

Worksheet 4: The Language of Love (solutions)

1. Get together with a partner! Read Act 2 Scene 4, I. 89-120 together.

- First, read it silently.
- Then, decide who's going to take which part and read it out loud.

2. Together discuss the following questions and take notes.

- Does Viola give hints about her true identity to Orsino without directly revealing it?
- How do you think Viola feels about her disguise at this moment?
- In your own words:
 - What does Duke Orsino say about a woman's capacity to love?
 - Why do you think Viola feels the need to argue with Orsino at that moment?
- What are Orsino's feelings toward Olivia? Did the conversation with Viola/"Cesario" change anything?

3. Read the excerpt again. Did anything change in the way you read it now (i.e. tone, delivery, emotions expressed, ...)?

2. Answer the following questions with you partner. Take notes.

a) *Does Viola give hints about her true identity to Orsino without directly revealing it?*

Viola hints at the fact that she knows how a woman feels, while in her disguise as the boy "Cesario" (CSS, II, iv, I. 99).

She tells Orsino that her father had a daughter, and that if she were a woman, she would still argue with Orsino (CSS, II, iv, I. 103-105).

Viola almost reveals the truth and gives Orsino an involuntary hint at the end of their conversation: "I am all the daughters of my father's house, And all of the brothers too" (CSS, II, iv, I. 116-117).

b) *How do you think Viola feels about her disguise?*

She almost misspeaks at the end of her talk with Orsino, which gives the reader/viewer the impression that she is not as fully invested in her disguise anymore. It also seems as if she is conflicted, because while she is pretending to be a man, she also wants to defend women, and in turn herself, against Orsino's assumptions.



c) *In your own words:*

What does Duke Orsino say about a woman's capacity to love?

In lines 89-99 (CSS, II, iv) Orsino says that a woman's love is not as strong as a man's love, because women are not as physically strong as men. He uses comparisons to the body/organs to explain that women lack the ability to retain their feelings.

Why do you think Viola feels the need to argue with Orsino at that moment?

Even though she is disguised as a man, she still feels offended by Orsino's words that women cannot love as passionately, especially because she is in love with Orsino herself. Orsino is indirectly insulting her.

d) *What are Orsino's feelings toward Olivia? Did the conversation with Viola /"Cesario" change anything?*

Orsino's feelings towards Olivia seem to be very passionate and "as hungry as the sea" (CSS, II, iv, l. 96). He thinks he will always be the person that loves the most because he is a man. After his conversation with Viola, or rather after Viola tells him the story of her father's daughter, he seems to be reconsider his previous views of women not loving as passionately, as he asks Viola if the daughter died because of her broken heart.

