

# Characteristics of Orsino in Shakespeare's Twelfth Knight

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



Characteristics of Orsino in Shakespeare's Twelfth Knight Love is desirable, everyone is in search of it, but some take it too far. Some let it control you, and reveal characteristics that ought not to be revealed. Orsino, in the twelfth knight for example let's love control him revealing aspects of his personality that reveal is obsession with love. Some Notable Characteristics of the Duke of Illyria are his moodiness, selfishness and how he is a fool for love.

Orsino is a gentleman who is in search of love, and while eagerly searching; his moodiness and foolishness is revealed. Struggling to find love, Orsino's temperamental moodiness is revealed. His moodiness is revealed early in the play when Orsino interrupts his own musicians while they are playing to satisfy his needs. Orsino has musicians playing around him in hopes that it will distract his thoughts from how bad he wants to find love. Orsino says, "Enough; no more: 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before. (Act I, Scene I) This reveals Orsino's moodiness because the musicians were only trying to cheer him up, and Orsino deliberately and rudely interrupts them because the music was doing no good in hopes of cheering up his lonely heart. Also, later in the play Feste even points out Orsino's moodiness. Feste compares Orsino's erratic moods to a gemstone when he says the Duke's "mind is very opal." (Scene II, act IV) An opal is a gemstone that shimmers and shifts in colors.

Although, this is not meant to be a compliment by Feste, Feste is rather implying that Orsino is temperamental and unstable, like an opal constantly shifting in colors. Although, for Orsino, unlike an opal constantly shifting in

colors, what shifts constantly is his moods. Orsino is a man who is more fixated with the fantasy of love than the reality of love, which portrays his selfishness in just wanting to fulfill his own desires. Orsino seems to be a man who is in love with the idea of being in love.

The play begins with Orsino saying, “ 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! ”

(Act I, Scene I) Orsino is very fixated with love, willing to do whatever it takes to satisfy his own needs. He is so willing he even attempts to find love in a woman in which he knows doesn't feel the same about him.

Orsino fights to have Olivia love him back, in fact the more Olivia rejects him the more it seems Orsino tries to pursue her. Orsino doesn't care that she has no love for him back, he just wants to find love, and that's the selfishness within him. Orsino is a man in search of love, so determined to find it he makes a fool of himself. Based upon the opening scene we know Orsino is a passionate man who is out in search of the love of Olivia. Orsino says he is in love for the countess, but Orsino doesn't truly know her, he just knows of her.

When Orsino describes one of his fantasies, you can determine from it that it has nothing to do with the countess. The first time Orsino saw Olivia he describes, “ That instant was I turn'd into a hart; And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds, E'er since pursue me. ”(Act I, Scene I) Orsino says he was

turned into a "hart" (a male deer and also a play on the word "heart") and that he was chased or hunted by his own desires, which were like "hounds." So, Orsino doesn't imagine his pursuit of Olivia so much as he fixates on his pursuit of himself in a fantasy that is all about him.

He is a fool for love, fixated so much around it that he tries to make himself believe he is in love with someone he truly doesn't even know. Orsino's moodiness, selfishness, and foolishness all revolve around what means the most to Orsino, love. His moodiness flares up when dealing with the problems he faces when trying to find love. Orsino's selfishness is revealed in the way he pursues a countess that doesn't love him back, yet doesn't even know him. Foremost, his foolishness is revealed by the way he tries to find love in general.

Revolving so much around trying to find love, that he goes to extreme measures that makes him look foolish. In fact, anyone trying to find love as hard as Orsino should be looked at as foolish too. You cannot force love upon anyone, and you should never force it upon yourself, or you will be compelled as selfish in the fact that you want love so bad you do extraordinarily selfish things to do so. Like trying to love a woman who doesn't love you back. Love is something that cannot be forced, that Orsino apparently doesn't know, causing him to be moody, look selfish, and be a fool for love.