



HILLBARK
PLAYERS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

TWELFTH NIGHT AUDITIONS

Auditions for our production
of Twelfth Night will take place
on **Saturday 3rd October**

The Church Hall, St John the Divine,
Frankby Booking is essential



Further details from www.hillbarkplayers.co.uk
or find us on social media @hillbarkplayers

Audition Extracts

These extracts are intended to give us opportunities to see:

- relationships and chemistry between actors;
- comic timing;
- ability to respond to other performers;
- connection with an audience;
- confidence with Shakespeare's language;
- physicality and use of space;
- responsiveness to direction.

You do not need to learn the pieces, and you will not be expected to perform every extract for every character (eg, there are lots of pieces that include Viola). You may choose your favourite to prepare, and we may ask you to perform other parts if we feel we need to see something else.

We may ask actors to swap roles, repeat sections with different direction, or read for characters other than those for which they originally intended to audition.

AUDITION PIECE 1

VIOLA and CAPTAIN

Act 1 Scene 2

Context: Viola has survived a shipwreck on the coast of Illyria. She does not know whether her twin brother Sebastian has survived. Having discovered where she is, she begins to work out how she can protect herself and make a new life.

CAPTAIN

And so is now, or was so very late;
For but a month ago I went from hence,
And then 'twas fresh in murmur—as, you know,
What great ones do the less will prattle of—
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

VIOLA

What's she?

CAPTAIN

A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count
That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
In the protection of his son, her brother,
Who shortly also died; for whose dear love,
They say, she hath abjured the company
And sight of men.

VIOLA

O, that I served that lady,
And might not be delivered to the world

Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,
What my estate is!

CAPTAIN

That were hard to compass,
Because she will admit no kind of suit,
No, not the Duke's.

VIOLA

There is a fair behaviour in thee, Captain;
And though that nature with a beauteous wall
Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee
I will believe thou hast a mind that suits
With this thy fair and outward character.
I prithee—and I'll pay thee bounteously—
Conceal me what I am, and be my aid
For such disguise as haply shall become
The form of my intent.
I'll serve this duke.

Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him.
It may be worth thy pains; for I can sing
And speak to him in many sorts of music
That will allow me very worth his service.
What else may hap, to time I will commit.
Only shape thou thy silence to my wit.

CAPTAIN

Be you his eunuch, and your mute I'll be.
When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

VIOLA

I thank thee. Lead me on.

What we are interested in

For Viola, this is a character who has suffered something extraordinary but almost immediately begins making practical decisions. We would like to see both the vulnerability beneath the situation and her intelligence, energy and resourcefulness.

AUDITION PIECE 2

SIR TOBY, MARIA and SIR ANDREW

Act 1 Scene 3

Context: Sir Toby is living in his niece Olivia's household. Maria has been sent to tell him that Olivia is unhappy with his drinking and behaviour. Sir Toby's friend Sir Andrew has come to woo Olivia – although it rapidly becomes clear that he may not be ideally equipped for the task.

Enter Sir Toby and Maria.

TOBY What a plague means my niece to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.

MARIA By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights. Your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours.

TOBY Why, let her except before excepted!

MARIA Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order.

TOBY Confine? I'll confine myself no finer than I am.

These clothes are good enough to drink in, and so be these boots too. An they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps!

MARIA That quaffing and drinking will undo you. I heard my lady talk of it yesterday, and of a foolish knight that you brought in one night here to be her wooer.

TOBY Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA Ay, he.

TOBY He's as tall a man as any 's in Illyria.

MARIA What's that to th' purpose?

TOBY Why, he has three thousand ducats a year!

MARIA Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats. He's a very fool and a prodigal.

TOBY Fie that you'll say so! He speaks three or four languages word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature.

MARIA He hath indeed, almost natural, for, besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreler, and, but that he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarreling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

TOBY By this hand, they are scoundrels and substractors that say so of him. Who are they?

MARIA They that add, moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

TOBY With drinking healths to my niece. I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria. He's a coward that will not drink to my niece
What, wench!
for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

Enter Sir Andrew.

ANDREW Sir Toby Belch! How now, Sir Toby Belch?

TOBY Sweet Sir Andrew!

ANDREW, *to Maria* Bless you, fair shrew.

MARIA And you too, sir.

TOBY Accost, Sir Andrew, accost!

ANDREW What's that?

TOBY My niece's chambermaid.

ANDREW Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

MARIA My name is Mary, sir.

ANDREW Good Mistress Mary Accost—

TOBY You mistake, knight. "Accost" is front her, board her, woo her, assail her.

ANDREW By my troth, I would not undertake her in this company. Is that the meaning of "accost"?

MARIA Fare you well, gentlemen.

ANDREW Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?

MARIA Sir, I have not you by th' hand.

ANDREW Marry, but you shall have, and here's my hand. *He offers his hand and she shakes it. She exits.*

TOBY Oh knight, thou lack'st a cup of canary. When did I see thee so put down?

ANDREW Never in your life, I think, unless you see canary put me down. Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has. But I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.

TOBY No question.

ANDREW An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home tomorrow, Sir Toby.

TOBY *Pourquoi*, my dear knight?

ANDREW What is "*pourquoi*"? Do, or not do? I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bearbaiting. I'll home tomorrow, Sir Toby. Your niece will not be seen, or if she be, it's four to one

she'll none of me. The Count himself here hard by
woos her.

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AUDITION PIECE 3

OLIVIA and VIOLA/CESARIO

Act 1 Scene 5

Context: Orsino has sent his new servant Cesario to woo Olivia for him. Olivia has repeatedly refused Orsino's approaches, but she becomes intrigued by this unusually persistent messenger.

OLIVIA

Give me my veil. Come, throw it o'er my face.

We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

VIOLA

The honourable lady of the house, which is she?

OLIVIA

Speak to me; I shall answer for her. Your will?

VIOLA

Most radiant, exquisite and unmatchable beauty—I pray you, tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw her. I would be loath to cast away my speech; for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to con it.

OLIVIA

Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA

I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest assurance if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA

Are you a comedian?

VIOLA

No, my profound heart; and yet, by the very fangs of malice, I swear I am not that I play.

Are you the lady of the house?

OLIVIA

If I do not usurp myself, I am.

VIOLA

Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp yourself; for what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve. But this is from my commission. I will on with my speech in your praise, and then show you the heart of my message.

OLIVIA

Come to what is important in't. I forgive you the praise.

VIOLA

Alas, I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

OLIVIA

It is the more like to be feigned. I pray you, keep it in.

I heard you were saucy at my gates, and allowed your approach rather to wonder at you than to hear you. If you be not mad, be gone. If you have reason, be brief. 'Tis not that time of moon with me to make one in so skipping a dialogue.

VIOLA

I am a messenger.

OLIVIA

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

VIOLA

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

OLIVIA

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

VIOLA

The rudeness that hath appeared in me have I learned from my entertainment.

What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead: to your ears, divinity; to any other's, profanation.

What we are interested in

The scene should change.

Olivia begins in control and expecting yet another tedious representative of Orsino. Viola is doing a job she does not particularly want to do. During the scene, both become fascinated by the other.

We want to see the moment when that happens.

AUDITION PIECE 4

ORSINO and VIOLA/CESARIO

Act 2 Scene 4

Context: Viola is now established in Orsino's household. Orsino trusts Cesario and talks intimately to him about love. Viola attempts to tell Orsino what she feels without revealing that she is really a woman or that she loves him.

ORSINO

Come hither, boy. If ever thou shalt love,
In the sweet pangs of it remember me;
For such as I am, all true lovers are,
Unstaid and skittish in all motions else
Save in the constant image of the creature
That is beloved.
How dost thou like this tune?

VIOLA

It gives a very echo to the seat
Where Love is throned.

ORSINO

Thou dost speak masterly.
My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye
Hath stayed upon some favour that it loves.
Hath it not, boy?

VIOLA

A little, by your favour.

ORSINO

What kind of woman is't?

VIOLA

Of your complexion.

ORSINO

She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?

VIOLA

About your years, my lord.

ORSINO

Too old, by heaven. Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.

VIOLA

I think it well, my lord.

ORSINO

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.
For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.

VIOLA

And so they are. Alas, that they are so:
To die, even when they to perfection grow.

What we are interested in

This is not simply a conversation about someone else.
There should be a strong relationship between Orsino and Cesario already. Viola is trying to say something very personal without saying it directly.
We are interested in what Orsino does – or does not – recognise.

AUDITION PIECE 5

FESTE and VIOLA

Act 3 Scene 1

Context: Viola meets Feste outside Olivia's house. They immediately recognise each other as people who enjoy playing with language.

VIOLA

Save thee, friend, and thy music. Dost thou live by thy tabor?

FESTE

No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA

Art thou a churchman?

FESTE

No such matter, sir. I do live by the church; for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

VIOLA

So thou mayst say the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him; or the church stands by thy tabor, if thy tabor stand by the church.

FESTE

You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence is but a kid glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!

VIOLA

Nay, that's certain. They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.

FESTE

I would therefore my sister had had no name, sir.

VIOLA

Why, man?

FESTE

Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.

VIOLA

Thy reason, man?

FESTE

Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words; and words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them.

VIOLA

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and carest for nothing.

FESTE

Not so, sir. I do care for something. But in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you.

If that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you invisible.

VIOLA

Art not thou the Lady Olivia's fool?

FESTE

No, indeed, sir; the Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, till she be married, and fools are like husbands as pilchards are to herrings – the husband's the bigger.

I am indeed not her fool, but her corrupter of words.

What we are interested in

Speed is not the same as wit.

We want actors to understand what they are saying and genuinely enjoy trying to outmanoeuvre one another.

For Feste particularly, we are interested in somebody who can talk **with** an audience rather than simply perform at them.

AUDITION PIECE 6

MARIA, SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, FABIAN and MALVOLIO

Act 2 Scene 5 – The Letter

Context: Maria has forged a letter in Olivia's handwriting designed to convince Malvolio that Olivia is secretly in love with him. Toby, Andrew and Fabian hide while Malvolio approaches.

MARIA

Get ye all three into the box-tree. Malvolio's coming down this walk. He has been yonder i' the sun practising behaviour to his own shadow this half hour. Observe him for the love of mockery!

The others hide. Enter MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO

'Tis but fortune; all is fortune.

Maria once told me she did affect me, and I have heard herself come thus near, that should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion.

Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than anyone else that follows her.

What should I think on't?

SIR TOBY

Here's an overweening rogue!

SIR ANDREW

'Slight, I could so beat the rogue!

SIR TOBY

Peace, I say.

MALVOLIO

To be Count Malvolio.

SIR TOBY

Ah, rogue!

SIR ANDREW

Pistol him, pistol him.

SIR TOBY

Peace, peace!

MALVOLIO

There is example for't. The Lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

SIR ANDREW

Fie on him, Jezebel!

FABIAN

O, peace! Now he's deeply in. Look how imagination blows him.

MALVOLIO

Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state—

SIR TOBY

O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye!

MALVOLIO

Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown, having come from a day-bed where I have left Olivia sleeping—

SIR TOBY

Fire and brimstone!

MALVOLIO

And then to have the humour of state; and after a demure travel of regard, telling them I know my place, as I would they should do theirs—to ask for my kinsman Toby.

SIR TOBY

Bolts and shackles!

What we are interested in

This is as much an audition piece for the watchers as it is for Malvolio.

Malvolio must genuinely believe in the fantasy he is creating.

The others need to listen, react and build the comedy without overwhelming the person at the centre of the scene.

We may improvise some of the hiding and positioning before reading the extract.

AUDITION PIECE 7

OLIVIA and MALVOLIO

Act 3 Scene 4

Context: The forged letter has instructed Malvolio to appear before Olivia smiling, wearing yellow stockings and behaving in a very particular way. Olivia knows nothing about the trick. She is increasingly convinced that something is seriously wrong with him.

OLIVIA

Where is Malvolio? He is sad and civil,
And suits well for a servant with my fortunes.
Where is Malvolio?

MARIA

He's coming, madam; but in very strange manner. He is sure possessed, madam.

OLIVIA

Why, what's the matter? Does he rave?

MARIA

No, madam, he does nothing but smile. Your ladyship were best to have some guard about you if he come; for sure the man is tainted in's wits.

Enter MALVOLIO

OLIVIA

How now, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

Sweet lady, ho, ho!

OLIVIA

Smil'st thou? I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

MALVOLIO

Sad, lady? I could be sad. This does make some obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering, but what of that?

If it please the eye of one, it is with me as the very true sonnet is: "Please one, and please all."

OLIVIA

Why, how dost thou, man? What is the matter with thee?

MALVOLIO

Not black in my mind, though yellow in my legs.

OLIVIA

Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

To bed? Ay, sweetheart, and I'll come to thee.

OLIVIA

God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so and kiss thy hand so oft?

MALVOLIO

At your request? Yes; nightingales answer daws.

OLIVIA

Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before me?

MALVOLIO

“Be not afraid of greatness.” ’Twas well writ.

OLIVIA

What meanest thou by that, Malvolio?

MALVOLIO

“Some are born great—”

OLIVIA

Ha?

MALVOLIO

“Some achieve greatness—”

OLIVIA

What say’st thou?

MALVOLIO

“And some have greatness thrust upon them.”

OLIVIA

Heaven restore thee!

What we are interested in

Malvolio believes the meeting is going brilliantly.

Olivia believes she is watching a trusted servant have some sort of breakdown.

The greater the gap between those two interpretations, the funnier the scene becomes.

AUDITION PIECE 8

SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO

Act 3 Scene 3

Context: Antonio rescued Sebastian from the shipwreck and has followed him to Illyria despite being in danger there.

SEBASTIAN

I would not by my will have troubled you;
But since you make your pleasure of your pains,
I will no further chide you.

ANTONIO

I could not stay behind you. My desire,
More sharp than filèd steel, did spur me forth;
And fearful of what might befall your travel,
Being skillless in these parts, which to a stranger,
Unguided and unfriended, often prove
Rough and unhospitable.
My willing love,
Set forth in your pursuit.

SEBASTIAN

My kind Antonio,
I can no other answer make but thanks,
And thanks, and ever thanks.
Too oft good turns
Are shuffled off with such uncurrent pay.
But were my worth as is my conscience firm,
You should find better dealing.
What's to do?
Shall we go see the relics of this town?

ANTONIO

Tomorrow, sir. Best first go see your lodging.

SEBASTIAN

I am not weary, and 'tis long to night.
I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame
That do renown this city.

ANTONIO

Would you'd pardon me.
I do not without danger walk these streets.
Once in a sea-fight 'gainst the Count his galleys
I did some service, of such note indeed
That were I ta'en here it would scarce be answered.

SEBASTIAN

Belike you slew great number of his people?

What we are interested in

We want this relationship to matter.

Antonio is taking a considerable risk simply by being here. The scene should help us understand why.

There are several possible interpretations of Antonio's feelings for Sebastian, and we do not need actors to arrive having decided on a single definitive one. What matters is that the relationship is specific, strong and truthful.

AUDITION PIECE 9

ORSINO

Act 1 Scene 1

Context: At the very beginning of the play, Orsino is listening to music and reflecting on his love for Olivia. He is completely absorbed in the idea of being in love, moving rapidly between wanting more of the feeling and being overwhelmed by it.

ORSINO

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour!
Enough; no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch so e'er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

What we are interested in

For Orsino, we are interested in someone who can make this famous speech feel immediate rather than simply lyrical. He is indulging in his own emotions and changes his mind almost as quickly as the music changes. We would like to see charisma, confidence with the language and an ability to find both the genuine feeling and the comedy in his romantic self-absorption.

AUDITION PIECE 10

SEBASTIAN

Act 4 Scene 3

Context: Sebastian has arrived in Illyria and finds himself in an increasingly bizarre situation. Complete strangers seem to know him, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby have attacked him, and Olivia has intervened, treated him with great affection and given him a valuable pearl. Sebastian is trying to decide whether everyone around him is mad — or whether he is.

SEBASTIAN

This is the air; that is the glorious sun.
This pearl she gave me, I do feel 't and see 't.
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio, then?
I could not find him at the Elephant.
Yet there he was; and there I found this credit,
That he did range the town to seek me out.
His counsel now might do me golden service.
For though my soul disputes well with my sense
That this may be some error, but no madness,
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me
To any other trust but that I am mad—
Or else the lady's mad. Yet if 'twere so,
She could not sway her house, command her
followers,
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch
With such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing
As I perceive she does. There's something in 't
That is deceivable. But here the lady comes.

What we are interested in

For Sebastian, we want to see someone thinking through an extraordinary situation in real time. He is genuinely confused, but he is not helpless: he keeps testing the evidence and trying to make sense of what is happening. We would like to see clear thought, comic bewilderment and a sense that Sebastian is increasingly tempted to accept this very strange piece of good fortune.

AUDITION PIECE 11

VIOLA

Act 2 Scene 2

Context: Viola, disguised as Cesario, has just left Olivia's house after delivering Orsino's message of love. Olivia has sent a servant after her with a ring, pretending that Cesario left it behind. Viola suddenly understands what has happened: Olivia has fallen in love with Cesario. This leaves Viola trapped in an increasingly complicated love triangle.

VIOLA

I left no ring with her. What means this lady?

She picks up the ring.

Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!

She made good view of me, indeed so much

That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,

For she did speak in starts distractedly.

She loves me, sure! The cunning of her passion

Invites me in this churlish messenger.

None of my lord's ring? Why, he sent her none!

I am the man. If it be so, as 'tis,

Poor lady, she were better love a dream.

Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness

Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.

How easy is it for the proper false

In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!

Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,

For such as we are made of, such we be.

How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,

And I, poor monster, fond as much on him,

And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.

What will become of this? As I am man,

My state is desperate for my master's love.

As I am woman (now, alas the day!),

What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!

O Time, thou must untangle this, not I.

It is too hard a knot for me t' untie.

What we are interested in

We want to see Viola's thought process as she realises Olivia has fallen for Cesario. The comedy should come naturally from the situation, while still showing her intelligence, sympathy and growing anxiety about the mess she is in.
