



Unique Literary Series

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**TWELFTH
NIGHT**

(A Critical Evaluation)

**Low-priced
Student Friendly
Edition**

Dr. S. Sen

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction to Shakespeare | 1 |
| 1. Shakespeare's Life (1564-1616) | 1 |
| 2. Chronological Chart | 1 |
| 3. The Age of Shakespeare | 2 |
| 4. The Elizabethan Theatre | 2 |
| 5. The Eternal Shakespeare | 3 |
| 6. Four Periods of Shakespeare's Career | 15 |
| 2. The Shakespearean Comedy | 16 |
| 1. Concept of Comedy and its Various Forms | 16 |
| 2. The Comic Spirit | 17 |
| 3. Comic Spirit or Laughter as Interpreted by Meredith | 19 |
| 4. Pre-Shakespearean Comedy | 19 |
| 5. The Experimental Period of Shakespeare's Comedy | 22 |
| 6. Mature Comedies | 23 |
| 7. Salient Features of Shakespearean Comedy | 25 |
| 8. Evolution of Shakespeare's Women | 36 |
| 3. Introduction to <i>Twelfth Night</i> | 41 |
| 1. Date of the Composition of the Play | 41 |
| 2. The Title of the Play | 41 |
| 3. Main Sources of the Play | 41 |
| 4. Time of Action of the Play | 41 |
| 5. Scene of Action of the Play | 43 |
| 6. The Text of the Play | 43 |
| 7. Who is Who in the Play | 43 |
| 4. Brief Outline of the Play | 44 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 5. Detailed Scene-wise Summary of The Play with Critical Comments | 46 |
| Act I | 46 |
| Act II | 51 |
| Act III | 56 |
| Act IV | 62 |
| Act V | 64 |
| 6. Text, Annotations and Paraphrase of <i>Twelfth Night</i> | 69 |
| Act I | |
| Scene I | 70 |
| Scene II | 72 |
| Scene III | 78 |
| Scene IV | 86 |
| Scene V | 88 |
| Act II | |
| Scene I | 108 |
| Scene II | 110 |
| Scene III | 112 |
| Scene IV | 124 |
| Scene V | 132 |
| Act III | |
| Scene I | 144 |
| Scene II | 154 |
| Scene III | 160 |
| Scene IV | 164 |
| Act IV | |
| Scene I | 188 |
| Scene II | 192 |
| Scene III | 202 |
| Act V | |
| Scene I | 204 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 7. <i>Twelfth Night</i> : A Critical Evaluation | 230 |
| 8. The Characters of the Play | 240 |
| 1. Viola | 240 |
| 2. Olivia | 243 |
| 3. Maria | 247 |
| 4. Orsino | 249 |
| 5. Sebastian | 251 |
| 6. Malvolio | 252 |
| 7. The Clown | 253 |
| 8. Sir Toby Belch | 256 |
| 9. Sir Andrew Aguecheek | 257 |
| 10. Fabian | 259 |
| 11. Antonio | 261 |
| 9. Important Explanations with Critical Comments | 262 |
| Act I | 262 |
| Act II | 282 |
| Act III | 293 |
| Act IV | 306 |
| Act V | 312 |
| 10. Important Passages for Reference to the Context | 322 |
| 11. Selected University Questions with Answers | 360 |

**I. TWELFTH NIGHT :
A SHAKESPEAREAN ROMANTIC COMEDY**

Q. 1. Discuss Shakespeare's concept of comedy with special reference to *Twelfth Night*. 360

Or

What are the main features of Shakespearean comedy and how representative is *Twelfth Night* of the type?

Or

Twelfth Night has been called the best of Shakespeare's Romantic comedies. Do you agree? Give a reasonable answer.

- Q. 2. What is a comedy? To what type of comedy does *Twelfth Night* belong? 362
- Q. 3. Can *Twelfth Night* be classified as a romantic comedy? Justify. 364
- Q. 4. Hazlitt, in his essay on this play, distinguishes three kinds of comedy; namely, comedy of artificial life, comedy of sentiment, comedy of nature. To which of these would you assign *Twelfth Night*? 366
- Q. 5. *Twelfth Night* is a beautiful blending of 'romance and realism'. Discuss. 367
- Q. 6. Distinguish between Comedy and Farce in *Twelfth Night*. How far was Shakespeare successful in blending these two ingredients? 369
- Q. 7. *Twelfth Night* is suffused with the spirit of romantic melancholy. Discuss. 370

Or

"In *Twelfth Night* there is a silvery undertone of sadness, which makes it perhaps the loveliest of Shakespeare's high comedies." Discuss.

- Q. 8. What place would you give *Twelfth Night* in the list of Shakespeare's comedies? 372
- Q. 9. "Beneath every comedy lurk elements of tragedy". Trace the tragic element in *Twelfth Night*. 372

II. LOVE THEME IN TWELFTH NIGHT

- Q. 10. "Love regarded as an affair of the imagination rather than of the heart," is the fundamental theme running through *Twelfth Night*. Illustrate with reference to the important characters of the play. 376

Or

"Love, as we are reminded by the opening words of the play, is the abiding theme of *Twelfth Night*" Justify this dictum with reference to *Twelfth Night*.

- Q. 11. Describe the three kinds of lovers that beset Olivia. Why does Sir Andrew never come into audience with her? 379
- Q. 12. The types of love in *Twelfth Night* rise from 'Love at First Sight'. Discuss. 380
- Q. 13. Shakespeare presents love in rich variety. By close reference to the play, show the different kinds of love presented in *Twelfth Night*. 382

Or

Consider *Twelfth Night* as a striking dissertation on the subject of love, representing the main element of love and many distinct types of lovers.

Or

In *Twelfth Night* there are as many variations on the theme of love as there are characters.

Or

Twelfth Night has been described as "primarily a study of love on various planes." Does the play lose or gain so regarded?

III. PLOT CONSTRUCTION IN TWELFTH NIGHT

- Q. 14. What do you consider to be the main-plot and the under-plot of *Twelfth Night*? Sketch each plot briefly and show how the two are connected. 384
- Q. 15. Discuss the plot construction of *Twelfth Night* keeping in view (i) Exposition, (ii) Development of the Action (iii) The Climax, (iv) Denouement or Resolution. 386
- Q. 16. Discuss the inconsistencies and improbabilities in the plot of *Twelfth Night*. 390

Or

Examine the pronouncement that like Shakespeare's comedies, *Twelfth Night* is desultory in structure.

- Q. 17. Discuss the comic under-plot of *Twelfth Night* and its inter-weaving with the main-plot. 397

IV. CHARACTERISATION IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Q. 18. Discuss Shakespeare's art of characterisation in *Twelfth Night*. 394

Q. 19. Discuss with reference to *Twelfth Night* the statement that 'Shakespeare's comedies have no heroes, only heroines'. 396

Or

Examine the statement 'without Viola *Twelfth Night* would have no beginning, middle or end'.

Q. 20. Viola has been described as Shakespeare's most attractive heroine. What attractive qualities do you find in her character? Illustrate by quotation and close references from the play. 397

Or

Discuss the statement, "The great and secret charm of *Twelfth Night* is the character of Viola".

Q. 21. Elaborate the dictum: "The character of Viola in its naturalness and transparent honesty seems designed to heighten and set off by deliberate contrast the insincerities which is the purpose of the Comic Muse to correct". 400

Q. 22. Discuss: "Olivia is merely a female edition of the Duke sharing his sentimentalism, impulsiveness, caprice, the pang of unrequited love, the craving for a change and ultimate victory in love." 402

Or

Critically evaluate the character of Olivia.

Q. 23. Compare and contrast the characters of Olivia and Viola. 405

Q. 24. What part is played by Maria in the drama? Sketch her character. 407

Q. 25. Discuss the various facets of Orsino's character. What is his role in *Twelfth Night*? 409

Q. 26. Compare and contrast the characters of Orsino and Sebastian. 412

Q. 27. What is the institution of the Fool? Discuss the important features of the Fool (Feste) in *Twelfth Night*. Is his role indispensable in the play? 414

- Q. 28. "Feste is the highest wisdom of the play and its lowest buffoonery". Discuss. 417

Or

"Feste declares that he does not wear motley in his brain." What evidence is there of this quality of his character?

- Q. 29. Justify the statement of Duffin that Sir Toby "is a very much lesser Falstaff—Falstaff robbed of his grandeur." 419

Or

"Sir Toby is really nothing more than an elderly school boy with a prodigious thirst and far too much spare time on his hands." How do you agree with this statement of J.B. Priestley regarding the character of Sir Toby?

Or

Examine critically the character sketch of Sir Toby Belch.

- Q. 30. Comment on the statement that Sir Toby is the arch plotter in *Twelfth Night*. 420
- Q. 31. Indicate some points of Sir Toby's character. What fitness was there in the match between him and Maria? Comment on Maria's intellectual qualities. 422
- Q. 32. "Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a choice specimen of stupidity and imbecility." Discuss this dictum keeping in view the character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek. 423

Or

Examine the character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek. What is his role in the sub-plot of the play?

- Q. 33. Compare and contrast the character, of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. 424
- Q. 34. Discuss the various aspects of the character of Malvolio and his role in *Twelfth Night*. 426
- Q. 35. What is Malvolio's opinion of Feste? Account for his spleen. How does Olivia retort upon Malvolio? 430

V. SONGS AND MUSIC IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- Q. 36. Narrate the role of songs and music in *Twelfth Night*. 431

VI. STYLE AND LANGUAGE OF *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- Q. 37. Illustrate from *Twelfth Night* how Shakespeare uses poetic language to communicate facts as well as to delight and impress the reader. 434
- Q. 38. "Instances of dramatic irony are scattered through the play". Give examples from various scenes of *Twelfth Night*. 437

VII. ILLUSION AND REALITY IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- Q. 39. Discuss the role of madness, wit, melancholy, music and setting in the context of theme of illusion and reality in *Twelfth Night*. 439

VIII. HUMOUR, WIT AND SATIRE IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- Q. 40. What do you mean by humour? How far can you treat *Twelfth Night* as a comedy of humour? 442
- Q. 41. By careful reference to specific scenes in the play, show how mistaken identity adds to the humour and excitements in *Twelfth Night*. 445
- Q. 42. Discuss the statesmen that "the charm of *Twelfth Night* lies primarily in the union of humour with romance, of diverting action with masterly characterisation". 448
- Q. 43. Illustrate from *Twelfth Night* the theory that the incongruous and the absurd are essential elements of humour. 450
- Q. 44. "*Twelfth Night* is largely occupied with the disclosure of unbalanced sentiment." Illustrate this dictum from the play. 453

Or

"*Twelfth Night* may be regarded as a satire against sentimentality". Elaborate this statement with reference to the play.

- Q. 45. Discuss the various direct as well as indirect references to the Puritans in *Twelfth Night*. From these references what is Shakespeare's opinion about Puritans of his time? 454
- Q. 46. What Puritan qualities of the time does Malvolio present? How is the Puritan Prohibition of bear-bating dealt through him? As a lover, what makes him absurd? 456

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

- Q. 47. Give a synopsis of the scene in which Malvolio is befooled by Maria and her companions. 457
- Q. 48. Narrate the duel-scene and point out its dramatic significance. What are the circumstances which lead to the duel-scene? 460
- Q. 49. In what way does the opening passage indicate the theme and the atmosphere of the play? Indicate your impression of the Duke, derived from his opening speech. In what sense does Shakespeare here and elsewhere use the word 'fancy'? 463
- Q. 50. What is the importance of the opening scene in *Twelfth Night*? 466
- Q. 51. Samuel Johnson criticised *Twelfth Night* because it lacked credibility and failed to present a true picture of life. Do you agree with Johnson's criticism? Offer reasons for your answer. 468
- Q. 52. *Twelfth Night* is a comedy built on the principle of contrast. Discuss this dictum giving various examples from the play. 469
- Q. 53. Why is the play called *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*? Discuss the title of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. 471
- Q. 54. 'The very basis of *Twelfth Night* is built on element of chance, fate and luck.' Discuss this statement giving instances from this play. 473

12. Critics' Views on *Twelfth Night* 475

Selected Bibliography 487