly appear, that it might well have passed for magic; but Rosalind told him how she had left the palace, and lived in the forest as a shepherd-boy, with her cousin Celia as her sister.

The duke agreed to the marriage; and Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, were married at the same time. And though their wedding could not be celebrated in this wild forest with any splendour, yet a happier wedding-day was never passed; and while they were eating under the cool shade of the pleasant trees, a messenger arrived to tell the duke the joyful news, that his dukedom was given back to him.

Frederick, angry at the flight of his daughter Celia, had put himself at the head of a large force, and advanced towards the forest, intending to seize his brother, and put him, with all his faithful followers, to the sword. But, just as he entered the wild forest, he was met by an old religious man, with whom he had much talk, and who in the end completely turned his heart from his wicked plan. He became truly sorry, and resolved to give up

his dukedom to spend the rest of his days in a religious house. His first act was to send a messenger to his brother (as has been told), to give back to him his dukedom, and with it the lands and houses of his friends and faithful followers.

This joyful news came just in time to perfect the joy of all who were at the wedding of the princesses. Celia wished her cousin joy very sincerely, though Rosalind, not she, was now to be rich.

The duke was now able to reward those true friends who had stayed with him in the forest; and these worthy followers, though they had patiently shared his troubles, were very well pleased to return in peace and happiness to the palace of their lawful duke.

The Merchant of Venice

The People in the Story

The duke of Venice
Antonio, a young merchant of Venice
Bassanio, his friend
Gratiano, a gentleman following Bassanio
Shylock, the money-lender
Portia, a lady living at Belmont
Nerissa, Portia's maidservant

The Merchant of Venice

Shylock and Antonio

Shylock, the Jew, lived at Venice; he had made himself very rich by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants. Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, forced men to pay the money he lent with such cruelty, that he was much hated by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice. And Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in trouble, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great hatred between this Jew and the kind merchant Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock he used to attack him for his hard dealings; and this the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly planned to hurt him.

Antonio was the kindest man that lived. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having only a small property, had wasted it by living in too expensive a manner (as young men of high rank with small fortunes often do). Whenever Bassanio wanted money, Antonio helped him; and it seemed as if they had .but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to make a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved. Her father, who was lately dead, had left her a large property. In her father's lifetime (he said) he used to visit at her house, and sometimes he thought this lady had sent him messages with her eyes; but not having money to make himself appear the lover of so rich a lady, he begged Antonio to lend him three thousand pounds.

Antonio had no money by him at the time to lend his friend;

but expecting soon to have some ships come home with goods for sale, he said he would go to Shylock, the rich money-lender, and borrow the money.

Antonio and Bassanio went together to Shylock, and Antonio asked the Jew to lend him three thousand pounds upon any interest he wished, to be paid out of the goods in his ships at sea.

On this, Shylock thought within himself, "If I can once catch him, I will feed the hatred that I bear him. He hates our Jewish nation; he lends out money without interest; and among the merchants he curses me and my good business. May my tribe be cursed if I forgive him!"

Antonio, seeing he was thinking and did not answer, and being anxious to get the money, said, "Shylock, do you hear? Will you lend the money?"

To this question the Jew replied, "Signor Antonio, many a time you have cursed, and I have borne it quietly; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spat on my Jewish garments, and kicked at me with your foot, as if I was a dog. Well, then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me, and say, 'Shylock, lend me money.' Has a dog money? Is it possible a dog should lend three thousand pounds? Shall I bend low and say, 'Fair sir, you spat upon me on Wednesday last; another time you called me dog; and for these kind deeds I am to lend you money'?"

Antonio replied, "I am as likely to call you so again, to spit on you again, and kick at you too. If you will lend me this money, lend it not as to a friend, but rather lend it as to an enemy, that, if I cannot pay again, you may with better face punish me."

"Why, look you," said Shylock, "how you storm! I would be friends with you, and have your love. I will forget the shame you have put upon me. I will supply your wants, and take no interest for my money." This offer greatly surprised Antonio; and then Shylock, still pretending kindness, again said he would lend him three thousand pounds, and take no interest for his money; only Antonio should go with him to a lawyer, and there sign in merry sport a bond, that if he did not repay the money by a certain

day, he would lose a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of his body that Shylock pleased.

"Content," said Antonio, "I will sign this bond, and say there is much kindness in the Jew."

Bassanio said Antonio should not sign such a bond for him; but still Antonio said that he would sign it, for before the day of payment came, his ships would come back with many times the value of the money.

Shylock, hearing this talk, cried out, "O, Father Abraham, what evil these Christians think! Their own hard dealings teach them to think evil. I pray you tell me this, Bassanio: if he should break his bond, what should I gain? A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man, is not worth so much as the flesh of a lamb or a cow. I say, to buy his favour I offer this friendship: if he will take it, so; if not, goodbye."

At last, against the advice of Bassanio, Antonio signed the bond, thinking it really was (as the Jew said) merely in sport.

Portia and Bassanio

The rich lady that Bassanio wished to marry lived near Venice, at a place called Belmont. Her name was Portia, and in the graces of her person and her mind she was the equal of any woman that ever lived.

Bassanio, being so kindly supplied with money by his friend Antonio at the risk of his life, set out for Belmont with a splendid company of servants, and attended by a gentleman of the name of Gratiano.

Bassanio was successful; Portia in a short time agreed to accept him as her husband.

Bassanio told Portia that he had little money, and that his high birth and noble family were all that he could speak proudly of; but she loved him for his own sake, and had riches enough not to wish for wealth in a husband. She answered that she would wish herself a thousand times more beautiful, and ten thousand times more rich, to be more worthy of him; and said

she was an ignorant girl, yet not so old but that she could learn, and that she would allow her gentle spirit to be directed and governed by him in all things. And she said, "Myself and what is mine, to you and yours is given. Only yesterday, Bassanio, I was the lady of this fair house, queen of myself and mistress over these servants; and now this house, these servants, and myself are yours, my lord — I give them with this ring," presenting a ring to Bassanio.

Bassanio was so filled with thankfulness and wonder at the gracious way in which the rich and noble Portia took a poor man like him, that he could only speak a few broken words of love: and taking the ring, he swore never to part with it.

Gratiano and Nerissa, Portia's maid, were with their lord and lady when Portia so gracefully promised to become the obedient wife of Bassanio; and Gratiano wishing Bassanio and the lady joy, asked leave to be married at the same time.

"With all my heart, Gratiano," said Bassanio, "if you can get a wife."

Gratiano then said that he loved the lady Portia's fair maid-servant, Nerissa, and that she had promised to be his wife, if her lady married Bassanio. Portia asked Nerissa if this was true. Nerissa replied, "Madam, it is so, if you approve of it." Portia willingly agreeing to this, Bassanio pleasantly said, "Then our wedding-feast shall be much honoured by your marriage, Gratiano."

Bad News

The happiness of these lovers was sadly crossed at this moment by the entrance of a messenger, who brought a letter from Antonio containing fearful news. When Bassanio read Antonio's letter, Portia feared it was to tell him of the death of some dear friend, he looked so pale. She asked what was the news which had so troubled him, and he said, "O sweet Portia, here are a few of the unpleasantest words that were ever written. Gentle lady, when I first spoke my love to you, I freely told you all the wealth

I had was my noble blood; but I should have told you that I had less than nothing, being in debt." Bassanio then told Portia what has been here said of his borrowing the money from Antonio, and of Antonio's borrowing it from Shylock the Jew, and of the bond by which Antonio had promised to give a pound of flesh, if it was not paid back by a certain day. And then Bassanio read Antonio's letter; the words of which were:

> Dear Bassanio,
> My ships are all lost, I must pay the Jew, and since in paying it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death; but do as you please; if your love for me does not make you come, let not my letter.

"Oh, my dear love," said Portia, "finish your business and be gone. You shall have gold to pay the money twenty times over, before this kind friend shall lose even a hair by your fault; and as you are so dearly bought, I will dearly love you."

Portia then said she would be married to Bassanio before he set out, to give him a right in law to her money; and that same day they were married, and Gratiano was also married to Nerissa; and Bassanio and Gratiano, as soon as they were married, set out in great haste for Venice, where Bassanio found Antonio in prison.

The day of payment being past, the cruel Jew would not accept the money which Bassanio offered him, but said he must have a pound of Antonio's flesh. A day was fixed for a trial before the duke of Venice, and Bassanio waited in great trouble of mind.

Portia's Plan

When Portia left her husband, she spoke cheeringly to him, and told him to bring his dear friend along with him when he returned. Yet she feared it would go hard with Antonio, and when she was left alone, she began to think if she could by any

means save the life of her dear Bassanio's friend. And though she had said with such a gentle and wifelike grace that she would be ruled in all things by his wisdom, yet she quickly decided to go herself to Venice and speak in Antonio's defence.

Portia had a relation who was a lawyer. To this gentleman, whose name was Bellario, she wrote, asking him to advise her and also to lend her the dress worn by a lawyer. When the messenger returned, he brought from Bellario letters of advice and also everything necessary for her journey.

Portia dressed herself and her maid Nerissa in men's dress, and putting on the clothes of a lawyer, she took Nerissa along with her as her clerk; and setting out immediately, they arrived at Venice on the very day of the trial. The case was just going to be heard before the duke and counsellors of Venice in the court-house. Portia entered it and handed the duke a letter from Bellario, to say that he would have come himself to speak for Antonio, but that he was sick and could not, and to ask that the learned young doctor Balthasar (so he called Portia) might speak instead of him. This the duke granted, much wondering at the youthful face of the stranger, whose true appearance was prettily hidden by her lawyer's dress.

And now began this important trial. Portia looked around her, and she saw the merciless Jew; and she saw Bassanio, but he did not know her in her lawyer's clothes. He was standing beside Antonio, in very great anxiety and fear for his friend.

A Daniel Come to Judgment

Portia boldly set herself to the duty she had promised to do; and first of all she addressed herself to Shylock. He had a right (she said) by the Venetian law to have what was promised in the bond; but she spoke so sweetly of the noble quality of *mercy*, as would have softened any heart but the unfeeling Shylock's, saying, "Mercy drops as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is a double blessing, it blesses him that gives,

and him that receives it; it is a finer thing for a king than his crown itself, because it is a quality of God Himself; and earthly power comes nearest to God's when justice is mixed with mercy. Remember that as we all pray for mercy, that same prayer should teach us to show mercy."

Shylock only answered her by asking to have what the bond promised. "Is he not able to pay the money?" asked Portia. Bassanio then said he would pay the three thousand pounds as many times over as he should wish; but Shylock refused, and still said he must have a pound of Antonio's flesh. So Bassanio begged the learned young lawyer would try to twist the law a little, to save Antonio's life. But Portia solemnly answered, that laws once passed must never be so changed. Shylock heard Portia say that the law might not be changed, and thought that she was speaking on his side, and he said, "A Daniel is come to judgment! O wise young judge, how I do honour you! How much older are you than your looks!"

Portia now asked Shylock to let her look at the bond; and when she had read it, she said, "By this bond the Jew may lawfully claim a pound of flesh, to be cut off by him nearest Antonio's heart." Then she said to Shylock, "Be merciful; take the money, and tell me to tear up the bond."

But no mercy would the cruel Shylock show, and he said, "By my soul, I swear, there is no power in the tongue of man to change me."

"Why, then, Antonio," said Portia, "you must prepare your breast for the knife." And while Shylock was sharpening a long knife with great eagerness to cut off the pound of flesh, Portia said to Antonio, "Have you anything to say?"

Antonio with a calm voice replied, that he had but little to say, for he had prepared his mind for death. Then he said to Bassanio, "Give me your hand, Bassanio! Goodbye! Grieve not that I am fallen into this misfortune for you. Remember me to your honourable wife, and tell her how I have loved you!"

Bassanio in the deepest sorrow replied, "Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as dear to me as life itself: but life itself, my wife, and all the world, are not valued by me above your life. I would lose all, I would give all to this devil here, to save you."

When Portia heard this, she could not help answering, "Your wife would not thank you, if she were present, to hear you make this offer."

And then Gratiano, who loved to copy what his lord did, said, in Nerissa's hearing, "I have a wife whom I love; I wish she were in heaven, if she could but beg some power there to change the cruel temper of this Jew."

"It is well you wish this behind her back, else you would have trouble in your house," said Nerissa.

A Pound of Flesh

Shylock now cried out, "We waste time; I pray you give the sentence." And now every heart was full of grief for Antonio.

Portia asked if the scales were ready to weigh the flesh; and she said to the Jew, "Shylock, you must have some doctor by, in case he bleeds to death."

Shylock, whose hope it was that Antonio should bleed to death, said, "It is not so named in the bond."

Portia replied, "It is not so named in the bond, but what of that? It would be good if you did this for kindness."

To this all the answer Shylock would make was, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond."

"Then," said Portia, "a pound of Antonio's flesh is yours. The law allows it, and the court gives it. And you may cut this flesh from off this breast. The law allows it and the court gives it."

Again Shylock cried out, "O wise and upright judge! A Daniel is come to judgment!" And then he sharpened his long knife again, and looking eagerly on Antonio, he said, "Come, prepare!"

"Wait a little, Jew," said Portia; "there is something else. This bond here gives you no drop of blood; the words are: 'a pound of flesh'. If in the cutting off of the pound of flesh you spill one

drop of Christian blood, your land and goods are by the law to be taken from you and given up to the state of Venice."

Now it was quite impossible for Shylock to cut off the pound of flesh without spilling some of Antonio's blood; so this wise word of Portia's, that it was flesh and not blood that was named in the bond, saved the life of Antonio. And all admiring the wonderful wisdom of the young lawyer cried out in joy from every part of the court-house; and Gratiano said, in the words which Shylock had used, "O wise and upright judge! See, Jew, a Daniel is come to judgment!"

Shylock, finding himself beaten, said with a disappointed look that he would take the money; and Bassanio cried out, "Here is the money!"

But Portia stopped him saying, "Wait; there is no haste. The Jew shall have nothing but what is in the bond. Therefore get ready, Shylock, to cut off the flesh; but mind you spill no blood: and do not cut off more or less than just a pound. If the scale turn but by the weight of a single hair, you are condemned by the laws of Venice to die, and all your wealth will become the state's."

"Give me my money, and let me go," said Shylock.

"I have it ready," said Bassanio, "here it is."

Shylock was going to take the money when Portia again stopped him, saying, "Wait, Jew; I have yet another hold upon you. By the laws of Venice, your wealth will go to the state, for having planned to kill one of its citizens; and your life lies at the mercy of the duke. Therefore, down on your knees, and ask him to pardon you."

Mercy

The duke then said to Shylock, "That you may see the difference of our Christian spirit, I give you your life before you ask it. Half your wealth belongs to Antonio, the other half comes to the state."

The generous Antonio then said that he would give up his share of Shylock's wealth, if Shylock would sign a bond to give it at his death to his daughter and her husband. (For Antonio knew that the Jew had an only daughter, who had lately married without his consent a young Christian, named Lorenzo, a friend of Antonio's, which had made Shylock very angry with her.)

The Jew agreed to this; and very sorrowfully he said, "I am ill. Let me go home; send the bond after me, and I will sign over half my riches to my daughter."

"Go, then," said the duke, "and sign it; and if you are truly sorry for your cruelty and turn Christian, the state will forgive you the payment of the other half of your riches."

The duke now set Antonio free, and with his councillors left the court; and then Bassanio said to Portia, "Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend Antonio have by your wisdom been this day saved, and I beg you to accept the three thousand pounds due to the Jew."

The Ring

Portia would not accept the money; but when Bassanio still pressed her to accept a present, she said, "Give me your gloves; I will wear them for your sake." And then, Bassanio taking off his gloves, she saw the ring which she had given him upon his finger, and she said, when she saw the ring, "And for your love I will take this ring from you."

Bassanio was sorry that the lawyer should ask him for the only thing he could not part with, and he replied that he could not give him that ring, because it was his wife's gift, and he had promised never to part with it. But he added that he would give him the most costly ring in Venice. On this Portia pretended to be angry, and left the court saying, "You teach me, sir, how a beggar should be answered."

"Dear Bassanio," said Antonio, "let him have the ring."

Bassanio, ashamed to appear so ungrateful, gave way, and sent Gratiano after Portia with the ring. And then the clerk Nerissa, who had also given Gratiano a ring, begged his ring, and Gratiano (though unwillingly) gave it to her. And there was laughing among the two ladies to think, when they got home, how they would make trouble with their husbands for giving away their rings, and swear that they had given them as a present to some woman.

Portia, when she returned, was in that happy temper of mind which comes from a good action. She enjoyed everything she saw; the moon seemed to shine more brightly than ever before; and when that pleasant moon was hid behind a cloud, then a light which she saw from her house at Belmont pleased her, and she said to Nerissa, "That light we see is burning in my hall; how far that little candle throws its beams, so shines a good deed in a bad world." And hearing the sound of music from her house, she said, "By night music sounds much sweeter than by day."

A Quarrel

And now Portia and Nerissa entered the house, and dressing themselves in their own clothes, awaited their husbands, who soon followed them with Antonio. Presently, Nerissa and her husband began to quarrel in a corner of the room.

"A quarrel already?" said Portia. "What is the matter?"

Gratiano replied, "Lady, it is about a poor little ring that Nerissa gave me."

"What does the value of the ring matter?" said Nerissa. "You swore to me, when I gave it to you, that you would keep it till the hour of death; and now you say you gave it to the lawyer's clerk. I know you gave it to a woman."

"By this hand," replied Gratiano, "I gave it to a youth, a boy no taller than yourself. He was a clerk to the young lawyer that by his wise words saved Antonio's life. This little boy begged it for a payment, and I could not for my life say 'no' to him."

Portia said, "You were to blame, Gratiano, to part with your wife's first gift. I gave my lord Bassanio a ring, and I am sure he would not part with it for all the world."

Gratiano, in excuse for his fault, now said, "My lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the lawyer, and then the boy, his clerk, begged my ring."

Portia, hearing this, seemed very angry, and blamed Bassanio for giving away her ring; and she said, Nerissa had taught her what to believe, and that she knew some woman had the ring.

Bassanio was very unhappy to have made his dear wife angry, and he said, "No, by my honour, no woman has it, but a lawyer, who refused three thousand pounds of me, and begged the ring. What could I do, sweet Portia? I was so filled with shame, that I was forced to send the ring after him. Pardon me, good lady; had you been there, I think you would have begged the ring of me to give the good lawyer."

"Ah!" said Antonio, "I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels."

Portia asked Antonio not to grieve at that; and then Antonio said, "I once did lend my body for Bassanio's sake; and but for him to whom your husband gave the ring, I should have now been dead. I can promise you, your lord will never more break his faith with you."

"Then," said Portia, "give him this ring, and bid him keep it better than the other."

When Bassanio looked at this ring, he was much surprised to find it was the same he gave away. And then Portia told him how she was the young lawyer, and Nerissa was her clerk. And Bassanio found, to his great wonder and joy, that it was by the noble courage and wisdom of his wife that Antonio's life had been saved.

And Portia again welcomed Antonio, and gave him letters in which there was an account of how Antonio's ships, that were supposed lost, had safely arrived in the harbour. So these sad beginnings of this rich merchant's story were all forgotten in

the wonderful good fortune which came after, and there was time to laugh at the strange story of the rings, and the husbands that did not know their own wives, Gratiano merrily swearing that

> while he lived, he'd fear no other thing
> So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Macbeth

The People in the Story

Duncan, king of Scotland
Macbeth, lord of Glamis, a general in Duncan's army
Banquo, another of Duncan's generals
Malcolm, *Donalbain* } Duncan's sons
Fleance, Banquo's son
Macduff, lord of Fife

Lady Macbeth
Lady Macduff

The three witches
Spirits

Macbeth

The Witches' Prophecy

When Duncan the Gentle ruled as king of Scotland, there lived a great lord called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near relative of the king, and was held in great honour at court for his courage in the wars.

The two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from a great battle, were stopped by three strange figures, like women, except that they had beards, and their lined skins and wild dress made them look not like any earthly creatures. Macbeth first addressed them, but each one laid a finger upon her skinny lips, for silence: and the first of them called Macbeth by the name of lord of Glamis. The general was much surprised to find himself known by such creatures; but how much more, when the second of them gave him the name of lord of Cawdor, to which honour he had no claim! And again the third called to him, "O king that shall be hereafter!" Such a prophecy might well surprise him, for he knew that while the king's sons lived he could not hope to succeed to the throne. Then turning to Banquo, they pronounced him, in a sort of riddle, to be lesser than Macbeth and greater! not so happy, but much happier! and prophesied that though he should never be king yet his sons after him should be kings in Scotland. They then turned into air and disappeared: by which the generals knew them to be witches.

While they stood thinking about these strange things, there arrived certain messengers from the king, who were sent by him to give Macbeth the name and title of Cawdor. An event so strangely like the prophecy of the witches filled Macbeth with wonder, and he stood surprised, unable to make reply to the messengers. And in that moment of time swelling hopes formed

in his mind, that the prophecy of the third witch might in like manner be fulfilled, and that he should one day be king in Scotland.

Turning to Banquo, he said, "Do you not hope that your children shall be kings, when what the witches promised to me has so wonderfully come to pass?"

"That hope," answered the general, "might move you to aim at the throne; but often these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to lead us into doing evil."

But the words of the witches had sunk too deep into the mind of Macbeth to allow him to attend to the warnings of the good Banquo. From that time he bent all his thoughts on how to win the throne of Scotland.

Lady Macbeth

Macbeth had a wife, to whom he told the strange prophecy of the witches, and what had followed. She was a bad, ambitious woman, and if only her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not much by what means. She urged on Macbeth, and never failed to tell him that the murder of the king was necessary to the fulfilment of the prophecy.

It happened at this time that the king came to Macbeth's house, attended by his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and a large number of lords and attendants, to honour Macbeth for his success in the wars.

The castle of Macbeth was built in a pleasant place; the air about it was sweet and healthy; swallows had made their nests upon the walls of the building, and where those birds build and live, the air is known to be soft. The king entered, well-pleased with the place, and not less so with the attentions and respect of his honoured hostess, Lady Macbeth, who had the art of covering wicked purposes with smiles; and could look like the innocent flower, while she was indeed the snake under it.

The king, being tired with his journey, went early to bed, and in his state-room two servants (as was the custom) slept beside

him. He had been unusually pleased with his welcome, and had made presents, before he went to his room, to his chief officers; and among the rest, had sent a rich diamond to Lady Macbeth, greeting her by the name of his most kind hostess.

The Murder Planned

Now was the middle of night, when over half the world nature seems dead, and wicked dreams trouble men's minds, and none but the wild animal and the murderer is about. This was the time when Lady Macbeth woke to plan the murder of the king. She would not have done something so unnatural in a woman, but that she feared her husband's nature; that it was too full of the milk of human kindness to do murder. She knew him to be ambitious but to fear wrongdoing, and not to be yet prepared for a great crime. She had won him to agree to the murder, but she doubted his firmness, and she feared that the natural tenderness of his heart (more gentle than her own) would come between, and defeat the purpose. So with her own hands armed with a knife, she approached the king's bed; having taken care to make his servants drunk, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan, in a deep sleep after the labours of his journey; but as she looked closely at him, there was something in his face, as he slept, which made her think of her own father; and she had not the heart to go on.

She returned to speak with her husband. His determination had begun to grow weak. He now considered that there were strong reasons against the deed. In the first place, he was not only a subject, but a near relative of the king; he had been his host that day, and it was a host's duty to shut the door against his murderers, not bear the knife himself. Then he thought how just and merciful a king this Duncan had been, how clear of wrong towards his subjects, how loving towards his nobles, and in particular to him; that such kings are the special care of Heaven, and their subjects having a double duty to punish those that hurt them. Besides, by the favours of the king, Macbeth

stood high in the opinion of all sorts of men, and how these honours would be stained by the name of so terrible a murder!

So Lady Macbeth found her husband turning to the better part, and deciding to go no further. But she was a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose. She began to pour into his ears words which breathed some of her own spirit into his mind. She gave reason upon reason why he should not turn from what he had promised; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come kingship and royal power! Then she laughed at his change of purpose, and called him weak and a coward; she declared that she had given suck, and knew how tender it was to love the babe that milked her, but she would, while it was smiling in her face, have pulled it from her breast, and struck its brains out, if she had so sworn to do it, as he had sworn to perform that murder. Then she added how easy it was to lay the guilt of the deed upon the drunken, sleepy servants. And with the courage of her tongue she so urged him, that he once more made himself brave to do the bloody business.

So, taking the knife in his hand, he softly crept in the dark to the room where Duncan lay; but as he went, he thought he saw another knife in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood. And when he tried to take it, it was nothing but air, a dream rising from his own hot and troubled brain and the business he had in hand.

The Murder

Putting away this fear, he entered the king's room, and killed him with one stroke of his knife. Just as he had done the murder, one of the servants, who slept in the room, laughed in his sleep, and the other cried, "Murder!" which woke them both. But they said a short prayer; one of them said, "God bless us!" and the other answered, "Amen"; and they turned to sleep again. Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say "Amen" when the fellow said "God bless us!" but, though he had most

need of a blessing, the word stuck in his throat, and he could not say it.

Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, "Sleep no more: Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep, that is the food of life." Still it cried, "Sleep no more," to all the house. "Glamis has murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

With such horrible ideas in his mind, Macbeth returned to his listening wife, who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and left the deed undone. He came in so disordered a state, that she blamed him for want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them. She herself took his knife, so as to stain the cheeks of the servants with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be hidden. Macbeth and his lady made great show of grief, and the proofs against the servants were strong. Yet all thought Macbeth had done the deed, since his reasons for doing it were so much stronger than such poor silly servants could be supposed to have; and Duncan's two sons escaped, Malcolm, the eldest, to the English court; and the youngest, Donalbain, to Ireland.

The king's sons, who should have succeeded him, having thus left the throne empty, Macbeth was crowned king, and thus the prophecy of the witches was fulfilled.

Banquo's Ghost

Though placed so high, Macbeth and his queen could not forget the other prophecy, that, though Macbeth should be king, yet not his children, but the children of Banquo, should be kings after him. The thought of this, and that they had stained their hands with blood, and done such great crimes, only to place the children of Banquo upon the throne, so troubled

them, that they decided to put to death both Banquo and his son.

For this purpose they made a great supper, to which they invited all the chief lords; and, among the rest, with marks of particular respect, Banquo and his son Fleance were invited. Banquo, coming to the palace at night, was set upon and killed by murderers put there by Macbeth; but in the fight Fleance escaped.

At supper the queen, whose manners were in the highest degree friendly and royal, played the hostess with a graceful ness and attention which pleased everyone present. And Macbeth spoke freely with his lords and nobles, saying, that all that was honourable in the country was under his roof, all but his good friend Banquo. Just at these words the ghost of Banquo, whom he had caused to be murdered, entered the room and placed himself on the chair where Macbeth was about to sit. Though Macbeth was a brave man, and one that could have faced the devil without trembling, at this terrible sight his cheeks turned white with fear, and he stood quite shaken with his eyes fixed upon the ghost. His queen and all the nobles, who only saw him looking (as they thought) upon an empty chair, took it for a moment of madness. But Macbeth continued to see the ghost, and did not listen to all they could say, but addressed the ghost with mad words, yet so full of meaning, that his queen, fearing the secret would be made known, in great haste sent away the guests, excusing the weakness of Macbeth as a sickness he was often troubled with.

Of such fears Macbeth's mind now was full. His queen and he had their sleep broken with terrible dreams, and the blood of Banquo troubled them not more than the escape of Fleance, whom now they looked upon as father to a line of kings, who should keep their children out of the throne. With these miserable thoughts they found no peace, and Macbeth decided once more to seek out the witches, and know from them the worst.

The Witches Again

He looked for them in a cave in a wild part of the country, where they, who knew of his coming, were making their evil charms, by which they called up the spirits of the dead to show to them the future. Their nasty mixture was made of parts of animals, birds, snakes and poisonous plants and the finger of a dead child. All these were set on to boil in a great pot which, as fast as it grew too hot, was cooled with a monkey's blood. To these they poured in the blood of a pig that had eaten her young. By these charms, they said, they made the spirits of the dead answer their questions.

They asked Macbeth whether he would have his doubts removed by them, or by their masters, the spirits. He, not at all frightened by the ceremonies he saw, boldly answered, "Where are they? Let me see them." And they called the spirits, which were three.

And the first appeared in the likeness of an armed head, and he called Macbeth by name, and told him to be careful of the lord of Fife; and Macbeth thanked him: for he hated Macduff, the lord of Fife.

And the second spirit appeared in the likeness of a bloody child, and he called Macbeth by name, and told him to have no fear, but laugh at the power of man, for none of woman born should have power to hurt him: and he advised him to be bloody, bold and brave. "Then live, Macduff!" cried the king. "Why need I fear you? But yet I will make safety doubly safe. You shall not live; that I may tell pale-hearted Fear it lies, and sleep in spite of thunder."

That spirit being sent away, a third appeared in the form of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. He called Macbeth by name, and comforted him, saying that he should never be beaten, until the wood of Birnam should come against him to Dunsinane Hill.

"Sweet prophecies! Good!" cried Macbeth. "Who can unfix

the forest, and move it from its roots? I see I shall live the usual period of man's life, and not be cut off by a bloody death. But my heart beats to know one thing. Tell me, if your art can tell so much, if Banquo's children shall ever rule in this kingdom?"

Here the pot sank into the ground, and a noise of music was heard, and eight shadows like kings, passed by Macbeth, and Banquo last, bearing a glass which showed the figures of many more, and Banquo, all bloody, smiled upon Macbeth, and pointed to them. So Macbeth knew that these were the children of Banquo, who should be kings after him in Scotland. The witches, with a sound of soft music, and with dancing, making a show of respect to Macbeth, disappeared. And from this time the thoughts of Macbeth were all bloody and terrible.

Murder Again

The first thing he heard when he got out of the witches' cave, was that Macduff, lord of Fife, had escaped to England, to join the army which was forming against him under Malcolm, the eldest son of the late king, with the hope of setting Malcolm, the right heir, upon the throne. Macbeth, stung with anger, set upon the castle of Macduff, and put to the sword his wife and children, and all who were of the blood of Macduff.

These and such-like deeds turned the minds of all his chief nobles against him. Those that could went to join Malcolm and Macduff, who were now approaching with a powerful army which they had raised in England. The rest secretly wished success to their arms, though for fear of Macbeth they could take no open part.

Everybody hated him, nobody loved or honoured him, but all thought him a murderer. Macbeth began to wish that he were like Duncan, whom he had murdered, who slept peacefully in his grave, against whom wickedness had done its worst. Neither steel nor poison, hatred at home nor enemies abroad, could hurt him any longer.

Birnam Wood

Meanwhile the queen, who had been the only party to his wickedness, on whose breast he could sometimes seek a short rest from those terrible dreams which troubled them both nightly, died, it is supposed by her own hand, unable to bear her own guilt and public hate. Macbeth was left alone, without a soul to love or care for him, or a friend to whom he could trust his wicked purposes.

He grew careless of life, and wished for death; but the near approach of Malcolm's army brought back what remained of his old courage, and he resolved to die (as he expressed it) "with armour on his back". Besides this, the hollow promises of the witches had filled him with a false confidence, and he remembered the sayings of the spirits, that none of woman born was to hurt him, and that he was never to be beaten till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane, which he thought could never be. So he shut himself up in his strong castle, and waited for the approach of Malcolm. Then one day there came a messenger to him, pale and shaking with fear, almost unable to report that which he had seen. For he said, that as he stood upon his watch on the hill, he looked towards Birnam, and to his thinking the wood began to move! "Liar and slave!" cried Macbeth. "If you speak falsely, you will hang alive upon the next tree until hunger ends you. If your story be true, I care not if you do as much by me." For Macbeth now began to grow weak in purpose, and to doubt the speeches of the spirits. He was not to fear, till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane: and now a wood did move!

"However," he said, "if this which he states be true, let us arm and go out. There is no flying from here, nor staying here; I begin to be weary of the sun, and wish my life at an end." With these hopeless words he marched out to his enemies, who had now come up to the castle.

Macduff

The strange appearance which had given the messenger an idea of a wood moving is easily explained. When the attacking army marched through the wood of Birnam, Malcolm, like a skilful general, commanded his soldiers to each cut down a branch and carry it before him, so as to hide the true numbers of his army. This marching of the soldiers with branches had at a distance the appearance which had frightened the messenger. Thus were the words of the spirit brought to pass, in a sense different from that in which Macbeth had understood them, and one great hold of his confidence was gone.

And now a severe fight took place, in which Macbeth, though poorly helped by those who called themselves his friends, yet fought with the extreme of anger and courage, cutting to pieces all who were opposed to him, until he came to where Macduff was fighting. Seeing Macduff, and remembering that the spirit had warned him not to cross Macduff above all men, he would have turned. But Macduff, who had been seeking him through the whole fight, prevented him, and a fierce fight followed, Macduff giving him many bitter words for the murder of his wife and children. Macbeth, whose soul was stained with blood of that family already, would still have refused the fight; but Macduff still urged him to it, calling him an evil murderer.

Then Macbeth remembered the words of the spirit, how none of woman born should hurt him; and smiling confidently he said to Macduff, "You waste your labour, Macduff. As easily you may hurt the air with your sword, as hurt me. I bear a charmed life, which must not be taken by one of woman born."

The End

"Hope not in your charm," said Macduff, "and let that lying spirit whom you have served tell you that Macduff was never born of woman, never as the ordinary manner of men is to be

born, but was before the time taken from his mother."

"Curses on the tongue which tells me so," said the trembling Macbeth, who felt his last hold of hope give way; "and let never man in future believe the lies of witches and spirits, who deceive us in words which have double senses, and while they keep their promise in the letter, disappoint our hopes with a different meaning. I will not fight with you."

"Then live!" said Macduff. "We will have a show of you, as men show monsters, and a painted board, on which shall be written 'Here men may see the cruel Macbeth!'"

"Never," said Macbeth, whose courage returned with despair. "I will not live to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet, and to be angered by the curses of the crowd. Though Birnam Wood has come to Dunsinane, and you opposed to me who was never born of woman, yet will I try the last."

With these mad words he threw himself upon Macduff, who, after a severe struggle, in the end beat him. He cut off his head and made a present of it to the young and lawful king, Malcolm, who took upon him the government which he had so long been without, and set himself upon the throne of Duncan the Gentle among the joyful cries of the nobles and the people.

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

The People in the Story

Orsino, duke of Illyria
Sebastian, a young man of Messaline
Antonio, a sea-captain and friend of Sebastian
Another sea-captain
Servants
A priest

Viola, twin sister of Sebastian who dresses herself as the page, *Cesario*
Olivia

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

The Duke's Page

Sebastian and his sister Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline, were twins, and from their birth were so much like each other, that, but for the difference in their dress, they could not be known apart. They were both born in one hour, and in one hour they were both in danger of death, for they were shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria as they were making a sea-voyage together. The ship, on which they were on board, split on a rock in a great storm, and a very small number of the ship's company escaped with their lives. The captain of the ship, with a few of the sailors that were saved, got to land in a small boat, and with them they brought Viola safe on shore. But she, poor lady, instead of being grateful for her own safety, began to weep for her brother's loss. The captain comforted her by telling her that he had seen her brother, when the ship split, fasten himself to a strong pole, on which, as long as he could see anything of him for the distance, he saw him carried up above the waves. Viola was much comforted by the hope this account gave her, and now considered how she was to live in a strange country so far from home; and she asked the captain if he knew anything of Illyria. "Yes, very well, madam," replied the captain, "for I was born not three hours' travel from this place."

"Who governs here?" said Viola. The captain told her that Illyria was governed by Orsino, a duke noble in nature as well as state. Viola said she had heard her father speak of Orsino, and that he was unmarried then.

"And he is so now," said the captain; "or was so very lately.

For only a month ago, I went from here, and then it was the general talk that Orsino sought the love of fair Olivia, a virtuous maid, the daughter of a nobleman who died twelve months ago, leaving Olivia to the care of her brother, who shortly after died also. And for the love of this dear brother, they say, she has hidden herself from the sight and company of men."

Viola, who was herself in such sorrow for her brother's loss, wished she could live with this lady, who so tenderly grieved for her brother. She asked the captain if he could take her to Olivia, saying she would willingly serve this lady. But he replied that this would be a hard thing to do, because the lady Olivia would let no person into her house since her brother's death, not even the duke himself. Then Viola formed another plan in her mind, which was, in a man's dress to serve the duke Orsino as a page. It was a strange idea in a young lady to put on men's clothes, and pass for a boy; but her lonely state and youth and beauty must be taken as good reasons.

Now she had noticed that the captain showed a friendly concern for her, so she trusted him with her plan, and he willingly promised to help her. Viola gave him money, and told him to get her clothes of the same colour and in the same shape as her brother Sebastian used to wear. And when she was dressed in her manly garments, she looked so exactly like her brother that some strange mistakes happened; for, as will afterwards appear, Sebastian was also saved.

Viola's good friend, the captain, when he had turned this pretty lady into a gentleman, having some power at court, got her presented to Orsino under the name of Cesario. The duke was wonderfully pleased with the appearance and speech of this handsome youth, and made Cesario one of his pages, as Viola wished, and she so well fulfilled the duties of her new post, and showed such obedience and faithful love for her lord, that she soon became his most favoured attendant. To Cesario Orsino told the whole history of his love for the lady Olivia; how she, refusing to consider his long services, and disliking his person,

would not let him enter her presence. And for the love of this lady who had so unkindly treated him, the noble Orsino, leaving the sports of the field, and all manly exercises in which he used to delight, passed his hours in dishonourable idleness, listening to soft music, gentle airs, and passionate love-songs; and neglecting the company of the wise and learned lords with whom he used to spend his time, he was now all day long talking with young Cesario.

It is a dangerous thing for young maidens to be the friends of good-looking young dukes; which Viola too soon found to her sorrow. In spite of all that Orsino told her he suffered for Olivia, she presently saw she suffered for the love of him; and much it moved her wonder, that Olivia could be so careless of this lord and master, whom she thought no one could look at without the deepest admiration. So she said gently to Orsino, that it was a pity he should desire a lady who was so blind to his true worth, adding, "If a lady were to love you, my lord, as you love Olivia (and perhaps there may be one who does), if you could not love her in return, would you not tell her that you could not love, and must she not be content with this answer?"

But Orsino would not listen to this reasoning, for he said that it was impossible for any woman to love as he did. He said that no woman's heart was big enough to hold so much love, and therefore it was unfair to compare the love of any lady for him to his love for Olivia. Now though Viola had the greatest respect for the duke's opinions, she could not help thinking this was not quite true, for she thought her heart had quite as much love in it as Orsino's had; and she said, "Ah, but I know, my lord."

"What do you know, Cesario?" said Orsino.

"Too well I know," replied Viola, "what love women may owe to men. They are as true of heart as we are. My father had a daughter who loved a man, as I perhaps, if I were a woman, should love your lordship."

"And what is her history?" said Orsino.

"An empty page, my lord," replied Viola. "She never told her love, but let her secret, like a worm in an unopened flower, feed

on her rosy cheek. She grew sick in thought, and with a green and yellow sorrow, she sat like Patience in a picture, smiling at Grief."

Olivia's Answer

While they were talking, a gentleman entered whom the duke had sent to Olivia, and he said, "So please you, my lord, I might not come into the presence of the lady, but by her maid she returned you this answer: Until seven years from now, the sky itself shall not see her face; but she will walk with her face covered, watering her room with her tears for the sad memory of her dead brother."

On hearing this, the duke exclaimed, "O she that has a heart like this, to pay this debt of love to a dead brother, how will she love, when the rich golden arrow has touched her heart!"

And then he said to Viola, "You know, Cesario, I have told you all the secrets of my heart; therefore, good youth, go to Olivia's house. Make them let you in; stand at her doors, and tell her, there your fixed foot shall grow till you speak to her."

"And if I do speak to her, my lord, what then?" said Viola.

"Oh, then," replied Orsino, "unfold to her the passion of my love. Make a long history to her of my dear faith. It will be proper for you to act my grief, for she will attend more to you than to one of more serious looks."

Away then went Viola; but not willingly did she go to this courtship, for she was to ask a lady to become the wife of him she wished to marry. But having promised, she performed it faithfully; and Olivia soon heard that a youth was at her door asking to come into her presence.

"I told him," said the servant, "that you were sick: he said he knew you were, and therefore he came to speak with you. I told him that you were asleep; he seemed to know that too, and said that therefore he must speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? For he seems strengthened against all refusing, and will speak with you, whether you will or no."

Olivia, curious to see who this urgent messenger might be, said he might come in, and covering her face, she said she would once more hear Orsino's messages.

Viola, entering, put on her most manly air, and using the fine language of great men's pages, she said to the lady, "Most shining, splendid, and unequalled beauty, I pray you tell me if you are the lady of the house; for I should be sorry to throw away my speech upon another; for it is very well written, and I have taken great pains to learn it."

"Where do you come from, sir?" said Olivia.

"I can say little more than I have studied," replied Viola; "and that question is out of my part."

"Are you an actor?" said Olivia.

"No," replied Viola; "and yet I am not that which I play"; meaning that she, being a woman, pretended to be a man. And again she asked Olivia if she were the lady of the house. Olivia said she was; and then Viola, having more desire to see her face than haste to deliver her master's message, said, "Good lady, let me see your face."

Olivia was not unwilling to do so; for this proud beauty, whom the duke Orsino had loved so long in vain, at first sight fell in love with the page (as she thought him), the young Cesario.

Olivia in Love

When Viola asked to see her face, Olivia said, "Have you any commands from your lord and master to do business with my face?" And then, forgetting her decision to cover her face for seven long years, she uncovered it, saying, "But I will draw the curtain and show the picture. Is it not well done?"

Viola replied, "It is beauty truly mixed; the red and white upon your cheeks is by Nature's own hand laid on. You are the most cruel lady living, if you will lead these beauties to the grave, and leave the world no copy."

"O sir," replied Olivia, "I will not be so cruel. The world may have a list of them. As (i) two lips, just red enough; (ii) two grey

eyes, with lids to them; one neck; one chin; and so on. Were you sent here to praise me?"

Viola replied, "I see what you are: you are too proud, but you are fair. My lord and master loves you. O such a love could not be overpaid, though you were crowned the queen of beauty: for Orsino loves you with worship and with tears, with groans that thunder love, and sighs of fire."

"Your lord," said Olivia, "knows well my mind. I cannot love him; yet I doubt not he is virtuous; I know him to be noble and of high birth, of fresh and spotless youth. All men say that he is learned, polite, and brave; yet I cannot love him; he might have taken his answer long ago."

"If I did love you as my master does," said Viola, "I would make me a wooden hut at your gates, and call upon your name. I would write poems on Olivia, and sing them in the dead of night; your name should sound among the hills, and I would make Echo, the talkative spirit of the air, cry out *Olivia*. Oh, you should not rest between earth and air, but you should pity me."

"You might do much," said Olivia: "what is your birth?"

Viola replied, "Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman."

Olivia now unwillingly sent Viola away, saying, "Go to your master, and tell him I cannot love him. Let him send no more, unless perhaps you come again to tell me how he takes it."

And Viola left, saying goodbye to the lady by the name of Fair Cruelty. When she was gone, Olivia repeated the words: *Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman.* And she said aloud, "I will be sworn he is; his tongue, his face, his limbs, action, and spirit, plainly show he is a gentleman." And then she wished Cesario was the duke; and seeing the fast hold he had taken on her heart, she blamed herself for her sudden love. But the gentle blame which people lay upon their own faults has no deep root. And presently the noble lady Olivia so far forgot the difference between her fortunes and those of this seeming page, as well as the maidenly shame which is the chief beauty of a lady's character, that she decided to try to gain the love of

young Cesario. She sent a servant after him with a diamond ring, saying that he had left it with her as a present from Orsino. She hoped, by thus making Cesario a present of the ring, she should give him some knowledge of her plan. And truly it did make Viola think; for knowing that Orsino had sent no ring by her, she began to remember that Olivia's looks and manner were full of admiration, and she presently guessed her master's mistress had fallen in love with her. "Alas," said she, "the poor lady might as well love a dream. My dress I see is wicked, for it has caused Olivia to breathe as fruitless sighs for me as I do for Orsino."

Viola returned to Orsino's palace, and told her lord of her ill success, repeating the command of Olivia, that the duke should trouble her no more. Yet still the duke went on hoping that the gentle Cesario would in time be able to persuade her to show some pity, and therefore he told him to go to her again the next day.

To Olivia Again

When Viola made her second visit to Olivia, she found no difficulty in entering. Servants soon discover when their ladies delight to talk with good-looking young messengers; and the moment Viola arrived, the gates were thrown wide open, and the duke's page was shown into Olivia's presence with great respect. And when Viola told Olivia that she was come once more to speak for her lord, this lady said, "I asked you never to speak of him again; but if you would speak of something else, I had rather hear you speak, than music from heaven."

This was pretty plain speaking, but Olivia soon explained herself still more plainly, and openly told her love. But in vain; Viola hurried from her presence, saying she would never more come to speak of Orsino's love; and all the reply she made to Olivia was that *she would never love any woman.*

No sooner had Viola left the lady than a claim was made upon her courage. A gentleman, who had been refused by Olivia, and

now had learned how that lady had favoured the duke's messenger, called on him to fight with him. What should poor Viola do, who, though she carried a manlike outside, had a true woman's heart, and feared to look on her own sword?

A Strange Meeting

When she saw him advancing towards her with his sword drawn, she began to think of saying that she was a woman. But she was saved at once from her terror, and the shame of such a discovery, by a stranger that was passing by, who came up to them, and as if he had been long known to her, and were her dearest friend, said to her opponent, "If this young gentleman had done you wrong, I will take the fault on me; and if you offend him, I will for his sake fight you."

Before Viola had time to thank him, the officers of justice coming up, seized the stranger in the duke's name to answer for a wrong he had done some years before: and he said to Viola, "This comes from searching for you." Then he asked her for a purse, saying, "Now my necessity makes me ask for my purse, and it grieves me much more for what I cannot do for you, than for what is happening to myself. You are surprised, but be of comfort."

His words did indeed surprise Viola, and she told him she knew him not, nor had ever received a purse from him; but for the kindness he had just shown her, she offered him a small sum of money, being nearly the whole she possessed. And now the stranger spoke hard things, saying she was ungrateful and unkind. He said, "This youth, whom you see here, I saved from the jaws of death, and for his sake alone I came to Illyria, and have fallen into this danger." But the officers cared little for the complaints of their prisoner, and they hurried him off, saying, "What is that to us?" And as he was carried away, he called Viola Sebastian and ungrateful as long as he was within hearing. When Viola heard herself called Sebastian, she thought she was mistaken for her brother; and she began to hope that it was her

brother whose life this man had saved. And so indeed it was.

The stranger, whose name was Antonio, was a sea-captain. He had taken Sebastian up into his ship, when, almost dead with weariness, he was floating on the pole to which he had fastened himself in the storm.

Antonio and Sebastian had landed together but a few hours before Antonio met Viola. He had given his purse to Sebastian, telling him to use it freely if he saw anything he wished to buy, and telling him he would wait at the lodging-house, while Sebastian went to see the town. But when Sebastian did not return at the time appointed, Antonio had gone out to look for him. So, Viola being dressed the same, and in face so much like her brother, Antonio drew his sword (as he thought) in defence of the youth he had saved; and when Sebastian (as he supposed) would not know him or give him his own purse, no wonder he told him he was ungrateful.

Viola, when Antonio was gone, fearing a second invitation to fight, ran home as fast as she could. She had not been long gone, when her enemy thought he saw her return; but it was her brother Sebastian who happened to arrive at this place and he said, "Now, sir, have I met with you again? There, for you;" and struck him a blow. Sebastian was no coward; he returned the blow, and drew his sword.

A lady now put a stop to this fight, for Olivia came out of the house, and she, too, mistaking Sebastian for Cesario, asked him to come into her house, saying she was very sorry that he had been attacked so rudely. Though Sebastian was as much surprised at the kindness of this lady as at the rudeness of his unknown enemy, yet he went very willingly into the house, and Olivia was delighted to find Cesario (as she thought him) become more friendly.

Olivia Married

Sebastian did not at all object to the kindness the lady showed him. He seemed to take it in very good part, yet he wondered how it came to pass, and he rather thought Olivia was not in her right senses. But seeing that she was mistress of a fine house, and that she ordered her affairs and seemed to govern her household wisely, and that in all but her sudden love for him she appeared in the full possession of her reason, he allowed her to be kind to him. And Olivia finding Cesario in this good humour, and fearing he might change his mind, proposed that, as she had a priest in the house, they should be married at once. Sebastian agreed; and when the marriage ceremony was over, he left his lady for a short time, intending to go and tell his friend Antonio the good fortune he had met with.

In the meantime Orsino came to visit Olivia; and at the moment he arrived before Olivia's house, the officers of justice brought their prisoner, Antonio, before the duke. Viola was with Orsino, her master; and when Antonio saw Viola, whom he still supposed to be Sebastian, he told the duke how he had saved this youth from the dangers of the sea. But now the lady Olivia coming out from her house, the duke could no longer attend to Antonio's story; and he said, "Here comes the countess: now heaven walks on earth! But as for thee, fellow, thy words are madness": and then he ordered Antonio to be taken aside. But Orsino's heavenly countess soon gave the duke cause to accuse Cesario as much of ingratitude as Antonio had done, for all the words he could hear Olivia speak were words of kindness to Cesario. And when he found his page had obtained this high place in Olivia's favour, he promised to give him every punishment; and as he was going to depart, he called Viola to follow him. Though it seemed in his great anger he was going to give Viola to instant death, yet her love made her strong and brave, and she said she would most joyfully suffer death to give her master ease. But Olivia would not so lose her husband, and she

cried, "Where goes my Cesario?" Viola replied, "After him I love more than my life." Olivia cried out loudly that Cesario was her husband, and sent for the priest, who declared that not two hours had passed since he had married the lady Olivia to this young man. In vain Viola said she was not married to Olivia; the statements of Olivia and the priest made Orsino believe that this page had robbed him of the treasure he prized above his life. But then (as it seemed to them) a miracle appeared! for another Cesario entered, and addressed Olivia as his wife. This new Cesario was Sebastian, the real husband of Olivia; and when their wonder had a little ceased at seeing two persons with the same face, the same voice, and the same dress, the brother and sister began to question each other. For Viola could hardly be persuaded that her brother was living, and Sebastian did not know why the sister whom he supposed drowned was dressed like a young man. But Viola presently said that she was indeed Viola, and his sister.

When all the mistakes were cleared up, they laughed at the lady Olivia for the pleasant mistake she had made in falling in love with a woman; and Olivia showed no dislike to her exchange, when she found she had married the brother instead of the sister.

The hopes of Orsino were for ever at an end by this marriage of Olivia, and with his hopes, all his fruitless love seemed to disappear, and all his thoughts were fixed on his favourite, young Cesario. He looked at Viola with great attention, and he remembered how very beautiful he had always thought Cesario was, and he thought she would look very lovely in a woman's garments. And then he remembered how often she had said *she loved him*, which at the time seemed only the dutiful words of a faithful page; but now he guessed that something more was meant. For many of her pretty sayings, which were like riddles to him, came now into his mind; and he resolved to make Viola his wife. And he said to her (he still could not help calling her *Cesario* and *boy*), "Boy, you have said to me a thousand times

that you should never love a woman like to me, and for the faithful service you have done for me, you shall now be your master's mistress, and Orsino's true duchess."

Olivia, seeing that Orsino was making over the love which she had refused to Viola, invited them to enter her house, and offered the help of the good priest, who had married her to Sebastian in the morning, to marry Orsino and Viola in the remaining part of the day. Thus the twin brother and sister were both wedded on the same day: the storm and shipwreck, which had separated them, being the means of bringing to pass their good fortunes, Viola was the wife of Orsino, the duke of Illyria, and Sebastian the husband of the rich and noble countess, the lady Olivia.

Questions

Factual questions on The Tempest

1 Where did Prospero and Miranda live on the island?
2 What was the name of Sycorax's son, and how did Prospero employ him?
3 Who was Ariel?
4 How did Prospero raise the tempest?
5 How old was Miranda when she and Prospero arrived on the island, and how old was she at the time of the story?
6 Who was Antonio, and how did he take Prospero's dukedom for himself?
7 What was the name of the lord who had put food, clothes and books in the boat in which Prospero and Miranda were sent out to sea?
8 Why did Miranda think at first that Ferdinand was a spirit?
9 Why did Prospero say that Ferdinand was a spy?
10 What work did Prospero command Ferdinand to do?
11 How did Miranda disobey her father's commands and why did Prospero smile at her disobedience?
12 What promise did Ferdinand make to Miranda?
13 How did Ariel put Prospero's brother and the king of Naples almost out of their senses?
14 When Prospero was given back his dukedom, what was the gift he gave the king of Naples in return?
15 What gift did Prospero give Ariel when he left the island?

General questions on The Tempest

1 Describe the part that magic plays in the story.
2 Tell the story as if you were Ferdinand.
3 Describe the character of Prospero.

Factual questions on A Midsummer Night's Dream

1 Why did Egeus ask for the death of his daughter Hermia?
2 What was Hermia's defence?
3 How long did Theseus give her to decide what to do?
4 Why would Hermia and Lysander be safe at the house of his aunt?
5 Why did Helena tell Demetrius about Hermia's plans?
6 Why had Oberon quarrelled with Titania?
7 Who was Puck and what did he enjoy doing?
8 What was the special magic of the flower called Love in Idleness, and how did Oberon tell Puck to use it?
9 What orders did Titania give her followers?
10 Why did Lysander and Demetrius fall in love with Helena?
11 Why did Helena and Hermia quarrel?
12 Who did Titania fall in love with, and why?
13 How did Oberon obtain the little boy as his page?
14 How did Lysander fall in love with Hermia again?
15 Why did Egeus agree that Hermia should marry Lysander?

General questions on A Midsummer Night's Dream

1 Tell the story as if you were Helena.
2 Describe the wood and the fairies who live in it. What orders are they given by Titania and the fellow with the ass's head?
3 Describe the part played by magic in the story.

Factual questions on Much Ado About Nothing

1 What were the differences in character between Beatrice and Hero?

2 Why did Benedick hate Beatrice at the beginning of the story?
3 What plan did the prince suggest to pass the time before the wedding of Hero and Claudio?
4 Why did the prince talk to Leonato about Beatrice's love for Benedick, and what did Benedick think when he heard it?
5 Why did Ursula tell Hero that Beatrice must never know of Benedick's love for her?
6 Who decided to try to prevent the wedding of Hero and Claudio?
7 Why did Margaret talk to Borachio from Hero's window on the night before the wedding?
8 What did Hero do at her wedding when the prince said that he had seen her talking with a man from her window on the night before?
9 What advice did the priest give Leonato after the wedding ceremony had stopped?
10 What did Beatrice ask Benedick to do for her?
11 How did the prince discover Don John's plan?
12 What did Claudio promise Leonato to do as punishment for believing the false charge against Hero?
13 Who was Claudio's bride?
14 How did Beatrice and Benedick discover the trick that had been played on them?
15 Who was made unhappy by the joy and feastings in Messina, and why?

General questions on Much Ado About Nothing

1 Tell the story as if you were Hero.
2 The story says that Beatrice and Benedick "had become lovers in truth by the power of a false jest." Explain how this happened.
3 Describe the part played in the story by the prince.

Factual questions on As You Like It

1 Why did the duke lose his dukedom and where did he go?
2 Why did duke Frederick keep Rosalind in his court after he had driven out her father?
3 Why did duke Frederick want to stop Orlando from wrestling, and what gave Orlando the strength to win?
4 What did Rosalind give Orlando after the wrestling match, and how did Celia know that Rosalind had fallen in love with him?
5 Why did Rosalind and Celia leave the court of duke Frederick?
6 How did they change their appearance and their names?
7 What warning did Adam give Orlando, and how much money did he give him?
8 How did Orlando meet Rosalind's father?
9 How did Ganymede know that Orlando was in love with Rosalind, and what cure did he suggest?
10 How had Oliver treated Orlando earlier, and what made him change the way he behaved to his brother?
11 How did Oliver meet Ganymede and Aliena?
12 Why did Ganymede faint, and why did this surprise Oliver?
13 What did Ganymede tell Orlando he would bring to pass by magic?
14 What celebration was happening in the forest when the duke was told that his dukedom was given back to him?
15 What was duke Frederick's first plan for his brother, and what made him change his mind?

General questions on As You Like It

1 Describe the character of Orlando.
2 Tell the story as if you were Celia.
3 What sort of place is the forest of Arden and what effect does it have on people who enter it with evil intentions?

Factual questions on The Merchant of Venice

1 Why did Shylock hate Antonio?
2 How did Antonio offer to help Bassanio?
3 Why did Antonio ask Shylock to lend him three thousand pounds?
4 What was the bond which Antonio agreed to sign in order to borrow the money from Shylock?
5 Why was Antonio happy to sign the bond?
6 What promise did Bassanio make when Portia gave him the ring?
7 Who was Nerissa and whom did she marry?
8 Why did Portia dress as a lawyer, and what name did she take?
9 Why did Shylock at first refuse to take the money which Bassanio offered?
10 Why could Shylock not cut the pound of flesh from Antonio?
11 What was to happen to Shylock's wealth?
12 What did Bassanio give Balthasar for saving the life of Antonio, and what did Gratiano give to Balthasar's clerk?
13 Why were Portia and Nerissa "angry" with their husbands?
14 How did Bassanio and Gratiano discover who Balthasar and his clerk really were?
15 What happened in the end to Antonio's ships?

General questions on The Merchant of Venice

1 Tell the story as if you were Bassanio.
2 Describe the character of Antonio.
3 Portia asks Shylock for mercy but he demands justice. How is this turned against him?

Factual questions on Macbeth

1 Why was Macbeth an important person at the court of Duncan?

2 What three prophecies did the witches make for Macbeth, and what prophecies did they make for Banquo?
3 What made Macbeth think that their prophecies might be fulfilled?
4 How did Duncan behave to Lady Macbeth when he went to stay at Macbeth's castle, and what did she plan to do to him there?
5 Why did Macbeth think at first that it would be wrong to kill Duncan, and what changed his mind?
6 When did Macbeth find that he could not say the word "Amen", and why, according to the voice he thought he heard, would he sleep no more?
7 What were the names of Duncan's sons and where did they go after the murder of their father?
8 Why did Macbeth and his wife decide to kill Banquo and his son?
9 Why did it seem to the guests at the great supper that Macbeth was ill or mad?
10 What three prophecies did the witches make for Macbeth when he went to ask them the future?
11 Why did Macbeth have Macduff's wife and children killed?
12 How did Macbeth's queen die and what effect did her death have on Macbeth?
13 Why did it seem that Birnam Wood was moving?
14 Why did Macbeth think that he could not be hurt or killed, and what made him change his mind?
15 Who became king of Scotland after the death of Macbeth?

General questions on Macbeth

1 Tell the story as if you were Macduff.
2 Describe the witches and the way they call up the future.
3 Lady Macbeth doubts her husband's firmness of purpose. When does he act bravely, and what makes him afraid?

Factual questions on Twelfth Night

1 How did Viola arrive in Illyria, and why did she feel happy when she arrived there?
2 Who was Cesario?
3 What did Viola think when Orsino told her that no woman could love as he did?
4 Why was it difficult for anyone to speak to Olivia or see her face?
5 What did Orsino tell Cesario to do at Olivia's house?
6 How did Olivia reply to Orsino's love?
7 Why did Olivia send a servant after Cesario with a ring?
8 Why did Antonio ask Cesario for a purse and offer to fight on his behalf?
9 What made Viola think that her brother might still be alive?
10 Why did Olivia invite Sebastian into her house, and why was it important that she had a priest there?
11 Why was Orsino angry with Cesario?
12 Why were "the two Cesarios" surprised to see each other?
13 How did Orsino's feelings change when he realised that Cesario was a woman?
14 How did Olivia help Orsino and Viola?
15 What promise did Cesario make to Olivia on the second visit and how was the promise kept?

General questions on Twelfth Night

1 Describe the character of Viola.
2 Describe how both Orsino and Olivia make mistakes about the people they marry at the end of the play.
3 Tell the story as if you were Olivia.

Glossary

arrow a thin stick with a point at one end and feathers at the other (here it refers to the arrow of Cupid, the boy used in art to represent love)
ass an animal like a horse but smaller and with longer ears
barber a person who cuts men's hair and sometimes shaves their faces
bold brave, confident
bond an official paper promising to pay a sum of money to the person who holds it
bride a woman about to be married
cave a natural hollow place, either underground or in the side of a hill
dairy a place on a farm where milk is kept and butter and cheese are made
deed an action
disdain the feeling that someone is not important enough to deserve one's attention
duke a nobleman of the highest rank
feast a splendid meal, especially a public one
glove a garment which covers the hand
handsome good looking (especially of men)
harbour a part of a coast which is sheltered so that ships are safe in it
hedgehog a small animal which has sharp pointed parts on its back
heir the person who will receive the property of another person when that person dies
idleness the waste of time doing nothing
interest a charge made for borrowing money
jest a joke; **jester** a man kept by a ruler, in former times, to tell him jokes
Jew a member of a people, whose religion is Judaism
maid/maiden (old use) a girl who is not married; **maid** = a female servant
merchant a person who buys and sells goods
mercy willingness to forgive; **merciful** = showing mercy
miracle an action that is impossible according to the laws of nature

mistress a woman who is in control
monster a strange creature that is large and frightening
overhear to hear what others are saying, usually without their knowledge
page a boy in service to a person of high rank
prophecy a statement telling something that will happen in the future; **prophesy** = to make a prophecy
purse a small bag used for carrying coins
riddle a difficult question to which one must guess the answer
sake: for the sake of in order to help or bring advantage
scratch to rub with something pointed or rough
shepherd a person who takes care of sheep in the open country
shy nervous in the company of others
son-in-law the husband of one's daughter
spit to throw out from the mouth with force
swallow a small bird which comes to northern countries in summer
tame to train to be gentle
task a piece of work, often hard or unpleasant
tempest a violent storm
throne the rank of a king or queen
twins two children born of the same mother at the same time
Venetian a person from Venice
virtuous having a good, worthy character
weary very tired; **weariness** = the state of being weary
weep to cry tears
wit a person who has the ability to say clever and amusing things; **witty** = showing a quick clever mind and an amusing way of expressing thoughts
witch a woman with magic powers, especially one who can make bad things happen to people
wrestle to fight by trying to hold or throw one's opponent