

Act2 المحاضرة الخامسة

Sc1

Summery

Somewhere near the coast of Illyria, we meet two men who have not yet appeared in the play. One of them is called Antonio, and he has been hosting the other in his home. This other man is none other than Sebastian, the twin brother of Viola, who she believes has drowned. It seems that Antonio took Sebastian into his home when he washed up after the shipwreck and has been caring for him ever since. At first, Sebastian gave him a false name, but now that he plans to leave Antonio and go wandering, he decides to tell his benefactor his true identity and the tale of his sister, who he assumes drowned in their shipwreck. We learn here that Sebastian and Viola's father is long dead, and so Sebastian assumes that he has no family left. He is still devastated by the loss of his sister and is preparing to go wandering through the world, with little care as to what the future will hold.

Antonio urges Sebastian to let him come with him on his journey. It is clear that Antonio has become very fond of Sebastian and does not want to lose him. But Sebastian is afraid that his travels will be dangerous, and he urges Antonio to let him go alone. After Sebastian leaves to go to Orsino's court, Antonio ponders the situation: he wants to follow his friend and help him, but he has many enemies in Orsino's court and is afraid to go there. He cares about Sebastian so much, however, that he decides to face the danger and follow him to Orsino's court anyway.

Act II, scene ii

Summery

Meanwhile, outside Olivia's house, Malvolio has caught up with Viola (still disguised as Cesario). Malvolio gives Cesario the ring that Olivia has sent with him, rebuking him for having left it with Olivia. Viola realizes Olivia's deception and plays along with it, pretending that she did indeed give the ring to Olivia. She tells Malvolio that Olivia took the ring and insists that Olivia must keep it.

Malvolio throws the ring onto the ground and exits. Alone, the confused Viola picks up the ring and wonders why Olivia has given it to her. She wonders if it means that Olivia has fallen in love with Cesario. If such is the case, Viola reflects, then events have indeed taken an ironic turn, because Olivia has unknowingly fallen in love with another woman. "Poor lady, she were better love a dream," Viola says to herself. Apparently loved by Olivia and in love with Orsino, who loves Olivia, Viola expresses her hope that time will untangle these problems since she certainly cannot figure out how to solve them.

Analysis: Act II, scenes i–ii

It comes as no surprise to any reader of Shakespeare's comedies that Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, has turned up alive. His reappearance and resemblance to his sister (who, as we know, is currently disguised as a man) sets the stage for later mix-ups and mistaken identities, common elements in Shakespeare's comic plays.

The relationship between Antonio and Sebastian, meanwhile, though it is a minor part of the play, offers fertile ground for critical attention. Antonio and Sebastian are clearly close, dear friends. Yet the language Antonio uses, along with his behavior, suggests something even stronger. Antonio appears willing to sacrifice everything for his friend, giving up his time, money, and safety to follow and protect him. He begs Sebastian to let him be his servant and travel into danger with him, and Antonio decides to go even when he learns that Sebastian is headed for a dangerous place filled with Antonio's enemies. Moreover, Antonio's language carries a strong emotional charge: "If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant". His implication that separation from Sebastian would be equivalent to a violent death demonstrates how deeply important to him his relationship with Sebastian is.



