

Twelfth Night abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 5.1

Counsel

Situation: Having declared that she “hath abjured the sight and company of men” for seven years, causes Olivia’s Fool (Fools being the wisest in Shakespeare plays) to call her a fool for doing so.

FOOL: Better a witty Fool than a foolish wit. God bless thee, lady!

OLIVIA: Take the Fool away.

FOOL: Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the Lady.

OLIVIA: I’ll no more of you. Besides, you grow dishonest.

Fool to Olivia

Two faults, lady, which counsel will amend.
Bid the dishonest man mend; if he mend
He is no longer dishonest. And give
The dry Fool a drink that he be not dry.
Beauty’s flower fades the more it doth live.
All things mended are but patched, which is why
Sin patched is virtue. She bid take away
The fool. I say, take her away. I say
If not, what remedy? Since my mind is
Idle, I’ll make your proof. Why mourn’st kin?
You say for your brother’s death, thinking his
Soul’s in hell? Ah, you say his soul is in
Heaven! Ah, the more fool, my lady, when
You mourn for a soul, being in heaven.

OLIVIA: What think you of this Fool, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO: I marvel your Ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal. I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone.

OLIVIA: O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio. There is no slander in an allowed Fool, though he do nothing but rail.

FOOL: Thou speak’st well of Fools!