**SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE**

by Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. DAY.**

SKY. Over which a title "LONDON--SUMMER 1593" appears.

Title card: In the glory days of the Elizabethan theatre

two playhouses were fighting it out for writers and

audiences. North of the city was the Curtain Theatre,

home to England's most famous actor, Richard Burbage.

Across the river was the competition, built by Philip

Henslowe, a business with a cash flow problem...

...The Rose...

Gradually a building is revealed, The Rose Theatre, three-

tiered, open to the elements and empty. On the floor,

roughly printed, a poster--torn, soiled, out of date. It

says:

**SEPT. 7TH & 8TH AT NOON**

**MR. EDWARD ALLEYN AND THE ADMIRAL'S MEN AT THE ROSE**

**THEATRE, BANKSIDE**

**THE LAMENTABLE TRAGEDIE OF THE MONEYLENDER REVENG'D**

OVER THIS the screams of a man under torture. The screams

are coming from the curtained stage.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

You Mongrel! Why do you howl When it

is I who am bitten?

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

The theatre owner, PHILLIP HENSLOWE, is the man

screaming. HENSLOWE'S boots are on fire. He is pinioned

in a chair, with his feet stuck out over the hot colas of

a fire burning in a brazier. He is being held in that

position by LAMBERT, who is a thug employed by FENNYMAN,

who is the owner of the VOICE. The fourth man, FREES, is

FENNYMAN'S bookkeeper.

**FENNYMAN**

What am I, Mr. Lambert?

**LAMBERT**

Bitten, Mr. Fennyman.

**FENNYMAN**

How badly bitten, Mr. Frees?

**FREES**

Twelve pounds, one shilling and four

pence, Mr. Fennyman, including

interest.

**HENSLOWE**

Aaagh! I can pay you!

**FENNYMAN**

When?

**HENSLOWE**

Two weeks, three at the most, Aaaagh!

For pity's sake.

**FENNYMAN**

Take his feet out. Where will you get

**FREES**

(the mathematical genius with

a notebook)

Sixteen pounds, five shillings and

nine pence

**FENNYMAN**

including interest in three weeks?

**HENSLOWE**

I have a wonderful new play!

**FENNYMAN**

Put his feet in.

**HENSLOWE**

It's a comedy.

**FENNYMAN**

Cut his nose off.

**HENSLOWE**

A new comedy. By Will Shakespeare!

**FENNYMAN**

And his ears.

**HENSLOWE**

And a share. We will be partners, Mr.

Fennyman!

**FENNYMAN**

(hesitating)

Partners!

**HENSLOWE**

It's a crowd-tickler--mistaken

identities, a shipwreck, a pirate

king, a bit with a dog, and love

triumphant.

**LAMBERT**

I think I've seen it. I didn't like

it.

**HENSLOWE**

This time it is by Shakespeare.

**FENNYMAN**

What's the title?

**HENSLOWE**

Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter.

**FENNYMAN**

Good title.

FENNYMAN snaps his fingers at FREES and LAMBERT. LAMBERT

unties HENSLOWE, FREES starts writing a contract.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

A play takes time. Find actors�

rehearsals�let's say open in three

weeks. That's--what--five hundred

groundlings at tuppence each, in

addition four hundred groundlings

tuppence each, in addition four

hundred backsides at three pence--a

penny extra for a cushion, call it two

hundred cushions, say two performance

for safety how much is that Mr. Frees?

**FREES**

Twenty pounds to the penny, Mr.

Fennyman.

**FENNYMAN**

Correct!

**HENSLOWE**

But I have to pay the actors and the

authors.

**FENNYMAN**

A share of the profits.

**HENSLOWE**

There's never any

**FENNYMAN**

Of course not!

**HENSLOWE**

(impressed)

Mr. Fennyman, I think you may have hit

on something.

FENNYMAN slaps a contract down on the table next to n ink-

pot and quill.

**FENNYMAN**

Sign here.

HENSLOWE takes the quill and signs.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

Romeo and Ethel The Pirate's

Daughter�Almost finished?

**HENSLOWE**

Without doubt he is completing it at

this very moment.

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY**

A small cramped space in the eaves of a building. A

cluttered shelf containing various objects, wedged

between crumpled pieces of paper. Among those we have

time to observe: a skull, a mug that says A PRESENT FROM

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.**

At infrequent intervals further pieces of crumpled paper

are tossed towards the shelf. The man who is throwing

them, WILL SHAKESPEARE, is bent over a table, writing

studiously with a quill.

Now we see what he is writing: Will is practising his

signature, over and over again. "Will Shagsbeard�W

Shakspur�William Shasper�" Each time he is dissatisfied,

and each time he crumples, and tosses it away.

Suddenly WILL becomes impatient. He jumps up and goes to

the loft area in the rafters, where he sleeps, and starts

to pull on his boots. At this point the door opens and

HENSLOWE walks in. He is out of breath and his feet hurt.

**HENSLOWE**

Will! Where is my play? Tell me you

have it nearly done! Tell me you have

it started.

(desperately)

You have begun?

**WILL**

(struggling with his boots)

Doubt that the stars are fire, doubt

that the sun doth move

**HENSLOWE**

No, no, we haven't the time. Talk

prose. Where is my play?

**WILL**

(tapping his forehead and

heading out the door)

It is all locked safe in here

**HENSLOWE**

God be praised!

(then doubt)

Locked?

**WILL**

As soon as I have found my muse

**EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE WILL'S HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL lives in a crowded area of the city. Hawkers are

crying their wares, tract-sellers, delivery boys, and

merchants go about their business. HENSLOWE catches up

with WILL as he strides purposefully along.

**HENSLOWE**

(catching up)

Who is she this time?!

**WILL**

She is always Aphrodite.

**HENSLOWE**

Aphrodite Baggot who does it behind

the Dog and Trumpet?

**WILL**

Henslowe, you have no soul so how can

you understand the emptiness that

seeks a soulmate?

**HENSLOWE**

Well, I am a dead man and buggered to

boot. My theatre is close by the

plague these twelve weeks, my company

is playing the inn-yards

of England, while Burbage and the

Chamberlain's Men are invited to court

and receive ten pounds to play your

piece, written for my theatre, by my

writer, at my risk when you were green

and grateful -

**WILL**

What piece? Richard Crookback?

**HENSLOWE**

No--it's comedy they want, Will!

Comedy! Like Romeo and Ethel?

**WILL**

Who wrote that?

**HENSLOWE**

Nobody! You are writing it for me! I

gave you three pounds a month since.

**WILL**

Half what you owed me. I am still due

for One Gentleman of Verona.

**EXT. ANOTHER STREET. DAY**

HENSLOWE'S hardly paused in his appeal.

**HENSLOWE**

. . . Will! What is money to you and

me? I, your patron, you my wordwright!

When the plague lifts Burbage will

have a new Christopher Marlowe for the

Curtain and I have nothing for the

Rose.

WILL stops.

**WILL**

Mr. Henslowe, will you lend me fifty

pounds?

**HENSLOWE**

(staggered)

Fifty pounds? What for?

**WILL**

Burbage offers me a partnership in the

Chamberlain's Men. For fifty pounds my

hired player days are over.

**HENSLOWE**

Cut out my heart! Throw my liver to

the dogs!

**WILL**

(answering for him)

No, then.

WILL turns down a side street.

**EXT. MARKETPLACE. DAY.**

HENSLOWE and WILL are crossing a crowded marketplace

where a Puritan preacher, MAKEPEACE, is haranguing anyone

who will listen.

**MAKEPEACE**

and the Lord shall smite them! Yea,

harken to me. The theatres are

handmaidens of the devil! Under the

name of the Curtain, the players

breed lewdness in your wives,

rebellion in your servants, idleness

in your apprentices and wickedness in

your children! And the Rose smells

thusly rank by any name! I say a

plague on both their houses!

As he passes WILL gratefully makes a mental note.

**EXT. DR. MOTH'S HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL turns into a narrow street and walks toward a

doorway.

**HENSLOWE**

Where are you going?

**WILL**

To my weekly confession.

As HENSLOWE arrives the door closes in his face. A sign

identifies the place as the premises of Dr. MOTH,

apothecary, alchemist, astrologer, seer, interpreter of

dreams, and priest of psyche. HENSLOWE looks puzzled.

**INT. DR. MOTH'S HOUSE. DAY**

A stuffed alligator hangs from the ceiling, pills,

potions, amulets and charms, star charts and mystic

paraphernalia festoon the place. Testimonials and framed

degrees hang on the walls.

WILL lying on a couch, on his back. His eyes are closed

DR. MOTH sits by the couch, listening to WILL and

occasionally making a note on a pad he holds on his knee.

What we have here is nothing less than the false dawn of

analysis. The session is being timed by an hourglass.

**WILL**

Words, words, words�once, I had the

gift�I could make love out of words as

a potter makes cups out of clay love

that overthrows empires, love that

binds two hearts together come

hellfire and brimstones�for sixpence a

line, I could cause a riot in a

nunnery�but now

**DR. MOTH**

And yet you tell me you lie with

women?

WILL seems unwiling to respond. DR. MOTH refers to his

notes.

**DR. MOTH (CONT'D)**

Black Sue, Fat Phoebe, Rosaline,

Burbage's seamstress; Aphrodite, who

does it behind the Dog and

**WILL**

(interrupting)

Aye, now and again, but what of it? I

have lost my gift.

**DR. MOTH**

I am here to help you. Tell me in your

own words.

**WILL**

I have lost my gift.

(not finding this easy)

It's as if my quill is broken. As if

the organ of the imagination has dried

up. As if the proud tower of my genius

has collapsed.

**DR. MOTH**

Interesting.

**WILL**

Nothing comes.

**DR. MOTH**

Most interesting.

**WILL**

It is like trying to a pick a lock

with a wet herring.

**DR. MOTH**

(shrewdly)

Tell me, are you lately humbled in the

act of love?

WILL turns towards him. How did he know that?

**DR. MOTH (CONT'D)**

How long has it been?

**WILL**

A goodly length in times past, but

lately

**DR. MOTH**

No, no. You have a wife, children

The sand runs through the hourglass.

**LATER**

Not much sand left.

**WILL**

I was a lad of eighteen. Anne Hathaway

was a woman, half as old again.

**DR. MOTH**

A woman of property?

**WILL**

(shrugs)

She had a cottage. One day, she was

three months gone with child, so

**DR. MOTH**

And your relations?

**WILL**

On my mother's side the Ardens

**DR. MOTH**

No, your marriage bed.

**WILL**

Four years and a hundred miles away in

Stratford.

A cold bed too, since the twins were

born. Banishment was a blessing.

**DR. MOTH**

So now you are free to love

**WILL**

yet cannot love nor write it.

DR. MOTH reaches for a glass snake bracelet.

**DR. MOTH**

Here is a bangle found in Psyche's

temple on Olympus cheap at four pence.

Write your name on a paper and feed it

in the snake.

WILL looks at the snake bangle in wonder.

**WILL**

Will it restore my gift?

**DR. MOTH**

The woman who wears the snake will

dream of you, and your gift will

return. Words will flow like a river.

I will see you in a week.

He holds out his hand. WILL drops a sovereign into it,

and takes the bracelet.

**EXT. DR. MOTH'S HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL comes out. HENSLOWE is waiting, standing in a horse

trough to ease his feet. WILL walks straight past him,

and HENSLOWE follows.

**HENSLOWE**

Now where? Will?

**WILL**

To the Palace at Whitehall.

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

WHITEHALL means nothing yet. We are behind closed

curtains on a stage busy with preparations for the

imminent performance of Two Gentlemen of Verona. This is

not a theatre but a banqueting hall, as we will see.

RICHARD BURBAGE is to play "PROTEUS." A BOY PLAYER will

play "SILVIA," and last minute improvements to his makeup

etc. are being applied by BURBAGE'S mistress ROSALINE.

"LAUNCE," one of the clowns, is the famous comedian WILL

KEMPE. "LAUNCE'S" dog, CRAB is in KEMPE'S charge and is

not helping much. There is no set. A helpful placard

reading VERONA--AN OPEN PLACE, is ready to hand. MUSICIANS

can be heard tuning their instruments. From the other

side of the curtain there is an expectant bubbub. KEMPE

leads the dog into the wings and rummages in a box of

proops. He finds a skull. He has one foot on the box, his

elbow on his knee, he looks at the skull�in other words

he reminds us of Hamlet. We see this from the POV of

WILL, who is just entering through a door backstage.

**WILL**

(approaching)

Prithee, Mr. Kempe, break a leg. You

too, good Crab.

**KEMPE**

Crab is nervous. He has never played

the Palace. When will you write me a

tragedy, Will? I could do it.

**WILL**

No, they would laugh at Seneca if you

played it.

WILL'S attention has been caught by ROSALINE, BURBAGE'S

mistress. ROSALINE is big breasted, dark-eyed, dark-

haired, sexual.

**BURBAGE**

(to ROSALINE)

My sleeve wants for a button, Mistress

Rosaline, where were my seamstress's

eyes?

BURBAGE kisses her mouth and slaps her behind. He comes

over to greet WILL.

**BURBAGE (CONT'D)**

There is no dog in the first scene,

Will Kempe, thank you. How goes it

Will?

**WILL**

I am still owed money for this play,

Burbage.

**BURBAGE**

Not from me. I only stole it. When are

you coming over to the Chamberlain's

Men?

**WILL**

When I have fifty pounds.

ROSALINE brings over the last elements of BURBAGE'S

costume and helps him into them.

**BURBAGE**

Are you writing?

**WILL**

(nods somewhat defensively)

A comedy. All but done, a pirate

comedy, wonderful.

**BURBAGE**

What is the chief part?

**WILL**

Romeo. Wit, swordsman, lover.

**BURBAGE**

The title?

**WILL**

Romeo

**BURBAGE**

I will play him. Bring it tomorrow.

**WILL**

It's for Henslowe. He paid me.

**BURBAGE**

How much?

**WILL**

Ten pounds.

**BURBAGE**

You're a liar.

BURBAGE digs under his costume for his purse, which is on

a waistband, over his corset.

**WILL**

I swear it. He wants Romeo for Ned and

the Admiral's Men.

**BURBAGE**

Ned is wrong for it.

WILL turns to see HENSLOWE approaching.

**BURBAGE (CONT'D)**

(to WILL)

Here is two sovereigns--I'll give you

two more when you show me the pages.

**WILL**

Done.

**HENSLOWE**

(arriving)

Burbage, I will see you hanged for a

pickpocket.

**BURBAGE**

The Queen has commanded, she loves a

comedy and the Master of the Revels

favours us.

**HENSLOWE**

And what favour does Mr. Tilney

receive from you?

**BURBAGE**

Ask him.

The Master of the Revels (TILNEY) comes through the

curtain officiously.

**TILNEY**

She comes!

He disappears back through the curtains. The hubbub falls

silent, rather dramatically, and all the busy PLAYERS

know what that means: they all crowd to the curtain and

find places to peep through.

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BANQUETING HALL. FRONT OF**

**HOUSE/STAGE. DAY.**

**THE POV OF THE PLAYERS.**

The arrival of QUEEN ELIZABETH, aged sixty, coming to

take her place in the audience at front centre. The hill

is crowded with lords and ladies, bowing ELIZABETH to her

seat, which is raised high on a pedestal, affording the

QUEEN an uninterrupted view of the play, and the audience

an uninterrupted view of the QUEEN. Trumpets sound.

Close on a small piece of paper: a quill is writing "W.

Shakespeare." WILL rolls the paper up carefully and slips

it into the mouth of the snake bangle.

The curtain draws back and CONDELL as "VALENTINE" and

BURBAGE as "PROTEUS" begin the play.

**CONDELL AS VALENTINE**

"Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus;

Home-keeping youth have ever homely

wits�"

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BANQUETING HALL. THE**

**WINGS/BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

With BURBAGES'S presence accounted for on stage, ROSALINE

curls an arm around WILL'S neck. They kiss hungrily.

After a moment, WILL pulls back.

**ROSALINE**

When will you write me a sonnet, Will?

**WILL**

I have lost my gift.

**ROSALINE**

You left it in my bed. Come to look

for it again.

**WILL**

Are you to be my muse, ROSALINE?

**ROSALINE**

Burbage has my keeping but you have my

heart.

WILL takes the snake bracelet and slips it onto her arm.

ROSALINE looks at it, then at WILL. Then they kiss again,

but WILL is distracted by the sound of coughing from the

auditorium.

**WILL**

You see? The consumptives plot against

me. "Will Shakespeare has a play, let

us go and cough through it."

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BANQUETING HALL. STAGE. DAY.**

"VALENTINE" is on stage with "PROTEUS."

**CONDELL AS VALENTINE**

"To be in love, where scorn is bought with groans: Coy

looks with heart sore sighs; One fading moment's mirth

With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights�"

As the scene continues, WILL appears at the back of the

hall and finds himself next to HENSLOWE.

**WILL**

I feel a scene coming on.

**HENSLOWE**

Is it about a pirate's daughter?

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BACK OF THE BANQUETING HALL/STAGE.**

**DAY.**

Laughter. It is later, and KEMPE is now on stage with his

dog. The audience is roaring.

**HENSLOWE**

You see? Comedy.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S idiosyncratic laugh rises above the

others.

**QUEEN**

Well played, Master Crab, I commend

you.

She throws a sweetheart on the stage and the dog wolfs it

down. Everyone applauds.

**HENSLOWE**

Love and a bit with a dog, that's what

they like.

Now we meet VIOLA. VIOLA DE LESSEPS is twenty-five and

beautiful, and she is laughing with great natural

enjoyment. She sits slightly apart from her small family

group--her parents, SIR ROBERT DE LESSEPS and LADY

MARGARET DE LESSEPS. Part of the group but seated behind

as befits her lower status is VIOLA'S NURSE.

Elsewhere is LORD WESSEX, our villain. WESSEX is in his

forties, dark cruel, self-important. He has noticed

VIOLA. The nurse notices him.

**INT. WHITEHALL PALACE. BANQUETING HALL. FRONT OF**

**HOUSE/STAGE. DAY.**

LATER. "VALENTINE" is on stage alone. He is speaking the

speech rather more coarsely than the version we hear

later.

**CONDELL AS VALENTINE**

"What light is light if Silvia be not

seen?

What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?

Unless it be to think that she is by

And feed upon the shadow of

perfection�"

Now we see that VIOLA knows the speech by heart, and is

silently mouthing it with the actor.

**HENSLOWE**

There's a lady knows your play by

heart.

But when he turns to WILL he finds that WILL has gone.

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY.**

WILL comes into his room, goes straight to his table in

the window, and arranges pen, ink, and paper. Now he has

his ritual: he spins round once in a circle, rubs his

hands together and spits on the floor. Then he sits down,

picks up his pen, and stares in front of him. PAUSE. Then

he begins to write.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE is undressing her, though VIOLA tries

intermittently to push her away. She is still bright with

excitement.

**VIOLA**

Did you like Proteus or Valentine

best? Proteus for speaking, Valentine

for looks.

**NURSE**

I liked the dog, for laughs.

**VIOLA**

But Silvia I did not care for much.

His fingers were red from fighting and

he spoke like a schoolboy at lessons.

Stage love will never be true love

while the law of the land has our

heroines played by pipsqueak boys in

petticoats! Oh, when can we see

another?

**NURSE**

When the Queen commands it.

**VIOLA**

But at the playhouse. Nurse?

**NURSE**

Be still.

Now the NURSE is cleaning VIOLA'S ears, one by one, of

course. She has an ear-cleaning implement for this. VIOLA

submits.

**NURSE (CONT'D)**

Playhouses are not for well-born

ladies.

**VIOLA**

I am not so well-born.

**NURSE**

Well-monied is the same as well-born

and well-married is more so. Lord

Wessex was looking at you tonight.

**VIOLA**

All the men at court are without

poetry. If they look at me they see my

father's fortune. I will have poetry

in my life. And adventure. And love.

Love above all.

**NURSE**

Like Valentine and Silvia?

**VIOLA**

No . . . not the artful postures of

love, but love that over- throws life.

Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a riot

in the heart, and nothing to be done,

come ruin or rapture. Love like there

has never been in a play.

(beat)

I will have love or I will end my days

as a . . .

**NURSE**

As a nurse.

**VIOLA**

(kissing her)

But I would be Valentine and Silvia

too. Good Nurse, God save you and good

night. I would stay asleep my whole

life if I could dream myself into a

company of players.

VIOLA goes over to the window.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE thrusts a twig to her face.

**NURSE**

Clean your teeth while you dream,

then.

Automatically, VIOLA takes the twig and begins brushing

her teeth, all the while looking downriver towards the

Rose. The NURSE attends her with a beaker of water, and a

bowl.

**NURSE (CONT'D)**

Now spit

VIOLA gazes longingly towards the Rose� And, there and

then, she makes a plan.

**EXT. SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE ROSE THEATRE. DAY.**

HENSLOWE is making his way from the theatre to the market

place when FENNYMAN and LAMBERT appear at either shoulder

and propel him back the way he came. FREES follows

behind.

**FENNYMAN**

This time we take your boots off!

**HENSLOWE**

What have I done, Mr. Fennyman?

**FENNYMAN**

The theatres are all closed by the

plague!

**HENSLOWE**

Oh, that.

**FENNYMAN**

by order of the Master of the Revels!

**HENSLOWE**

Mr. Fennyman, let me explain about the

theatre business.

(they stop)

The natural condition is one of

insurmountable obstacles on the road

to imminent disaster. Believe me, to

be close by the plague is a bagatelle

in the ups and downs of owning a

theatre.

**FENNYMAN**

So what do we do?

**HENSLOWE**

Nothing. Strangely enough , it all

turns out well.

**FENNYMAN**

How?

**HENSLOWE**

I don't know. It's a mystery.

**LAMBERT**

(dumbly)

Should I kill him, Mr. Fennyman?

At this point din is heard in the background. a

messenger, ringing a bell, is running though the street.

**MESSENGER**

The theatres are reopened. By order of

the Master of the Revels, the theatres

are reopened

FENNYMAN is intrigued.

**FREES**

Mr. Fennyman! Mr. Tilney has opened

the playhouses.

**FENNYMAN**

Yes I heard.

HENSLOWE plays his temporary advantage modestly,

shrugging himself free of LAMBERT'S grip.

**HENSLOWE**

(to LAMBERT)

If you wouldn't mind

HENSLOWE continues on his way. FENNYMAN watches HENSLOWE,

curious.

**FENNYMAN**

Where is the play?

**HENSLOWE**

Oh, it's coming, it's coming.

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY.**

It is. WILL is writing furiously. A burnt-down candle is

still alight, although it is day outside the window. He

has been writing all night. He has written about ten

pages. Pleased with himself and excited, he gathers them

up and leaves the room like a man with a mission.

**EXT. WILL'S HOUSE. DAY.**

Leaving the house, pages in hand, WILL nearly knocks down

HENSLOWE who has come to see him.

**HENSLOWE**

Will! The theatres are

Before he can finish, WILL brandishes the pages in his

hand.

**WILL**

Romeo and Rosaline. Scene One! God,

I'm good!

**HENSLOWE**

Rosaline? You mean Ethel.

WILL has gone.

**EXT. BURBAGE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

BURBAGE lives in another part of the city. WILL bangs

through the door without ceremony.

**WILL**

(shouting)

Richard!

**INT. BURBAGE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL enters and calls out.

**WILL**

Burbage?

**INT. BURBAGE'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

WILL charges into the bedroom. ROSALINE is in bed. The

Master of the Revels is pulling up his breeches. WILL is

shattered.

**WILL**

Mr. Tilney

The unsuccessful snake bracelet glints at him from

ROSALINE'S arm.

**TILNEY**

Like you, I found him not at home!

**WILL**

So this is the favour you find in the

Chamberlain's Men.

**ROSALINE**

Will!

**WILL**

(to ROSALINE)

I would have made you immortal.

(turning to go)

Tell Burbage he has lost a new play by

Will Shakespeare.

**TILNEY**

What does Burbage care of that? He is

readying the Curtain for Kit Marlowe.

**WILL**

You have opened the playhouses?

**TILNEY**

I have, Master Shakespeare.

**WILL**

But the plague

**TILNEY**

(sighs)

Yes, I know. But he was always hanging

around the house.

A bell can be heard ringing outside.

**ROSALINE**

(to WILL, leaving)

Will�you're the only one, Will!--in my

heart.

**EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE BURBAGE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL emerges looking distraught. A burning brazier stands

by the wall. WILL thrusts the pages into the coals. He

watches for a moment as the pages catch fire.

**INT. TAVERN. DAY.**

WILL walks in to find the place in an uproar of

celebration. A handsome young serving man (NOL) is

bumping through with a tray of tankards.

**NOL**

(excitedly)

Mr. Henslowe!

**HENSLOWE**

Yes, I heard. The theatres are open.

But where is my playwright?

HENSLOWE finds a seat, and takes a tankard off NOL'S

tray.

**HENSLOWE**

Chalk it up, Nol. I'm hungry, too.

**NOL**

The special today is a pig's foot

marinated in juniper-berry vinegar,

served with a buckwheat pancake which

has been

They are interrupted by WILL who joins them. He looks

distracted.

**HENSLOWE**

Will! Have you finished?

**WILL**

Yes. Nearly.

(he taps his forehead)

It's all locked safe in here. We need

Ralph for the Pirate King. Good

morning, Master Nol. You will have a

nice little part.

NOL shouts for you, takes off his apron and flings it

behind the bar. HENSLOWE jumps up and embraces WILL. The

entire staff and half the customers are now crowding

around, actors the lot of them. HENSLOWE bangs the table

to shut them all up.

**HENSLOWE**

Ned Alleyn and the Admiral's Men are

out on tour. I need actors. Those here

who are unknown will have a chance to

be known.

**ACTOR**

What about the money, Mr. Henslowe?

**HENSLOWE**

It won't cost you a penny! Auditions

in half-an-hour!

The din of excited chatter returns. He sweeps grandly to

the tavern door�where he meets RALPH BASHFORD, a big,

burly, middle-aged actor.

**HENSLOWE (CONT'D)**

Ralph Bashford! I'd have a part for

you but, alas, I hear you are a

drunkard's drunkard.

**RALPH**

Never when I'm working.

**INT. TAVERN. DAY.**

WILL has remained behind, aghast now at his predicament.

He goes to the bar.

**WILL**

Give me to drink mandragora.

**BARMAN**

Straight up, Will?

**VOICE**

Give my friend a beaker of your best

brandy.

WILL turns towards a figure further down the bar. It's

**CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.**

**WILL**

Kit

**MARLOWE**

How goes it, Will?

**WILL**

Wonderful, wonderful.

**MARLOWE**

Burbage says you have a play.

**WILL**

I have. And chinks to show for it.

His drink arrives. WILL places a sovereign on the bar.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

I insist--and a beaker for Mr. Marlowe.

The BARMAN does the business.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

I hear you have a new play for the

Curtain.

**MARLOWE**

Not new--my Doctor Faustus.

**WILL**

I love your early work. "Was this the

face that launched a thousand ships

and burnt the topless towers of

Ilium?"

**MARLOWE**

I have a new one nearly done, and

better. The Massacre at Paris.

**WILL**

Good title.

**MARLOWE**

And yours?

**WILL**

Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter.

(beat, sighs despondently)

Yes, I know.

**MARLOWE**

What is the story?

**WILL**

Well, there's a pirate

(confesses)

In truth, I have not written a word.

**MARLOWE**

Romeo is�Italian. Always in and out of

love.

**WILL**

Yes, that's good. Until he meets

**MARLOWE**

Ethel.

**WILL**

Do you think?

**MARLOWE**

The daughter of his enemy.

**WILL**

(thoughtfully)

The daughter of his enemy.

**MARLOWE**

His best friend is killed in a duel by

Ethel's brother or something. His name

is Mercutio.

**WILL**

Mercutio�good name.

NOL hurries back to WILL'S side.

**NOL**

Will--they're waiting for you!

**WILL**

I'm coming.

He drains his glass.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

Good luck with yours, Kit.

**MARLOWE**

I thought your play was for Burbage.

**WILL**

This is a different one.

**MARLOWE**

(trying to work it out)

A different one you haven't written?

WILL makes a helpless gesture and hurries after NOL.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. GALLERY/STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

HENSLOWE and WILL are sitting in the gallery, listening

to a YOUNG ACTOR auditioning.

**YOUNG ACTOR**

" �Was this the face that launched a

thousand ships, And burnt the topless

towers of Ilium? Sweet Helen, make me

immortal with a kiss!"

**HENSLOWE**

Thank you.

HENSLOWE and WILL look a bit deflated. The YOUNG ACTOR

leaves and is replaced by a SECOND ACTOR.

**SECOND ACTOR**

I would like to give you something

from Faustus by Christopher Marlowe.

**HENSLOWE**

How refreshing.

**SECOND ACTOR**

"Was this the face that launched a

thousand ships, And burnt the topless

towers of Ilium?"

HENSLOWE and WILL let him continue a bit further, but

exchange despairing looks. A succession of would-be

actors offer their version of Marlowe's lines, each as

inappropriate as the other. Among them is a small URCHIN.

**URCHIN**

"�the topless towers of Ilium? Sweet

Helen, make me immortal with a--?"

**HENSLOWE**

(bellows)

Thank you!

The URCHIN leaves, glowering furiously, and is replaced

by a beanpole of a man (WASBASH). WABASH has a bad

stutter.

**WABASH**

"W-w-w-w-was th-th-this th-th-the f-f-

f-face�"

**HENSLOWE**

(unexpectedly)

Very good, Mr. Wabash. Excellent.

Report to the property master.

WILL looks at HENSLOWE in outrage.

**HENSLOWE (CONT'D)**

(apologetically)

My tailor. Wants to be an actor. I

have a few debts here and there. Well,

that seems to be everybody. Did you

see a Romeo?

**WILL**

I did not.

**HENSLOWE**

Well, I to my work, you to yours. When

can I see pages?

**WILL**

Tomorrow

HENSLOWE leaves him.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

(a prayer)

please God.

WILL sits brooding alone for a moment. Then he realizes

he is being addressed from the stage. ANOTHER ACTOR.

**ACTOR**

May I begin, sir?

WILL looks at the stage and sees a handsome young man,

with a hat shadowing his eyes.

**WILL**

Your name?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Thomas Kent. I would like to do a

speech by a writer who commands the

heart of every player.

WILL can hardly manage a nod.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS (CONT'D)**

"What light is light, if Silvia be not

seen, What joy is joy, if Silvia be

not by? Unless it be to think that she

is by And feed upon the shadow of

perfection.

It does not take four lines of "VALENTINE'S" speech to

confirm for us, if confirmation be needed, that THOMAS is

VIOLA. For WILL, amazement at hearing his own words soon

gives away to something else. He is captivated. He has

found his "ROMEO".

**VIOLA AS THOMAS (CONT'D)**

" �except I be by Silvia in the night,

There is no music in the nightingale.

Unless I look on Silvia in the day,

There is no day for me to look upon."

WILL interrupts "him."

**WILL**

Take off your hat.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

My hat?

**WILL**

Where did you learn how to do that?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

**I . . .**

**WILL**

Wait there.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Are you Mr. Shakespeare?

**WILL**

Let me see you. Take off your hat.

THOMAS begins to panic. WILL jumps down to ground level.

THOMAS runs offstage, to WILL'S bewilderment. WILL

hurries after him. We go with WILL as he crosses the

stage, then backstage, then into the

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. RETIRING ROOM. DAY.**

RETIRING ROOM which is crowded with actors and HENSLOWE'S

lieutenant, property manager, copier, and general

factotum who is a new character, PETER.

**ACTOR**

What are we playing?

**NOL**

Where are the pages?

WILL enters into the middle of this.

**WILL**

(shouts)

Where's the boy?

NOBODY knows what he is talking about. WABASH, the

stutterer, grabs Will's hand and shakes it excitedly.

**WABASH**

B-b-b-b-break a l-l-l-leg!

The street door is swinging shut. WILL sees it. He fights

his way through the men to get to the door.

**EXT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BANKSIDE. DAY.**

WILL emerges from the theatre into a street throbbing

with nefarious life. Whores, cutpurses, hawkers, urchins,

tract-sellers, riffraff of all kinds in an area of stews

(lowdown pubs), brothels and slums. It is some time

before WILL spots THOMAS, way ahead of him in the crowded

street. The chase is taking them to the riverbank.

**EXT. THE RIVER. DAY.**

When WILL gets to the riverbank he sees that THOMAS is in

a smallish boat being rowed upriver and in midstream. The

river is quite busy, and among the boats there are a

number of waiting "taxis." WILL jumps into the nearest

one and shouts at the "Taxi Driver" BOATMAN.

**WILL**

Follow that boat!

**BOATMAN**

Right you are, governor!

WILL sits in the stern of the boat and the BOATMAN sits

facing him, rowing lustily.

**BOATMAN (CONT'D)**

I know your face. Are you an actor?

**WILL**

(oh God, here we go again)

Yes.

**BOATMAN**

Yes, I've seen you in something. That

one about a king.

**WILL**

Really?

**BOATMAN**

I had the Christopher Marlowe in my

boat once.

**EXT. THE RIVER. DAY.**

LATER. The BOATMAN is puffing. WILL is looking ahead to

where THOMAS'S boat has reached a jetty on the farther

shore, a private jetty attached to a rich house on the

north bank. WILL sees THOMAS jump out of his boat and run

toward the house.

**WILL**

Do you know that house?

**BOATMAN**

Sir Robert De Lesseps.

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL runs towards the house.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES'S HOUSE. DAY.**

THOMAS rushes up the back stairs, removing his hat. Her

hair tumbles down about her shoulders, so we will call

her VIOLA again.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

Her mother LADY DE LESSEPS, is talking to the NURSE.

**LADY DE LESSEPS**

Where is she? Our guests are upon us, Lord Wessex too,

bargaining for a bride. My husband will have it settled

tonight.

Behind her, the door opens revealing VIOLA as THOMAS to

the NURSES view, but only for a moment. The door closes

again as LADY DE LESSEPS turns.

**LADY DE LESSEPS (CONT'D)**

Tomorrow he drags me off to the

country and it will be three weeks

gone before we return from our

estates.

A different door communicating to the next room, opens

and VIOLA comes in after a lightning dress change into a

robe. She curtseys to her mother.

**VIOLA**

God save you, mother.

(to NURSE)

Ho water, nurse.

The NURSE looks at her, round-eyed.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.**

From a cauldron on the stove, hot water is poured into

two pails, by the a KITCHEN BOY under the NURSE'S

command.

**SCULLERY MAID (O.S.)**

Thomas Kent, sir? No sir.

**WILL (O.S.)**

The actor

**NURSE**

Who asks for him?

WILL has come to the kitchen door with a letter.

**WILL**

William Shakespeare, actor, poet, and

playwright of the Rose.

The NURSE sends the SCULLERY MAID back to work.

**NURSE**

Master Kent is�my nephew.

**WILL**

(giving her the letter)

I will wait.

**NURSE**

Much god may it do you.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BATHROOM. EVENING.**

VIOLA in her bath, reads WILL'S letter. The NURSE is

adding hot water to the tub.

**VIOLA**

(delighted)

He sees himself in me! Romeo Montague,

a young man of Verona.

**NURSE**

(unimpressed)

Verona again.

**VIOLA**

(devouring the letter)

A comedy of quarreling families

reconciled in the discovery of Romeo

to be the very same Capulet cousin

stolen from the cradle and fostered to

manhood by his Montague mother that

was robbed of her own child by the

Pirate King!

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. NIGHT.**

WILL waits hopefully. The kitchen door opens and a

SERVANT flings a bucket of dirty water in the general

direction of the gutter. WILL hops nimbly aside and

escapes a soaking.

**SERVANT**

Be off!

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE is helping VIOLA into her party dress.

**NURSE**

Your mother, and your father

**VIOLA**

(gaily)

From tomorrow, away in the country for

three weeks! Is Master Shakespeare not

handsome?

**NURSE**

He looks well enough for a mountebank.

**VIOLA**

Oh, Nurse! He would give Thomas Kent

the life of Viola De Lesseps's

dreaming.

**NURSE**

(firmly)

My lady, this play will end badly. I

will tell.

**VIOLA**

(twice as firmly)

You will not tell. As you love me and

as I love you, you will bind my breast

and buy me a boy's wig!

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. NIGHT.**

WILL spots a gaggle of MUSICIANS approaching, carrying

instruments. WILL recognizes them.

**WILL**

Master Plum! What business here?

**MUSICIAN**

A five shilling business, Will. We

play for the dancing.

The sound of hooves gives hardly any warning as a

GALLOPING HORSEMAN thunders through the MUSICIANS who

have to leap out of the way. It is WESSEX arriving at the

house, with his usual good manners. Will watches WESSEX

skid to a halt and enter the house.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. BANQUETING ROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL has got in with the MUSICIANS. Competently enough he

strums along with them on the bandstand. Two dozen guests

are enough to crowd the space for dancing. WILL glances

around, looking for THOMAS KENT. He stops a passing

SERVANT, helping himself to a snack off the man's tray.

**SERVANT**

Musicians don't eat, Sir Robert's

orders.

**WILL**

I seek Master Thomas Kent.

It means nothing to the SERVANT who moves on. ANGLE ON

WESSEX and SIR ROBERT.

**SIR ROBERT**

She is a beauty, my lord, as would

take a king to church for a dowry of a

nutmeg.

**WESSEX**

My plantations in Virginia are not

mortgaged for a nutmeg. I have an

ancient name that will bring you

preferment when your grandson is a

Wessex. Is she fertile?

**SIR ROBERT**

She will breed. If she do not, send

her back.

**WESSEX**

Is she obedient?

**SIR ROBERT**

As any mule in Christendom. But if you

are the man to rider her, their are

rubies in the saddlebag.

**WESSEX**

I like her.

ANGLE on WILL--watching the dancing. Then he sees VIOLA in

the crowd. He turns to blood.

Love at first sight, no doubt about it. VIOLA has not

seen him. She is doing a daughter's duty among her

parents' friends. The guests form up to begin a changing-

partners dance (the very same one you get in every ROMEO

and JULIET).

**WILL**

(to Musician)

By all the stars in heaven, who is

she?

**MUSICIAN**

Viola de Lesseps. Dream on, Will.

WILL leaves the bandstand and is moving trancelike to

keep her in view between the dancers and onlookers. VIOLA

moves through patterns of the dance until�as night

follows day, she finds WILL opposite her. He has

insinuated himself into the dance. VIOLA gasps.

**VIOLA**

Master Shakespeare

WILL reacts, surprised by her reaction. The dance

separates them. VIOLA finds herself opposite WESSEX.

**WESSEX**

My lady Viola.

**VIOLA**

My lord.

**WESSEX**

I have spoken with your father.

**VIOLA**

So my lord? I speak with him every

day.

WESSEX scowls. The dance separates them. VIOLA finds

herself opposite WILL again. WILL stares at her

entranced.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

Good sir� ?

WILL has lost his tongue.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

I heard you are a poet.

WILL nods in his trance and she smiles at him.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

But a poet of no words?

WILL tries to speak but the silver tongue won't work. He

is dumb with adoration. Suddenly WESSEX takes him affably

by the elbow and leads him into an alcove.

**WESSEX**

(smiling evilly)

"Poet?"

**WILL**

(coming round form the

anaesthetic and not noticing

the danger)

I was a poet till now, but I have seen

beauty that puts my poems at one with

the talking ravens at the Tower.

To his surprise he finds a lordly dagger at this throat.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

(startled)

How do I offend, my lord?

**WESSEX**

By coveting my property. I cannot shed

blood in her house but I will cut your

throat anon. You have a name?

**WILL**

(gulps)

Christopher Marlowe at your service.

WESSEX shoves him through the nearest door.

VIOLA'S eyes are searching the room for WILL. She finds

WESSEX smiling at her. She looks away.

**EXT. DE LESSEPS' GARDEN/VIOLA'S BALCONY. NIGHT**

There is a lighted window on the balcony. VIOLA, dressed

for bed, and the NURSE pass across the lighted space.

WILL is in the garden. He sees her. The light in the room

is extinguished. WILL sighs. Then VIOLA comes out onto

the balcony in the moonlight. WILL gasps. He watches her.

VIOLA sighs dreamily.

**VIOLA**

Romeo, Romeo . . . a young man of

Verona. A comedy. By William

Shakespeare.

WILL reckons that's a good enough cue. He comes out of

hiding, and approaches the balcony.

**WILL**

(whispers)

My lady!

**VIOLA**

(gasps)

Who is there?

**WILL**

Will Shakespeare!

The NURSE calls "Madam!" from inside the room.

**VIOLA**

Anon, good nurse. Anon.

(to WILL)

Master Shakespeare?!

**WILL**

The same, alas.

**VIOLA**

Oh but why "alas?"

**WILL**

A lowly player.

**VIOLA**

Alas indeed, for I thought you the

highest poet of my esteem and a writer

of plays that capture my heart.

**WILL**

Oh--I am him too!

The NURSE calls again.

**VIOLA**

(to NURSE)

Anon, anon!

(to WILL)

I will come again.

She goes inside for a moment.

**WILL**

(to himself)

Oh, I am fortune's fool, I will be

punished for this!

VIOLA returns. WILL comes forward again.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

Oh my lady, my love!

**VIOLA**

If they find you here they will kill

you.

**WILL**

You can bring them with a word.

**VIOLA**

Oh, not for the world!

The NURSE calls her again: "Madam!"

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

Anon, nurse!

But she goes inside. WILL looks around and sees that

there is, as ever a convenient tree. He starts to climb

up toward the balcony. When his head is nearly level, a

soft figure comes once more onto the balcony. WILL pops

his head over the parapet and is face to face with the

NURSE. The NURSE gives a yell. WILL falls out of the

tree.

**EXT. DE LEESEPSES' HOUSE. NIGHT.**

Male voice shout to each other inside the house, candle

flames appear in different windows, the garden door is

flung open, revealing SIR ROBERT with candelabra in one

hand and sword in the other. By this time WILL is on top

of the garden wall and he drops safely out of sight. He

could have written it better.

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAWN.**

WILL is burning the midnight oil--literally and

metaphorically. His quill has already covered a dozen

sheets. He is inspired.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

It is day one. THE COMPANY is on stage. PETER is passing

pages around a bunch of actors. JOHN, JAMES, and NOL are

looking through their pages.

**JOHN**

"Draw if you be men!

(to JAMES)

Gregory, remember thy washing blow."

**NOL**

"Part, fools, put up your swords."

WILL is going around pumping hands and slapping

shoulders, flushed with excitement. HENSLOWE is reading

his pages, worried. RALPH BASHFORD is next to him.

**HENSLOWE**

It starts well, and then it's all long-

faced about some Rosaline. Where's the

comedy, Will. Where's the dog?

(to RALPH)

Do you think it is funny?

**RALPH**

I was a Pirate King, now I'm a Nurse.

That's funny

WILL pulls HENSLOWE aside.

**WILL**

We are at least six men short, and

those we have will be overparted,

ranters and stutterers who should be

sent back to the stews. My Romeo has

let me down. I see disaster.

**HENSLOWE**

We are at least four acts short, Will,

if you are looking for disaster.

WILL as notices a young scruffy thirteen-year-old actor,

the URCHIN we met before.

**WILL**

Who are you, master?

**URCHIN**

I am Ethel, sir, the Pirate's

daughter.

**WILL**

(furiously)

I'll be damned if you are!

And he helps the URCHIN off with a kick. The URCHIN

glowers with resentment. HENSLOWE finds himself face to

face with FENNYMAN.

**FENNYMAN**

Is it going well?

**HENSLOWE**

Very well.

**FENNYMAN**

But nothing is happening.

**HENSLOWE**

Yes, but very well.

**WILL**

(shouts)

Gentlemen! Thank you! You are welcome.

**FENNYMAN**

Who is that?

**HENSLOWE**

Nobody. The author.

**WILL**

We are about to embark on a great

voyage.

**HENSLOWE**

It is customary to make a little

speech on the first day. It does no

harm and authors like it.

**WILL**

You want to know what parts you are to

receive. All will be settled as we go

That's as far as he gets before there is a dramatic

interruption--the public entrance door is flung open and

SIX MEN make a loud entrance, headed by NED ALLEYN, the

actor, who is a handsome piratical figure with a big

voice and a big sword.

**ALLEYN**

Huzzah! The Admiral's Men are returned

to the house!

He gets various reactions. HENSLOWE and WILL shout his

name joyfully, some of the actors are friends with the

new group and behave accordingly, others know they are

out of a job. FENNYMAN recovers, or tries to.

**FENNYMAN**

Who is this?

ALLEYN slaps him aside with his sword.

**ALLEYN**

(roars)

Silence, you god! I am Hieronimo! I am

Tamburlaine! I am Faustus! I am

Barrabas, the Jew of Malta--of yes,

Master Will, and I am Henry VI. What

is the play, and what is my part?

FENNYMAN is impressed.

**FENNYMAN**

A moment, sir!

**ALLEYN**

(roars)

Who are you?

**FENNYMAN**

(bleating)

I am the money!

**ALLEYN**

Then you may remain so long as you

remain silent. Pay attention and you

will see how genius creates a legend.

**FENNYMAN**

(respectfully)

Thank you, sir.

**WILL**

We are in desperate want of a

Mercutio, Ned, a young nobleman of

Verona

**ALLEYN**

And the title of this piece?

**WILL**

Mercutio

**HENSLOWE**

Is it?

**ALLEYN**

I will play him!

Half a dozen of the ADMIRAL'S MEN will be given roles in

our play and we meet them and identify them as WILL

enthusiastically shakes hands.

**WILL**

Mr. Pope! Mr. Phillips! Welcome,

George Bryan! James Armitage!

(and now greeting SAM GOSSE,

the female star of the

Admiral's Men)

Sam! My pretty one! Are you ready to

fall in love again?

**SAM**

(hoarsely)

I am, Master Shakespeare.

**WILL**

(concerned)

But your voice

(he thrust a hand between

SAM'S legs)

Have they dropped?

**SAM**

(a girlie voice now)

No, no, a touch of cold only. We

suspect he is lying but WILL has

turned away.

**WILL**

Master Henslowe, you have your actors.

He leaves, passing by the humbled FENNYMAN.

**FENNYMAN**

I saw his Tamburlaine, you know.

Wonderful.

**WILL**

Yes, I saw it.

**FENNYMAN**

Of course, it was mighty writing.

There is no one like Marlowe

WILL is used to it. He goes.

**EXT. RIVERBANK. DAY.**

WILL arrives in a hurry at the wharfside, and looks

vainly in the direction of the DE LESSEPSES' house: no

**THOMAS.**

**EXT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE DOOR. DAY.**

WILL looks down the alley:--no THOMAS. He turns away. The

URCHIN, the short-lived Ethel, is sitting in the alley.

**WILL**

Better fortune, boy.

**URCHIN**

(shrugs)

I was in a play. They cut my head off

in Titus Andronicus. When I write

plays, they will be like Titus.

**WILL**

(pleased)

You admire it?

The URCHIN nods grimly.

**URCHIN**

I like it when they cut heads off. And

the daughter mutilated with knives.

**WILL**

Oh. What is your name?

**URCHIN.**

John Webster. Here, kitty, kitty.

Because a stray cat is nearby. The cat show an interest.

The URCHIN passes a white mouse to the cat and watches

the result with sober interest.

**URCHIN (CONT'D)**

Plenty of blood. That is the only

writing.

WILL backs away, unnerved by the boy.

**URCHIN (CONT'D)**

Wait, you'll see the cat bites his

head off.

**WILL**

I have to get back.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

On stage . . . the actors carry their parts.

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

"See where he comes. So please you step aside; I'll know

his grievance or be much denied."

**MONTAGUE**

"I would thou wert so happy by thy

stay To hear true shrift. Come, madam,

let's away."

Onstage "MONTAGUE" and "LADY MONTAGUE" make their exit.

Offstage, WILL appears next to HENSLOWE.

**WILL**

Cut round him for now.

**HENSLOWE**

(not understanding)

What? Who?

**WILL**

Romeo.

**HENSLOWE**

The one who came with your letter?

**WILL**

What?

**NOL AS BENVOLIO (O.S.)**

"Good morrow, cousin."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO (O.S.)**

"Is the day so young?"

The voice is THOMAS'S. WILL turns back to the stage and

sees him. Today THOMAS has a wig as well as his small

mustache.

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

"But new struck nine."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Ay me, sad hours seem long. Was that

my father that went hence so fast?"

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's

hours?"

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Not having that which, having, makes

them short."

**WILL**

Good

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

"In love?"

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Out."

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

"Of love?"

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Out of her favour where I am in

love."

**WILL**

(interrupting)

No, no, no�Don't spend it all at once!

The rehearsal stops.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Yes, sir.

**WILL**

Do you understand me?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

No, sir.

**WILL**

He is speaking about a baggage we

never even meet! What will be left in

your purse when he meets his Juliet?

**HENSLOWE**

Juliet? You mean Ethel.

**WILL**

(rounding on him)

God's teeth, am I to suffer this

constant stream of interruption?!

(to THOMAS)

What will you do in Act Two when he

meets the love of his life?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(timidly--looking through his

few sheets of paper)

I am very sorry, sir, I have not seen

Act Two.

**WILL**

Of course you have not! I have not

written it!

Alone in the auditorium, FENNYMAN looks and listens,

fascinated. So this is theatre!

**WILL (CONT'D)**

Go once more!

NED ALLEYN comes out of the wings, frowning over his

manuscript.

**ALLEYN**

Will�Where is Mercutio?

**WILL**

(tapping his forehead)

Locked safe in here. I leave the scene

in your safe keeping, Ned, I have a

sonnet to write.

WILL moves back into the wings where HENSLOWE is looking

anxious.

**HENSLOWE**

A sonnet? You mean a play.

WILL moves on, ignoring him. As he goes, we see that

VIOLA is love-struck by him, a riot in the heart.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. STAIRCASE. DAY.**

VIOLA still dressed as THOMAS, sonnet in hand, runs up

the stairs to her room. From the other end of the house

WESSEX can be heard ranting.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. HALL. NIGHT.**

LORD WESSEX is being kept waiting. The NURSE is bearing

the brunt of his impatience.

**WESSEX**

Two hours at prayer!

**NURSE**

Lady Viola is pious, my lord.

**WESSEX**

Piety is for Sunday! And two hours at

prayer is not piety, it is self-

importance!

**NURSE**

It would be better that you return

tomorrow, my lord.

**WESSEX**

It would be better that you tell her

to get off her knees and show some

civility to her six-day lord and

master.

VIOLA opens the door. She has changed hurriedly--too

hurriedly: the effect of her glorious hair falling to her

bare shoulders is spoiled by her mustache. Fortunately,

the NURSE spots her before WESSEX does and by coming

forward to greet her, the NURSE manages to shield Viola

from view, communicate the problem, and announce WESSEX'S

presence, so that by the time the NURSE has passed by

VIOLA and let herself out of the room, the moustache has

disappeared.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

My lady VIOLA.

**VIOLA**

Lord Wessex. You have been waiting.

**WESSEX**

I am aware of it, but it is beauty's

privilege.

**VIOLA**

You flatter, my lord.

**WESSEX**

No. I have spoken to the Queen.

(pause)

Her majesty's consent is requisite

when a Wessex takes a wife, and once

gained, her consent is her command.

**VIOLA**

Do you intend to marry, my lord?

**WESSEX**

Your father should keep you better

informed. He has bought me for you. He

returns from his estates to see us

married two weeks from Saturday.

(pause)

You are allowed to show your pleasure.

**VIOLA**

I do not love you, my lord.

**WESSEX**

How your mind hops about! Your father

was a shopkeeper, your children will

bear arms, and I will recover my

fortune. That is the only matter under

discussion today. You will like

Virginia.

**VIOLA**

Virginia?!

**WESSEX**

Why, yes! My fortune lies in my

plantations. The tobacco weed. I need

four thousand pounds to fit out a ship

and put my investments to work--I fancy

tobacco has a future. We will not stay

there long, three or four years . . .

**VIOLA**

But why me?

**WESSEX**

It was your eyes. No, your lips.

He kisses her with more passion than ceremony. VIOLA

recoils, and slaps him.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

Will you defy your father and your

Queen?

**VIOLA**

The Queen has consented?

**WESSEX**

She wants to inspect you. At

Greenwich, come Sunday. Be submissive,

modest, grateful and brief.

**VIOLA**

(forced to submit)

I will do my duty, my lord.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

She is writing to WILL. His letter-poem is on her table.

We can read part of it. "Shall I compare thee to a

summer's day�"

Now we see what VIOLA is writing.

INSERT: "Master Will, poet dearest to my heart, I beseech

you, banish me from yours--I am to marry Lord Wessex-- a

daughter's duty� "

She sheds a romantic, unhappy tear.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

SAM is now "JULIET." The play has evidently reached Act I

Scene 5. We are witnessing the meeting of "ROMEO" and

"JULIET" in a simplified version of the changing-partners

dance we saw at VIOLA'S house. NED ALLEYN is in charge.

**ALLEYN**

Gentlemen upstage, ladies downstage!

The dance goes wrong. it is THOMAS'S fault.

**ALLEYN (CONT'D)**

(furious)

Gentlemen upstage! Ladies downstage!

Are you a lady, Mr. Kent?

THOMAS mutters a blushing apology. WILL arrives the

bystanders, clutching fresh pages. He gives these to

PETER. NED ALLEYN sees him and comes over to start an

argument.

**WILL**

(preempting)

You did not like the speech?

**ALLEYN**

The speech is excellent.

(he does the first line

impressively)

"Oh, then I see Queen Mab hath been

with you!" Excellent and a good

length. But then he disappears for the

length of a bible.

WILL points significantly at the pages he has given

**PETER.**

**WILL**

There you have his duel, a skirmish of

words and swords such as I never

wrote, nor anyone. He dies with such

passion and poetry as your ever heard:

"a plague on both your houses!"

NED nods satisfied and turns back to work. Then he turns

back.

**ALLEYN**

He dies?

But the author has escaped.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. WRITER'S CORNER. DAY.**

Up aloft, WILL has a Writer's Corner where he settle down

to work. We see his private superstition: he spins round

in a circle, rubs his hands together, and spits on the

floor. That done, he picks up his pen.

**EXT. STREET. NIGHT.**

WILL is charging down a narrow alley, and bumps into

BURBAGE who is emerging from the door of a tavern.

**BURBAGE**

Will!

WILL is in too much of a hurry to stop. BURBAGE calls

after him.

**BURBAGE (CONT'D)**

And where are my pages . . .

WILL hurries on.

**EXT. RIVERBANK. DUSK.**

VIOLA as THOMAS is being rowed across the river. From

behind, in the direction of Bankside, "he" hears

shouting.

**WILL**

(O.S. shouting)

Did you give her my letter?

VIOLA as THOMAS turns to see WILL some way behind,

following in another boat. She takes a letter from her

coat and holds it aloft.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(calling)

And this for you.

**EXT. THE RIVER. VIOLA'S BOAT. NIGHT.**

WILL has climbed aboard VIOLA'S boat and is tearing open

the letter. What he reads causes him great pain. He

collapses into the stern seat next to VIOLA.

**WILL**

Oh, Thomas! She has cut my strings! I

am unmanned, unmended, and unmade,

like a puppet in a box.

**BOATMAN**

Writer, is he?

WILL turns on him savagely

**WILL**

Row your boat.

**EXT. THE RIVER. VIOLA'S BOAT. NIGHT.**

WILL turns back to VIOLA. They have their conversation

intimately, disregarding the lack of intimacy. The

BOATMAN is hardly an arm's length away, but they ignore

him.

**WILL**

She tells me to keep away. She is to

marry Lord Wessex. What should I do?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

If you love her, you must do what she

asks.

**WILL**

And break her heart and mine?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

It is only ours you can know.

**WILL**

She loves me, Thomas!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Does she say so?

**WILL**

No. And yet she does where the ink has

run with tears. Was she weeping when

she gave you this?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

I � Her letter came to me by the

nurse.

**WILL**

Your aunt?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(catching up)

Yes, my aunt. But perhaps she wept a

little. Tell me how you love her,

Will.

**WILL**

Like a sickness and its cure together.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Yes, like rain and sun, like cold and

heat.

(collecting herself)

Is your lady beautiful? Since I came

to visit from the country, I have not

seen her close. Tell me, is she

beautiful?

**WILL**

Oh, if I could write the beauty of her

eyes! I was born to look in them and

know myself.

He is looking into VIOLA'S eyes. She holds his look, but

WILL belies his words.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

And her lips?

**WILL**

Oh, Thomas, her lips! The early

morning rose would wither on the

branch, if it could feel envy!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

And her voice? Like lark song?

**WILL**

Deeper. Softer. None of your

twittering larks! I would banish

nightingales from her garden before

they interrupt her song.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

She sings too?

**WILL**

Constantly. Without doubt. And plays

the lute, she has a natural ear. And

her bosom--did I mention her bosom?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(glinting)

What of her bosom?

**WILL**

Oh Thomas, a pair of pippins! As round

and rare as golden apples!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

I think the lady is wise to keep your

love at a distance. For what lady

could live up to it close to, when her

eyes and lips and voice may be no more

beautiful than mine? Besides, can a

lady born to wealth and noble marriage

love happily with a Bankside poet and

player?

**WILL**

(fervently)

Yes, by God! Love knows nothing of

rank or riverbank! It will spark

between a queen and the poor vagabond

who plays the king, and their love

should be minded by each, for love

denied blights the soul we owe to God!

So tell my lady, William Shakespeare

waits for her in the garden!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

But what of Lord Wessex?

**WILL**

For one kiss, I would defy a thousand

Wessexes!

The boat scrapes on the jetty of the DE LESSEPSES' house.

The bump throws THOMAS into WILL'S arms. He holds her

round the shoulders. His words have almost unmasked her.

The closeness does the rest. She kisses him on the mouth

and jumps out of the boat.

**VIOLA**

Oh, Will!

She throws a coin to the BOATMAN and runs towards the

house.

**BOATMAN**

Thank you, my lady!

**WILL**

(stunned)

Lady?

**BOATMAN**

Viola De Lesseps. Known her since she

was this high. Wouldn't deceive a

child.

WILL gets out of the boat.

**BOATMAN (CONT'D)**

(reaching under his seat)

Strangely enough, I'm a bit of a

writer myself.

The BOATMAN produces his memoirs in manuscript.

**BOATMAN (CONT'D)**

It wouldn't take you long to read it,

I expect you know all the booksellers

**. . .**

But WILL has gone.

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' GARDEN. NIGHT.**

WILL drops over the wall into the garden and without

hesitation starts climbing up to her balcony.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL comes in through the window, just as VIOLA enters by

the door. They stare at each other across the room.

**WILL**

Can you love a fool?

**VIOLA**

Can you love a player?

They run together and fall into a passionate kiss.

**WILL**

(springs back)

Wait! You are still a maid and perhaps

as mistook in me as I was mistook in

Thomas Kent.

**VIOLA**

Answer me only this: are you the

author of the plays of William

Shakespeare?

**WILL**

I am.

**VIOLA**

Then kiss me again for I am not

mistook.

They run together and fall into a passionate kiss. VIOLA

fumbles with his clothing, he with hers.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

I do not know how to undress a man.

**WILL**

It is strange to me, too.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE has come to listen. She puts her ear against

the door. Because she hears muffled voices, she looks

startled.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL is half-naked. VIOLA is down to her petticoat, and

chemise. The petticoat comes away. WILL flings it aside.

He takes off her chemise. He is startled to find that she

is tightly bandaged round the bosom. WILL finds the loose

end and spins her naked.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE, drags a chair--a rocker--outside the bedroom

door, and takes up her position. She sits down, keeping

guard. Pretty soon there comes the regular creak of

VIOLA'S bed. The NURSE fans herself furiously with her

little lacy fan. She crosses herself. A CHAMBERMAID comes

along the gallery outside the bedroom door. She is

dusting her way along. The CHAMBERMAID becomes aware of

the regular creaking. She pauses. The NURSE begins to

rock in her chair, keeping time with the creaking from

within. The CHAMBERMAID stares at the NURSE. The NURSE

stares at the CHAMBERMAID.

**NURSE**

Go to, go to.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

WILL and VIOLA have finished making love, and lie in each

other's arms.

**VIOLA**

I would not have thought it. There is

something better than a play.

**WILL**

There is.

**VIOLA**

Even your play.

**WILL**

(frowns)

Oh

**VIOLA**

And that was only my first try.

**WILL**

Well perhaps better than my first.

(he kisses her again)

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. DAWN.**

Dawn is breaking. The sun lacing the severing clouds with

envious streaks.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM. DAWN**

The NURSE has fallen asleep in her rocking chair.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. DAWN.**

A rooster crows at some distance. VIOLA and WILL are in

bed. She stirs drowsily. VIOLA, coming awake, speaks his

name and he kisses her.

**VIOLA**

Will

Then he starts to get out of bed.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

You would not leave me?

**WILL**

I must. Look-- how pale the window.

**VIOLA**

(pulling him down)

Moonlight!

**WILL**

No, the morning rooster woke me.

**VIOLA**

It was the owl--come to bed

She is winning. She kisses him and pulls the bedclothes

around them.

**WILL**

(giving in)

Oh, let Henslowe wait.

**VIOLA**

(pausing, pushing him away)

Mr. Henslowe?

**WILL**

(persisting)

Let him be damned for his pages!

**VIOLA**

Oh--no, no!

**WILL**

(kissing her)

There is time. It is still dark.

**VIOLA**

It is broad day!

(the rooster crows again)

The rooster tells us so!

**WILL**

It was the owl. Believe me, love, it

was the owl.

He kisses her and starts to make love to her again. VIOLA

gives him a shove which pushes him onto the floor. She

sits up and pulls on her gown.

**VIOLA**

You would leave us players without a

scene to read today?!

There's a knock at the door.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE VIOLA'S**

**BEDROOM/VIOLA'S BEDROOM. DAWN.**

The NURSE is knocking. VIOLA comes to the door.

**NURSE**

My lady, the house is stirring, it is

a new day.

VIOLA looks beautified by the hours that have passed.

**VIOLA**

It is a new world!

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

The cut is to the middle of a rehearsal. We are coming up

to the moment when "ROMEO" and "JULIET" kiss for the

first time (Act I Scene V) NED ALLEYN is in charge but

WILL is watching. His life has turned perfect.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"�Have not saints lips, and holy

palmers too?"

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Ay pilgrim, lips that they must use

in prayer."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Oh then, dear saint, let lips do what

hands to: They pray: grant thou, lest

faith turn to despair."

WILL is in her eye-line. Her eyes flash an intimate

secret look to him.

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Saints do not move, though grant for

prayer's sake."

And VIOLA misses her cue as a result.

**SAM**

(prompting her)

It's you.

**ALLEYN**

(roars)

Suffering cats!

VIOLA guiltily picks up her line.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Then move not, while my prayer's

effect I take."

In character, VIOLA kisses SAM, demurely, but apparently

not demurely enough for WILL, who gives a twitch.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO(CONT'D)**

"Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin

is purg'd."

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Then have my lips the sin that they

have took."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Sin from my lips? Oh trespass sweetly

urg'd. Give me my sin again."

VIOLA kisses SAM again. WILL gives a major twitch, which

in fact catapults his body onto the stage. Everybody

looks at him in surprise.

**WILL**

Yes�yes�er�not quite right�it is more

let me

(as JULIET)

"Then have my lips the sin that they

have took."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

Sin from my lips? Oh trespass sweetly

urg'd. Give me my sin again."

VIOLA kisses WILL. They lose themselves for a fraction of

a moment. As VIOLA withdraws her lips, WILL'S lips are

going for it again.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO (CONT'D)**

"You kiss by th' book."

**ALLEYN**

(to Will, sarcastically)

Well! It was lucky you were here! Why

do not I write the rest of your play

while you

**WILL**

(apologising, retreating)

Yes, yes�continue. Now the Nurse.

Where is Ralph?

RALPH has been ready and waiting.

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Madam, your mother craves a word with

you."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"What is her mother?"

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Marry bachelor, Her mother is the

lady of the house�"

WILL has retreated to

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

He is behind the curtain now.

**RALPH AS NURSE (O.S.)**

"�And a good lady, and wise and

virtuous. I nurse her daughter that

you talk'd withal�"

During RALPH'S lines (which are continuous) WILL stands

in the shadow behind the curtain, alone, agitated.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"I tell you, he that can lay hold of her (he makes the

money sign) Shall have the chinks."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Is she a Capulet" Oh dear account. My

life is my foe's debt."

NOL, AS "BENVOLIO," at a party, carrying a goblet, tipsy,

enters the scene.

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

(to ROMEO)

"Away, be gone, the sport is at best."

VIOLA, about to make her exit, has her hand holding the

curtain at the gap.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BEHIND THE CURTAIN. DAY.**

WILL is kissing her hand.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Ay, so I fear; the more is my

unrest."

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BEHIND THE CURTAIN. DAY.**

VIOLA comes through the curtain. WILL and VIOLA kiss,

dangerously--they are in a narrow space, hidden from the

general backstage area.

**SAM AS JULIET (O.S.)**

"Come hither nurse. What is yond

gentleman?"

**VIOLA**

(to Will)

Oh let it be night!

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"I know not."

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Go ask his name--If he be married, My

grave is like to be my wedding bed."

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BEHIND THE CURTAIN. DAY.**

"JULIET'S" line bits WILL between the eyes. WILL pulls

away.

**VIOLA**

Oh, do not go

**WILL**

I must. I must

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

As WILL races up the ladder to his writer's corner, the

rehearsal can be heard continuing.

**RALPH AS NURSE (O.S.)**

"His name is Romeo, and a Montague,

The only son of your great enemy."

**ALLEYN (O.S.)**

(roaring from the audience)

Terrible!

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. WRITER'S CORNER. DAY.**

WILL arrives at the top of the building in his writer's

corner. He spins around once in a circle, rubs his hands

together and spits on the floor. His manuscript is all

over the table.

We take a peak at the lines he has already written.

INSERT MANUSCRIPT: "But soft, what light through yonder

window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun."

VIOLA'S VOICE OVER speaks the line.

**VIOLA (VO)**

"But soft, what light through yonder

window breaks? It is the east and

Juliet is the sun!"

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. EVENING.**

**VIOLA**

(reading)

"Arise fair sun and kill the envious

moon Who is already sick and pale with

grief That thou her maid art far more

fair than she�"

VIOLA is in bed, reading the lines from the manuscript

page. WILL is in bed with her, reading with her.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

Oh, Will!

**WILL**

Yes, some of it is speakable.

She has to speak through WILL'S kisses, he is nibbling at

her neck and shoulders and she has to bat him away with

the pages.

**VIOLA**

(continuing reading)

"It is my lady, O it is my love! O

that she knew she were!"

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

VIOLA continues the speech, edge-to-edge, now in

rehearsal, with SAM as "JULIET" sighing on the balcony

above her.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"The brightness of her cheek would

shame those stars As daylight doth a

lamp. Her eyes in heaven Would through

the airy region stream so bright That

birds would sing and think it were not

night. See how she leans her cheek

upon her hand. O that I were a glove

upon that hand, That I might touch

that cheek.

**SAM AS JULIET**

(above)

"Ay me."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"She speaks.

Oh speak again bright angel�"

We have abandoned real time. The scene continues CROSS

CUT between the STAGE and VIOLA'S BED.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. EVENING.**

**WILL**

(reading through VIOLA'S

kisses)

"Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou

Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy

name."

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY**

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my

love And I'll no longer be a Capulet."

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

(below)

"Shall I hear more or shall I speak at

this?"

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL and VIOLA in bed.

**WILL**

"What man art thou that thus

bescreen'd in night So stumblest on my

counsel?"

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.**

It's become late and the rehearsal is continuing by

torchlight.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"�By a name I know not how to tell

thee who I am: My name, dear saint, is

hateful to myself Because it is an

enemy to thee�"

We see that a group of the other actors have drifted "out

front," drawn by the scene. FENNYMAN is there entranced.

Clearly, this stuff is a cut above the normal.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

WILL, undressed, strides around the room, feeding

"JULIET'S" lines to VIOLA in bed.

**WILL**

"The orchard walls are high and hard

to climb, And the place death,

considering who thou art, If any of my

kinsmen find thee here. If they do see

thee, they will murder thee."

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. NIGHT.**

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Alack, there lies more peril in thine

eye, Than twenty of their swords! Look

thou but sweet, And I am proof against

their enmity."

**SAM AS JULIET**

I would not for the world!

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

I have night's cloak to hide me from

their eyes; And but thou love me, let

them find me here.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL and VIOLA are both out of bed, halfway though

dressing. Still rehearsing.

**WILL**

"Good night, good night. As sweet

repose and rest Come to thy heart as

that within my breast. O wilt thou

leave me so unsatisfied?"

**VIOLA**

That's my line!

**WILL**

Oh, but it is mine too!

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. NIGHT.**

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?"

**SAM AS JULIET**

"What satisfaction can'st thou have

tonight?"

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"The exchange of thy love's faithful

vow for mine."

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

WILL and VIOLA are back on the bed, kissing and making

love.

**WILL**

"My bounty is as boundless as the sea,

My love as deep:

**VIOLA AND WILL**

(continuing the speech with

him)

the more I give to thee The more I

have, for both are infinite."

Outside the NURSE is knocking on the door and calling.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**SAM AS JULIET**

"I hear some noise within. Dear love,

adieu."

RALPH, the Nurse, call's "JULIET!" off stage.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

**VIOLA**

(calling to the NURSE who is

outside)

Anon, good Nurse

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

The NURSE listens at the door.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Anon, good Nurse--Sweet Montague be

true."

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

**WILL**

"Stay but a little, I will come

again."

VIOLA slaps him playfully for his vulgarity, and then

kisses him.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Stay but a little, I will come

again."

SAM leaves the balcony through the curtain.

**VIOLA AS ROMEO**

"Oh blessed blessed night."

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

It is night. They have just made love. Suddenly it is

very still.

**VIOLA**

(almost to herself)

"I am feared,

Being in night, all this but a dream, Too flattering-

sweet to be substantial."

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

Onstage, the scene continues. Backstage NED ALLEYN is

working his way upstairs. He passes by RALPH (the Nurse)

who has a couple of words "of," as it were, in "JULIET'S"

chamber.

**SAM AS JULIET (O.S.)**

"�All my fortunes at thy foot I'll

lay, And follow thee my lord

throughout the world."

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Madam!"

**SAM AS JULIET (O.S.)**

"I come, anon--But if thou meanest not

well, I do beseech thee--"

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Madam!"

**SAM AS JULIET (O.S.)**

By and by I come to cease thy strife

and leave me to my grief. A thousand

times good night!"

SAM exits (i.e. enters to us) through the curtain.

**SAM**

(to NED)

I cannot move in this dress! and it

makes me look like a pig! I have no

neck in this pig dress!

(and then hearing his cue

from "ROMEO")

Oh, she's off again! She says she's

going and then she doesn't

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. WRITER'S CORNER. DAY.**

NED is arriving. WILL is busy writing. PETER is there,

holding the pages WILL has completed, and waiting for

WILL to finish his page. PETER is reading his pages. WILL

sees NED arrive. He gives his page to PETER.

**WILL**

(to PETER)

How is it?

**PETER**

(shrugs)

It's all right.

Typical!, says WILL'S face. Peter departs, leaving the

field to NED. WILL braces himself.

**WILL**

Ned�I know�I know

**ALLEYN**

It's good.

**WILL**

Oh

**ALLEYN**

The title won't do.

**WILL**

Ah

**ALLEYN**

Romeo and Juliet--just a suggestion.

**WILL**

Thank you, Ned.

The whole exchange is in ironic code, between old

soldiers. NED nods curtly and turns to descend.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

You are a gentleman.

**ALLEYN**

And you are a Warwickshire shit-house.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

PETER is just handing the pages HENSLOWE in the

auditorium. HENSLOWE has acquired a performing dog. The

dog does somersaults tirelessly. As PETER hands over the

pages, he shakes his head.

**HENSLOWE**

(in disbelief)

You mean, no dog of any kind?

FENNYMAN, the born-again theatre groupie shushes HENSLOWE

and looks daggers at him.

**PETER**

(to HENSLOWE)

The Friar married them in secret, then

Ned gets into a fight with one of the

Capulets, Romeo tries to stop them, he

gets in Ned's way, I mean in

Mercutio's way, so Tybalt kills

Mercutio and then Romeo kills Tybalt.

Then the Prince banishes him from

Verona.

**HENSLOWE**

(much relieved)

That must be when he goes on the

voyage and gets shipwrecked on the

island of the Pirate King.

FENNYMAN can't hear it. He storms over. Kicks the dog,

roars at HENSLOWE .

**FENNYMAN**

Cease your prattling! Get out!

(to the stage where the

action has paused)

A thousand apologies!

**SAM AS JULIET**

"Good night, good night. Parting is

such sweet sorrow That I shall say

good night till it be morrow."

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. MORNING.**

A sunbeam wakes the lovers. Sunday morning. Church bells.

VIOLA wakes with a start. Something is bothering her, she

can't think what. WILL calms her.

**WILL**

Sunday�it is Sunday.

He brings her back down to the pillow.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

I found something in my sleep. The

Friar who married them will take up

their destinies.

**VIOLA**

Oh, but it will end well for love?

**WILL**

In heaven, perhaps. It is not a comedy

I am writing now. A broad river

divides my lovers--family, duty,

fate--as unchangeable as nature.

**VIOLA**

(sobered)

Yes, this is not life, Will. This is a

stolen season.

Suddenly there is a great racket heard from downstairs�a

man shouting.

**WESSEX (O.S.)**

Not ready? Where is she?

**NURSE (O.S.)**

Be patient, my lord, she is dressing.

**WESSEX (O.S.)**

Will you ask Her Majesty to be

patient?!

VIOLA remembers. She jumps up and gives a cry.

**VIOLA**

Sunday! Greenwich!

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM.**

**MORNING.**

The NURSE is barring the stairs to WESSEX.

**WESSEX**

Now, pay attention, Nursy. The Queen,

Gloriana Regina, God's Chosen Vessel,

the Radiant One, who shines her light

on us, is at Greenwich today, and

prepared, during the evening's

festivities, to bestow her gracious

favour on my choice of wife--and if

we're late for lunch, the old boot

will not forgive. So you get you to my

lady's chamber and produce her with or

without her undergarments.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. MORNING.**

VIOLA has her dress on and is putting on her shoes. WILL,

in his underwear is in mid-argument.

**WILL**

You cannot! Not for the Queen herself!

**VIOLA**

What will you have me do? Marry you

instead?

**WILL**

(brought up short)

To be the wife of a poor player?--can I

wish that for Lady Viola, except in my

dreams? And yet I would, if I were

free to follow my desire in the harsh

light of day.

**VIOLA**

(tartly)

You follow your desire freely enough

in the night. So, if that is all, to

Greenwich I go.

**WILL**

Then I will go with you.

**VIOLA**

You cannot, Wessex will kill you

**WILL**

I know how to fight!

**VIOLA**

(now fixing her hair)

Stage fighting!

(turn to him)

Oh, Will! As Thomas Kent my heart

belongs to you but as Viola the river

divides us, and I will marry Wessex a

week from Saturday.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. OUTSIDE VIOLA'S BEDROOM**

**DOWNSTAIRS HALL. MORNING.**

The ranting from WESSEX has continued

**WESSEX**

(ranting)

By heaven, I will drag her down, by

the Queen's command

And is cut off short as VIOLA'S door opens at the top of

the stairs.

**VIOLA**

Good morning, my lord!

**WESSEX**

(impressed by her appearance)

Ah! My lady! The tide waits for no

man, but I swear it would wait for

you!

VIOLA comes down the stairs. Behind her WILL appears

gowned and bonneted. He has also assumed a country

accent.

**WILL**

Here we come at last, my lord!

**WESSEX**

(taken aback)

Are you bringing your laundry woman?

**WILL**

Her chaperone. My lady's country

cousin.

(arriving with a curtsey)

My, but you be a handsome gallant,

just as she said! You may call me Miss

Wilhelmina!

**WESSEX**

On a more fortuitous occasion, perhaps

**WILL**

Oh, my lord, you will not shake me

off, she never needed me more, I sear

by your breeches!

**EXT. GREENWICH PALACE. NIGHT.**

Fireworks explode in the evening sky over Greenwich, a

royal palace, crowded now with noble guests.

**EXT. GREENWICH PALACE. TERRACE. NIGHT.**

The way these royal routs work is that guest mill about,

chatting, bowing and generally behaving gallantly, while

QUEEN ELIZABETH creates a vortex around her as she passes

through the throng, occasionally honouring somebody with

a couple of words, until she arrives thankfully at the

best chair�where she establishes a headquarters. Her

current LORD IN WAITING ferries the lucky few forward to

a brief audience with the QUEEN, each giving way to the

next. VIOLA and WESSEX are, respectively, dipping and

bowing as they are greeted by people who know them�Will,

in close attendance, joins in gratuitously, bowing until

VIOLA nudges him and reminds him to curtsey instead. The

QUEEN'S LORD IN WAITING plucks WESSEX'S sleeve.

**WESSEX**

(to him)

Now?

**LORD IN WAITING**

Now.

**WESSEX**

(to Viola)

The Queen asks for you. Answer well.

The LORD IN WAITING ushers VIOLA through the crowd. WILL

starts to follow. WESSEX takes him by the arm.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

Is there a man?

**WILL**

A man, my lord?

**WESSEX**

(impatiently)

There was a man, poet--a theatre poet,

I heard--does he come to the house?

**WILL**

A theatre poet?

**WESSEX**

An insolent penny-a-page rogue,

Marlowe, he said, Christopher

Marlowe--has he been to the house?

**WILL**

Marlowe? Oh yes, he is the one, lovely

waistcoat, shame about the poetry.

**WESSEX**

(venomously)

That dog!

ANGLE on the QUEEN.

The LORD IN WAITING has presented VIOLA. VIOLA speaks

from a frozen curtsey.

**VIOLA**

Your Majesty.

**QUEEN**

Stand up straight, girl.

VIOLA straightens. The QUEEN examines her.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

I have seen you. You are the one who

comes to all the plays--at Whitehall,

at Richmond.

**VIOLA**

(agreeing)

Your Majesty.

**QUEEN**

What do you love so much?

**VIOLA**

Your Majesty

**QUEEN**

Speak out! I know who I am. Do you

love stories of kings and queens?

Feats of arms? Or is it courtly love?

**VIOLA**

I love theatre. To have stories acted

for me by a company of fellows is

indeed

**QUEEN**

(interrupting)

They are not acted for you, they are

acted for me.

VIOLA remains silent, in apology.

ANGLE on WILL.

He is watching and listening. He has never seen the QUEEN

so close. He is fascinated.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

And--?

**VIOLA**

And I love poetry above all.

**QUEEN**

Above Lord Wessex?

She looks over VIOLA'S shoulder and VIOLA realises WESSEX

has moved up behind her. WESSEX bows.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

(to WESSEX)

My Lord--when you cannot find your wife

you had better look for her at the

playhouse.

The COURTIERS titter at her pleasantry.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

But playwrights teach nothing about

love, they make it pretty, they make

it comical, or they make it lust. They

cannot make it true.

**VIOLA**

(blurts)

Oh, but they can!

She has forgotten herself. The COURTIERS gasp. The QUEEN

considers her. WESSEX looks furious. WILL is touched.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

I mean�Your Majesty, they do not, they

have not, but I believe there is one

who can

**WESSEX**

Lady Viola is�young in the world. Your

Majesty is wise in it.

Nature and truth are the very enemies

of playacting. I'll wager my fortune.

**QUEEN**

I thought you were here because you

had none.

Titters again. WESSEX could kill somebody.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

(by way of dismissing him)

Well, no one will take your wager, it

seems.

**WILL**

Fifty pounds!

Shock and horror. QUEEN ELIZABETH is the only person

amused.

**QUEEN**

Fifty pounds! A very worthy sum on a

very worthy question. Can a play show

us the very truth and nature of love?

I bear witness to the wager, and will

be the judge of it as occasion arises.

(which wins a scatter of

applause. She gathers her

skirts and stands)

I have not seen anything to settle it

yet.

(she moves away, everybody

bowing and scraping)

So--the fireworks will be soothing

after the excitements of Lady Viola's

audience.

(and now she is next to

WESSEX who is bowing low.

Intimately to him)

Have her then, but you are a lordly

fool. She has been plucked since I saw

her last, and not by you. It takes a

woman to know it.

The QUEEN passes by, and as WESSEX comes vertical again,

we see his face a mask of furious realisation.

**WESSEX**

(to himself)

Marlowe!

**INT. BURBAGE'S HOUSE. ENTRANCE. DAY.**

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE shuts the door behind him. Above him,

the ceiling creaks to the rhythm of copulation. He has a

sheaf of manuscript pages in his hand. He goes to the

stairs.

**MARLOWE**

Burbage!

The creaking stops.

**BURBAGE'S VOICE**

Who's there?

**INT. BURBAGE'S HOUSE. STAIRS. DAY.**

MARLOWE ascends.

**MARLOWE**

Marlowe.

**BURBAGE'S VOICE**

Kit!

**INT. BURBAGE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.**

MARLOWE enters, ignoring the situation on the bed where

ROSALINE is astride BURBAGE.

**MARLOWE**

You are playing my Faustus this

afternoon. Don't spend yourself in

sport.

**ROSALINE**

(working hard)

This afternoon!--we'll still be here

this afternoon.

**BURBAGE**

What do you want, Kit?

**MARLOWE**

My Massacre at Paris is complete.

**BURBAGE**

You have the last act?

**MARLOWE**

You have the money?

**BURBAGE**

Tomorrow.

**MARLOWE**

(leaving)

Then tomorrow you will have the pages.

**BURBAGE**

Wait!

(to ROSALINE)

Will you desist!

**MARLOWE**

Twenty pounds on delivery

**BURBAGE**

What is money to me like us? Besides,

if I need a play, I have another

waiting, a comedy by Shakespeare.

**MARLOWE**

Romeo?--he gave it to Henslowe.

**BURBAGE**

Never!

**MARLOWE**

Well, I am to Deptford now, I leave my

respects, Miss Rosaline.

**BURBAGE**

I gave Shakespeare two sovereigns for

Romeo!

**MARLOWE**

(leaving)

You did. But Ned Alleyn and the

Admiral's Men have the playing of it

as the Rose.

**BURBAGE**

Treachery!

BURBAGE rouses himself violently, throwing ROSALINE off

the bed. The glass bracelet is flung from her wrist. It

breaks on the floor, releasing a strip of paper. BURBAGE

picks it up. What he reads on it does not please him: it

is WILL'S signature.

**BURBAGE (CONT'D)**

Traitor and thief!

**EXT. STREETS. DAY.**

BURBAGE and a solid wedge of the CHAMBERLAIN'S MEND are

cleaving a path through the crowds. Their faces are grim.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM/UNDER THE STAGE.**

**DAY.**

We are in Act III Scene I. NED ALLEYN as "MERCUTIO" and

NOL as "BENVOLIO", and two "MONTAGUE" sidekicks are in

occupation of the stage, when the "CAPULETS" swagger in,

four of them headed by JAMES HEMMINGS as "TYBALT."

**NOL AS BENVOLIO**

"By my head, here comes the Capulets."

**ALLEYN AS MERCUTIO**

"By my heel, I care not."

**JAMES HEMMINGS AS TYBALT**

"Follow me close, for I will speak to

them. (with bombast to "MERCUTIO")

Gentlemen, good e'en: a word with one

of you."

NED comes out of character.

**ALLEYN**

Are you going to do it like that? And

before the humbled actor can reply NED

continues.

**ALLEYN (AS MECUTIO)**

And but one word with one of us?

Couple it with something, make it a

word and a blow.

But suddenly six more men and a dog invade the stage,

ready to fight. BURBAGE and the CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN have

arrived to avenge BURBAGE'S honour with swords, clubs,

and a bucket (containing pig swill).

**BURBAGE**

Where is that thieving hack who can't

keep his pen in his own ink pot!?

WILL has already leapt up onto the stage.

**WILL**

What is this rabble?!

BURBAGE aims a blow at WILL, who ducks and grabs a stave

from the nearest actor, and parries the blow.

He swings at BURBAGE, a CHAMBERLAIN'S MAN swings at WILL,

THOMAS cries out, someone else slashes the stage hangings

bringing down the drapes, and in a moment the ADMIRAL'S

MEN and the CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN, using their much rehearsed

skills, are brawling with weapons and fist, using

everything short of unbuttoned rapiers. CRAB, the dog, is

yapping and snapping at any legs he can reach. HENSLOWE,

a little slow to catch up on the situation, checks the

page in his hand. FENNYMAN, much slower to catch up,

watches enthralled.

**FENNYMAN**

(to HENSLOWE)

Wonderful, wonderful! And a dog!

But now HENSLOWE has worked out that these actors don't

belong, nor does the scene. he enters the fray, but his

interest is protecting his property. Big burly RALPH is

using a couple of unlit torches as weapons; he breaks one

of them over an enemy's back and HENSLOWE turns on RALPH

**HENSLOWE**

Not with my props!

VIOLA is doing well enough, tripping up an enemy with a

well-judged stave, and then using it to deflect a blow

aimed at WILL

**VIOLA**

Will! What--?

**WILL**

A literary feud. Quite normal.

Then he is smashed over the head. He falls off the stage

taking VIOLA with him. Under the stage is a space (known

as Hell) and WILL shoves VIOLA into this space.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

Stay hid!

He gets back onto the stage, where the goings on are

worthy of the Four Musketeers and Robin Hood combined,

with SAM GOSSE, dressed as "JULIET," fighting with the

best of them. There is a stack of cushions, stored for

the expensive seats, and as the stack s knocked over, NED

ALLEYN and others grab cushions to use as shields. Soon

cushions are being ripped, and the air is full of flying

feathers. The trap door in the stage opens, VIOLA'S head

pops up. She looks around and, surrounded by milling legs

and floating feathers, a boot catches her sideways and

half knocks her wig off. In danger of having her cover

blown, she ducks down again, leaving the trap open just

nicely for Will to plummet down it.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. UNDER THE STAGE. DAY.**

**WILL**

I dreamed last night of a shipwreck.

You were cast ashore in a far country.

They embrace and kiss. In a moment they are in a world of

their own.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. UNDER THE STAGE. DAY.**

The battle rages. FENNYMAN, alone now in the auditorium,

continues to watch entranced. It's the greatest show he's

ever seen. HENSLOWE is desperately trying to rescue odd

props that have been seconded to the fight. Someone picks

up a tree that is to be used in Romeo. HENSLOWE yells.

**HENSLOWE**

We need that for the balcony scene!

FENNYMAN notices this, and it rings a distant bell. He

looks around the realises that some of these faces are

unfamiliar. The tree comes crashing down on RALPH'S head.

FENNYMAN looks at HENSLOWE.

**HENSLOWE (CONT'D)**

(in despair)

My poor Rose!

He collapses on to a broken bench. FENNYMAN comes over to

him, grabs the script pages from his pocket, and consults

them to confirm what he has now begun to suspect: that

this scene is not in them.

**FENNYMAN**

(horrified)

My investment! LAMBERT!!!

LAMBERT has been sleeping peacefully through this, but

wakes to his master's call.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

(points at the fray)

**VENGEANCE!**

HENSLOWE attempts to intervene.

**HENSLOWE**

I want no more trouble, Mr. Fennyman.

As I explained to you, the theatre

business

**FENNYMAN**

Henslowe, you pound of tripe, in my

business I would be out of business if

I had your courage, so don't tell me

about business

And he delivers a telling blow to a passing CHAMBERLAIN'S

MAN, who wheels off the stage. LAMBERT meanwhile is

making short work of the rest of the opposition,

receiving help with the thorny business of identification

from SAM. Stray members of the CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN are

running from the theatre, as BURBAGE, fighting a heroic

last stand, is tipped backwards by FENNYMAN off the stage

and into a bucket of swill. A PAUSE. Then NED starts

applauding. The others, weary from fighting, start

applauding too, from all levels of the theatre. FENNYMAN

looks around, starting to beam, as a din of encores and

bravos engulf him. A star!

**INT. BROTHEL. NIGHT.**

The victorious army of actors bursts into the brothel,

FENNYMAN at their head. He owns the brothel. The place is

already crowded with WHORES and CUSTOMERS. It's a party.

**FENNYMAN**

(shouts)

A famous victory! Kegs and legs. Open

and on the house! Oh what happy hour!

(and grabbing a RADDLED

**WHORE)**

Poxy Pol! You keep yourself to

yourself I'll not have you infecting

my investment!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(looking around guardedly. To

**WILL)**

Is this a tavern?

**WILL**

It is also a tavern.

WILL sits her down in THE COMPANY and takes the chair

next to her A PRETTY WHORE immediately sits on WILL'S

knee and kisses him.

**PRETTY WHORE**

I remember you! The poet!

VIOLA furiously pulls the PRETTY WHORE off WILL'S lap.

**PRETTY WHORE (CONT'D)**

One at a time, one at a time!

**SECOND WHORE**

(to VIOLA)

Oh, he's a pretty one! Tell me your

story while I tickle your fancy!

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

Oh!--it's--it's--oh, it's a house of ill-

repute!

**WILL**

It is, Thomas, but of good reputation.

Come, there is no harm in a drink.

Glasses are shoved into their hands. Everyone has a

glass. Except RALPH

**RALPH**

(declining the glass)

Never when I'm working!

The PRETTY WHORE has turned her attention to SAM. SAM

looks uncomfortable

**PRETTY WHORE**

Never tried it? Never?

(groping him)

I think you are ready, Sam!

FENNYMAN shouts a toast.

**FENNYMAN**

(raising his glass)

You are welcome to my best house!

Here's to the Admiral's Men!

Everybody drinks. VIOLA drinks too. She decides too. She

decides to enjoy it. She bangs down her glass.

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(shouts)

The Admiral's Men!

WILL toasts with her. He sees that she feels one of THE

**COMPANY.**

**EXT. STREET. NIGHT.**

A figure is running desperately through the streets. He

comes into the square and runs towards the Rose.

**EXT. BROTHEL. NIGHT.**

Half THE COMPANY are singing. NOL and a WHORE are

tumbling down the stairs together. He is without his

trousers. An awful lot of drink has gone down.

**SAM**

(to the PRETTIEST WHORE)

I�quite liked it.

VIOLA, bright eyed, is banging her glass on the table in

time to a song which is being drunkenly delivered by a

barbershop quartet of actors.

FENNYMAN reels into VIOLA.

**FENNYMAN**

Master Kent! You have not dipped your

wick?

**VIOLA AS THOMAS**

(baffled)

My wick?

**WILL**

(saving her)

Mr. Fennyman, because you love the

theatre you must have a part in my

play. I am writing an Apothecary, a

small but vital role.

**FENNYMAN**

(embracing WILL)

By heaven, I thank you! I will be your

Apothecary!

In his general enthusiasm, he embraces the next man, who

is RALPH, stone cold sober.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

I am to be in your play.

**WHORE**

(to RALPH)

And what is this play about?

**RALPH**

Well, there's this Nurse

FENNYMAN, beside himself, shouts for silence, announcing

**FENNYMAN**

Mr. Shakespeare has given me the part

of the Apothecary!

**HENSLOWE**

The Apothecary? Will, what is the

story? Where is the shipwreck? How

does the comedy end?

**WILL**

By God, I wish I knew.

**HENSLOWE**

By God, Will, if you do not, who does?

Let us have pirates, clowns, and a

happy ending, or we will send you back

to Stratford to your wife!

That goes down every well with the entire COMPANY�except

for VIOLA and WILL. He looks at her, helplessly, then

makes as if to say something. VIOLA ducks away from him

and blunders blindly out of the street door, in tears.

VIOLA passes PETER who is coming in from the street.

WILL, attempting to follow VIOLA, is grabbed round the

shoulders by PETER�who, we now see, is in a highly

emotional state. WILL tries to fight him off but PETER

has the strength of the news he brings.

**PETER**

(shouts)

Will! Mr. Henslowe! Gentlemen all!

He brings the room to silence.

**PETER (CONT'D)**

A black day for us all! There is news

come up river from Deptford. Marlowe

is dead.

There are general gasps and cries for information.

**PETER (CONT'D)**

Stabbed! Stabbed to death in a tavern

at Deptford!

No one is more affected than WILL. This second blow is

worse than the first. He stands horror-stricken.

**WILL**

Oh�what have I done?

**ALLEYN**

(standing up)

He was the first man among us. A great

light has gone out.

**EXT. BROTHEL. NIGHT.**

WILL comes staggering out into the street.

**WILL**

It was I who killed him! God forgive

me, God forgive me!

He falls into a stagnant puddle, a deep gutter of water

and garbage. He gets up and staggers on.

**EXT. CHURCH TOWER. NIGHT.**

A church tower looms up in the night sky.

**INT. CHURCH. NIGHT.**

This is where WILL has come. The church is empty, but for

the demented, grieving figure of SHAKESPEARE, kneeling,

praying, weeping, banging his head, in his private

purgatory, dimly lit by tallow candles, gazed upon by

effigies of the dead and images of his Redeemer. He is

wet, bedraggled, weeds and leaves in his hair.

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. DAY.**

A lovely sunny morning. The church bells are ringing.

VIOLA and the NURSE, mounted, approach. VIOLA rides

sidesaddle on a beautiful horse, and is followed, rather

like Quixote by Sancho, by the NURSE on a less impressive

animal.

Riding in the opposite direction, is WESSEX. And what a

happy day it is. He sings and hums to himself merrily.

Here is a man who has heard wonderful news. He sees VIOLA

and greets her merrily.

**WESSEX**

You look sad, my lady! Let me take you

riding.

**VIOLA**

It is not my riding day, my lord.

**WESSEX**

Bless me, I thought it was a horse.

**VIOLA**

I am going to church.

**WESSEX**

(recomposing his features to

solemnity)

I understand of course. It is to be

expected.

**VIOLA**

It is to be expected on a Sunday.

**WESSEX**

And on a day of mourning. I never met

the fellow but once at your house.

**VIOLA**

(cannot take this in)

Mourning? Who is dead, my lord?

**WESSEX**

Oh!--dear God, I did not think it would

be me to tell you. A great loss to

playwriting, and to dancing.

VIOLA almost faints. The NURSE steadies her.

**VIOLA**

(faintly)

He is dead?

**WESSEX**

(cheerfully solemn)

Killed last night, in a tavern! Come,

then, we'll say a prayer for his soul

VIOLA gives a silent cry. The NURSE is speaking to her in

distress.

**NURSE**

My lady�my lady�now is the time to

show your breeding.

**INT. CHURCH. DAY.**

The NURSE is holding VIOLA up as they enter the church.

VIOLA seems catatonic. The NURSE lowers her onto a seat

and sits down next to her.

As they sit, the CHOIR enters singing. WESSEX, who is

sitting in the next pew, looks about him with interest.

He hasn't been in a church for years. What he sees turns

him to jelly. He sees WILL SHAKESPEARE.

ANGLE on WILL.

WILL is a spectral, bedraggled figure, backlit by a great

shaft of light, he would look like a ghost at the best of

times, and this is the worst. Bleeding from where he has

banged his head, bedraggled and ravaged by the night, he

stands in a side chapel staring at WESSEX.

WESSEX gasps and sweats, and sees WILL raise a quivering

accusatory finger at him. WESSEX cracks. He starts to

mumble.

**WESSEX**

Oh, spare me, dear ghost, spare me for

the love of Christ!

Now VIOLA sees WILL. She is still paralysed, and seems at

first unable to take him in. She watches with detachment

as WESSEX starts to back out of the church, finally

running in terror.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

(screaming)

Spare me!

The CHOIR continues to sing, but the scream brings VIOLA

to her senses and she runs to a side door where WILL is

leaving.

**EXT. CHURCH. DAY.**

Outside, VIOLA sees WILL, staggering away from the

church. She calls his name.

**VIOLA**

Will!

He does not answer. She runs after him.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

Oh, my love, I thought you were dead!

She claps him to her. They told each other for a moment

then WILL pulls back.

**WILL**

It is worse. I have killed a man.

**EXT. MEADOW. DAY.**

VIOLA'S horse grazes. WILL lies on his back, still

sobered and full of guilt. VIOLA sits on the grass among

the buttercups and looks down at him.

VIOLA is plaiting a finger-ring from stems of grass. She

has not yet revealed her feelings.

**WILL**

Marlowe's touch was in my Titus

Andronicus and my Henry VI was a house

built on his foundations.

**VIOLA**

You never spoke so well of him.

**WILL**

He was not dead before. I would

exchange all my plays to come for all

of his that will never come.

**VIOLA**

You lie.

WILL turns to look at her.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

You lie in your meadow as you lied in

my bed.

**WILL**

My love is no lie. I have a wife, yes,

and I cannot marry the daughter of Sir

Robert de Lesseps. It needed no wife

come from Stratford to tell you that.

And yet you let me come to your bed.

**VIOLA**

Calf love. I loved the writer, and

gave up the prize for a sonnet.

**WILL**

I was the more deceived.

**VOILA**

Yes--you were deceived. For I never

loved you till now.

**WILL**

Now?

**VIOLA**

(declaring herself)

I love you, Will, beyond poetry.

**WILL**

Oh, my love

(he kisses her)

You ran from me before.

**VIOLA**

You were not dead before. When I

thought you dead, I did not care about

all the plays that will never come,

only that I would never see your face.

I saw our end, and it will come.

**WILL**

You cannot marry Wessex!

**VIOLA**

If not Wessex the Queen will know the

cause and there will be no more Will

Shakespeare.

They kiss again, passionately.

**WILL**

No�no.

**VIOLA**

(through his kisses)

But I will go to Wessex as a widow

from these vows, as solemn as they are

unsanctified.

And as their desperate kisses turn into lovemaking we cut

to:

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

**WILL**

(he is mid speech)

For killing Juliet's kinsman Tybalt,

the one who killed Romeo's friend

Mercutio, Romeo is banished

He is on the stage of the Rose. The entire COMPANY is

assembled, HENSLOWE and FENNYMAN included, holding pages

of manuscript, which they are sharing together, examining

the separated pages, passing pages to each other, etc.

WILL'S mood is intense and focused.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

but the Friar who married Romeo and

Juliet

**ACTOR (EDWARD)**

Is that me. Will?

**WILL**

You, Edward. The Friar who married

them gives Juliet a potion to drink.

It is a secret potion. It makes her

seeming dead. She is placed in the

tomb of the Capulets. She will awake

to life and love when Romeo comes to

her side again.

THE COMPANY murmurs approval.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

I have not said all. By malign fate,

the message goes astray which would

tell Romeo of the Friar's plan. He

hears only that Juliet is dead. And

thus he goes to the Apothecary.

**FENNYMAN**

That's me.

**WILL**

And buys a deadly poison. He enters

the tomb to say farewell to Juliet who

lies there cold as death. He drinks

the poison. He dies by her side. And

then she wakes and sees him dead.

HENSLOWE is fascinated and appalled.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

And so Juliet takes his dagger and

kills herself.

**PAUSE.**

WILL is staring at VIOLA

**HENSLOWE**

Well, that will have them rolling in

the aisles.

**FENNYMAN**

Sad and wonderful! I have a blue

velvet cap which will do well, I have

seen apothecary with a cap just so.

**ALLEYN**

(to WILL)

Yes--it will serve. But there's a scene

missing between marriage and death.

WILL is still staring at VIOLA. Aware, suddenly, of the

others watching, she breaks his gaze and drops her head.

WILL looks at NED.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. EVENING.**

WILL and VIOLA. VIOLA dressed as THOMAS. He has present

for her--a neatly written manuscript of his play, on

sheets folded to octavo size.

**WILL**

The play. All written out for you. I

had the clerk at Bridewell do it, he

has a good fist for lettering.

She wants to accept the present with joy, but something

in his mood restrains her.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

There's a new scene

He turns the pages and shows her.

**VIOLA**

Will you read it for me?

**WILL**

(he knows it)

"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near

day> It was the nightingale and not

the lark That pierced the fearful

hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings

on yon pomegranate tree. Believe me,

love, it was the nightingale."

**VIOLA**

(reading)

"It was the lark, the herald of the

morn, No nightingale. Look, love, what

envious streaks Do lace the severing

clouds in yonder east. Night's candles

are burnt out, and jocund day Stands

tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. I

must be gone and live, or stay and

die."

The words of the scene become WILL'S and VIOLA'S, their

way of saying the farewells they cannot utter.

**WILL**

"Yon light is not daylight, I know it,

I. It is some meteor that the sun

exhales To be to thee this night a

torchbearer�"

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

But the scene is continuing with VIOLA dressed as

"THOMAS." Somewhere behind and up above the stage, in a

deserted corner among rigging, bits of scenery, etc.,

they speak the lines and we hardly know ourselves whether

it is rehearsal or lovemaking. But after a few moments it

is definitely lovemaking. Their clothes start coming

away, their words interrupted by kisses.

**WILL**

"�thou need'st not to be gone."

**VIOLA**

"I have more care to stay than will to

go. Come death, and welcome. Juliet

wills it so. How is't my soul? Let's

talk. It is not day."

By now, her loosened bosom-bandage has been pulled away

and WILL passionately embraces her nakedness.

And into this heaving composition comes a little white

mouse, unseen my them, climbing through a knot hole in

the planking behind VIOLA'S head.

An adjacent knot hole reveals a human eye and we do not

need to be told it is JOHN WEBSTER'S.

WEBSTER takes his eye away from the peephole, and frowns,

thinking it out.

**EXT. ALLEWAY. DAY.**

TILNEY puts a coin in WEBSTER'S hand.

**TILNEY**

You will go far, I fear.

**TILNEY (CONT'D)**

I hope we work together again. Tilney

walks away.

**EXT. THE ROSE THEATRE. DAY.**

A man is pacing up and down, in a sort of agony. He is

muttering. He is glancing at a sheet of paper. He is

FENNYMAN rehearsing the important role of the Apothecary,

for which he has a special voice.

**FENNYMAN**

"Such mortal drugs I have but Mantua's

law Is death to any he that utters

them." Then him. Then me.

"Put this in any liquid thing you will And�"--something

He has dried up. He curses--the terror and despair.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

"Such mortal drugs I have�" What is

it? What is it?

He is so wrapped up in all this that he simply does not

notice when WESSEX rides up to the main entrance

dismounts and walks inside.

**INT. THE ROSE THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

Onstage, the rehearsal continues. WESSEX strides in.

Among the audience are HENSLOWE, a few actors�and JOHN

WEBSTER�who sees WESSEX and jumps up and goes to him.

**WEBSTER**

My lord!

WESSEX knocks him aside and continues.

**WESSEX**

(shouts)

Shakespeare!

Everything stops.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

You upstart inky pup! Now I will show

you your place, which is in hell!

**WILL**

You are on my ground.

**WESSEX**

(drawing his sword)

By God, I'll fight the lot of you

WILL draws his sword.

**WILL**

I am more than enough.

VIOLA reacts. She almost gives herself away. But the

fight has started.

WESSEX slashes at WILL. WILL knows how to fight. He

parries and thrusts. WESSEX is surprised. The fight goes

fast and furious around the stage, until WILL thrusts

accurately at WESSEX'S chest�and would have killed him

but for the button on his sword-point.

WESSEX grapples with him, and now it becomes a parody of

the Hamlet duel; WESSEX'S unbuttoned sword falls to the

ground, WILL puts his foot on it, tosses WESSEX his own

safe sword, picks up Wessex's sword and continues the

fight until he has WESSEX at his mercy.

WILL has fought with a passionate rage that has everybody

staring at him. Now the look in his eyes is merciless.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

Absent friends!

(to the assembly)

This is the murderer of Kit Marlowe!

NED ALLEYN comes forward looking worried and dubious.

**ALLEYN**

Will

**WESSEX**

I rejoiced at his death because I

thought it was yours. That is all I

know of Marlowe.

**ALLEYN**

It's true, Will--it was a tavern

brawl�Marlowe attacked, and got his

own knife in the eye. A quarrel about

the bill

**HENSLOWE**

The bill! Oh, vanity, vanity!

**ALLEYN**

Not the billing, the bill!

WILL steps back, and sinks to his knees. His relief could

not be greater.

**WILL**

(to the heavens)

Oh God, I am free of it!

WESSEX gets to his feet. TILNEY enters the auditorium

from the public entrance.

**WESSEX**

Close it!

**TILNEY**

My Lord Wessex!

**WESSEX**

(foaming)

Close it! Take it down stone by stone!

I want it ploughed into the ground,

and sown with quick lime!

WESSEX storms out past the bewildered TILNEY.

**HENSLOWE**

Mr. Tilney, what is this?

**TILNEY**

Sedition and indecency!

**HENSLOWE**

What?!

**WEBSTER**

Master of the Revels, sir, over here,

sir.

**TILNEY**

(to WEBSTER)

Where, boy?

**WEBSTER**

(points)

I saw her bubbies!

**TILNEY**

(shocked and gratified)

A woman on the stage? A woman?

**WEBSTER**

I swear it!

THE COMPANY of actors are dumbstruck. None more than

**VIOLA.**

**TILNEY**

So, Henslowe! I say this theatre is

closed! On the authority of the powers

invested in my by the court--I close

this theatre!

**HENSLOWE**

Why so?

**TILNEY**

(triumphantly)

For lewdness and unshamefacedness! For

displaying a female on the public

stage!

TILNEY is unstoppable. He jumps on the stage�and seizes

SAM GOSSE. Before WEBSTER or anyone can intervene, TILNEY

pulls up his skirt, ignoring SAM'S rather gutteral yell

of protest and pulls down SAM'S drawers.

TILNEY'S face is a study. So is everybody else's. WEBSTER

rolls his eyes (oh, these stupid grown-ups!) and deftly

throws one of his mice onto "ROMEO'S" hair. VIOLA gives a

shrill scream, the startled mouse descends her neck via

VIOLA'S ear, and seeks an entry into her collar. By which

time VIOLA has gone berserk and torn off her wig. Her

hair is pinned up but there is no question her gender.

WILL is paralysed. VIOLA gives him a look of terrible

despair and apology.

**WEBSTER**

(pointing at SAM)

Not him.

(pointing at VIOLA)

her.

**HENSLOWE**

He's a woman!

By now the scene is playing to a crowded theatre, or so

it seems.

**TILNEY**

That's who I meant! This theatre is

closed! Notice will be posted!

SAM has picked himself up, and his drawers.

**HENSLOWE**

(to NED)

Ned, I swear I knew nothing of this!

**VIOLA**

(hoping to protect WILL)

Nobody knew!

**WEBSTER**

(pointing at WILL)

He did! I saw him kissing her bubbies!

Everybody looks at WILL, who stares at VIOLA, helpless.

**TILNEY**

Closed! Closed, mark you, Henslowe!

TILNEY turns on his heel and leaves in triumph. THE

COMPANY is still polaxed.

**HENSLOWE**

(in despair)

It is over.

**VIOLA**

I am so sorry, Mr. Henslowe. I wanted

to be an actor.

(she turns to WILL)

I am sorry, Will.

WILL shakes his head. This cannot be the end. VIOLA walks

away, leaving by the public entrance. They all let her

go, watching her silently. As she passes WABASH

**WABASH**

Y-y-y-you w-w-w-were w-w-w-w-

wonderful.

**VIOLA**

Thank you.

As she is leaving, WILL comes to life. He starts off

towards her�but his progress is halted by a sock to the

jaw from NED ALLEYN. WILL falls down in the dust.

FENNYMAN enters, still bent over his sheet of paper,

mumbling his precious lines. When he reaches the

groundlings yard, he finds to his surprise the whole

COMPANY is standing about in attitudes of despair or

worse. FENNYMAN looks around.

**FENNYMAN**

Everything all right?

**EXT. THE ROSE THEATRE. EVENING.**

The closure notice is nailed to the door.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

VIOLA, in her nightdress, is reading by candlelight. She

is reading her private manuscript of Romeo and Juliet�and

rereading. Next to her is a tray of covered dishes. the

NURSE enters and looks at her sympathetically. She lifts

the tray. She realises it is heavy. She puts it down and

raises the covers and sees that VIOLA has eaten nothing.

She looks at VIOLA'S tears, but there is nothing to be

said.

**INT. TAVERN. DAY.**

They are all there--the ADMIRAL'S MEN, including WILL and

HENSLOWE, drowning their sorrows. Everyone is drunk.

FENNYMAN is also there, taking the disaster somewhat

selfishly.

**FENNYMAN**

(muttering)

I would have been good�I would have

been great.

He hands a flask to RALPH who is in a similar mood.

**RALPH**

So would I. We both would.

RALPH contemplates the flask, and, since he's not

working, takes a swig. A moment later, he keels over,

rigid as a pole. The street door crashes open. BURBAGE

enters. Behind him enter a solid wedge of the

CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN, sober-faced, several with black eyes

and bandages round their heads.

**FENNYMAN**

(shouts)

Lambert!

LAMBERT, FENNYMAN'S henchman and killer, puts down his

tankard and comes forward, casually kicking chairs and

tables out of his way.

**FENNYMAN (CONT'D)**

Kill him!

LAMBERT reaches up to the wall over the bar and takes

down once of the ceremonial weapons hanging there--a

battle-axe.

But BURBAGE has flintlock pistol stuck into his sash.

BURBAGE draws and the pistol roars, shooting flame,

LAMBERT curses, drops the axe, nurses his wounded hand.

BURBAGE puts the pistol back into his sash. NED ALLEYN is

half-drunk at a table. He staggers to his feet. He faces

**BURBAGE.**

**ALLEYN**

Well, Burbage--you never did know when

your scene was over.

**BURBAGE**

That can wait. The Master of the

Revels despises us for vagrants,

tinkers, and peddlers of bombast. But

my father, James Burbage, had the

first licence to make a company of

players from Her Majesty, and he drew

from poets the literature of the age.

Their fame will be our fame. So let

them all know, we are men of parts. We

are a brotherhood, and we will be a

profession. Will Shakespeare has a

play. I have a theatre. The Curtain is

yours.

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

A strong wind is blowing through the trees. A BOY with a

paste-pot and a bundle of flyers, is having trouble

pasting a flyer on the wall of the building. A gust of

wind scatters the bundle and sends a couple of dozen

flyers flying into the sky. The BOY with the paste-pot

runs around, trying to recover those he can. We look at

the poster. It says

**BY PERMISSION OF**

**MR. BURBAGE**

**A**

**HUGH FENNYMAN PRODUCTION**

**OF**

**MR. HENSLOWE'S PRESENTATION**

**OF**

**THE ADMIRAL'S MEN IN PERFORMANCE**

**OF**

**THE EXCELLENT AND LAMENTABLE TRAGEDY**

**OF**

**ROMEO AND JULIET**

with Mr. Fennyman as the Apothecary

WILL comes out of the theatre, and passes the poster. He

walks on without looking at it. A voice calls after him:

**HENSLOWE**

Will!

WILL does not turn to look at him.

**HENSLOWE (CONT'D)**

We'll be needing a Romeo

WILL carries on walking.

**EXT. STREETS. DAY.**

WILL is pushing through the crowds on his way to the

river.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. VIOLA'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

The NURSE is helping VIOLA to dress--in a wedding dress.

The NURSE is in tears. VIOLA submits to the task

impassively.

**EXT. THE RIVER. DAY.**

WILL is climbing down the ladder to the waiting boats.

**INT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. HALL. DAY.**

WESSEX, dressed to be a bridegroom is concluding his

negotiations with DE LESSEPS, while LADY DE LESSEPS

weeps. DE LESSEPS is signing papers. There is a money

chest, too.

**WESSEX**

My ship is moored at Bankside, bound

for Virginia on the afternoon

tide--please do not weep, Lady De

Lesseps, you are gaining a colony.

**DE LESSEPS**

And you are gaining five thousand

pounds, my lord�by these drafts in my

hand.

**WESSEX**

Would you oblige me with fifty or so

in gold?--just to settle my accounts at

the dockside?

DE LESSEPS sighs and unlocks his money chest. WESSEX

places his empty purse on the desk.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

Ah!--Look, she comes!

VIOLA has appeared at the top of the stairs with the

**NURSE.**

**VIOLA**

Good morning, my lord. I see you are

open for business so let's to church.

**EXT. DE LESSEPSES' HOUSE. DAY.**

WILL is running across the grass towards the house. As he

crosses the bridge over the moat, a carriage bears down

on him, and he has to flatten himself against the wall of

the gatehouse as the carriage passes, taking WESSEX and

his bride to church. WILL'S face, as he watches the

carriage disappear. Distant bells begin to peal

**EXT. CHURCH DOOR. DAY.**

The bells announce the completion of the marriage--as

WESSEX and the new LADY WESSEX leave the church. VIOLA'S

veil is flying in the wind, and beneath it we can just

see VIOLA'S unhappy face. The DE LESSEPS FAMILY entourage

is applauding. WESSEX beams with satisfaction.

Suddenly the sky and the wind deliver a message--a flyer

from the Curtain slaps against WESSEX'S face. He claws at

it and tries to throw it away. The wind delivers it to

VIOLA'S bosom. She takes it up and reads it. And passes

it to the NURSE.

WESSEX descends the steps to where the curtained carriage

awaits the bride and groom. He gallantly holds the door

for VIOLA to enter. She climbs aboard. WESSEX makes to

follow her.

**NURSE**

My lord!

The NURSE grasps him in a moving embrace, to WESSEX'S

discomfort.

**NURSE (CONT'D)**

Be good to her, my lord!

**WESSEX**

I will.

He tries to disengage. She won't have it.

**NURSE**

God bless you!

**WESSEX**

Thank you. Let go, there's a good

nurse.

After a couple of further attempts, WESSEX extricates

himself.

**WESSEX (CONT'D)**

The tide will not wait. Farewell!

WESSEX pulls aside the curtain and gets in.

**INT. CARRIAGE. DAY.**

It takes a moment for WESSEX to realise he is alone in

there. He looks around but VIOLA has fled.

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

Hundreds of people are converging on the theatre. Among

them is the Puritan MAKEPEACE, vainly exhorting the

crowds to run away from sin

**MAKEPEACE**

Licentiousness is made a show, vice is

made a show, vanity and pride likewise

made a show! This is the very business

of show

But MAKEPEACE is being carried inexorably through the

main doors of the theatre.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

The ADMIRAL'S MEN are all in costume, and are in a buzz

of nervous excitement. ALLEYN, dressed for "MERCUTIO," is

giving last minute instructions to PETER. JAMES and JOHN

HEMMINGS are arguing about the timing of their entrance.

FENNYMAN in his apothecary's cap is agonising over his

lines. WABASH is stuttering over his. Alone in his

dejection in the midst of all this, is WILL, dressed for

**"ROMEO."**

FENNYMAN approaches him, apothecary's

cap in hand.

**FENNYMAN**

Is this all right?

WILL nods, miserable. SAM has found a private corner. He

is gargling into a basin. He looks worried and furtive.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

The audience is gathering.

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

Word has got around. Even rich people are coming. They

arrive by carriage and by palanquin.

Some of them are cloaked and hooded, slumming incognito.

A cannon booms from the Curtain. The flag of the

ADMIRAL'S MEN flutters above.

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. ENTRANCE. DAY.**

LAMBERT and FREES are taking the entrance money.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

The auditorium is now packed. Among them, sheepish, is

**MAKEPEACE.**

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

Everything is ready. NED signals the musicians. Trumpets

and drums sound. The house falls silent.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE WINGS. DAY.**

WABASH seems to be important at the beginning. We have

never been told what part he plays. He is still muttering

lines and stuttering them.

**WABASH**

(mutter)

T-t-t-two h-h-households b-both alike

in d-d-d-dignity.

WILL listens to him in agony. He finds HENSLOWE next to

him.

**WILL**

(to HENSLOWE)

We are lost.

**HENSLOWE**

No, it will turn out well.

**WILL**

How will it?

**HENSLOWE**

I don't know, it's a mystery.

And off we go. HENSLOWE claps WABASH on the shoulder and

sends him through the curtain.

ANGLE on WABASH

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

The audience waits expectantly. WABASH gathers himself.

**WABASH AS THE CHORUS**

T-t-t-t-two

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

WILL shuts his eyes and prays.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

WABASH launches himself into a perfect audacious delivery

like a star.

**WABASH AS THE CHORUS**

"�Household both alike in dignity (in

fair Verona where we lay our scene)

From ancient grudge break to new

mutiny, Where civil blood makes civil

hands unclean. From forth the fatal

loins of these two foes A pair of star-

cross'd lovers take their life, Whose

misadventured piteous overthrows Doth

with their death bury their parents'

strife�"

**EXT. STREET. DAY.**

VIOLA and the NURSE, hurrying toward the Curtain.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

HEMMINGS BROTHERS are ready to go on as "SAMPSON" and

"GROCERY," Act I Scene I. They shake hands. Beyond the

curtain, the audience applauds the Prologue as WABASH

comes through the curtain backstage.

**WILL**

(to WABASH)

Wonderful!

**WABASH**

W-w-w-was it g-g-g-good?

The HEMMINGS BROTHERS enter the arena and the play

begins.

POV: from THE WINGS:

**JOHN HEMMINGS AS SAMPSON**

"Gregory, on my word we'll not carry

coals."

**JAMES HEMMINGS AS GREGORY**

"No, for then we should be colliers."

WILL looks as if he would rather be

dead. SAM GOSSE approaches WILL,

nervously.

**SAM**

(nervously--in a deep bass

guttural hoarse voice)

Master Shakespeare

**WILL**

(absently)

Luck be with you, Sam.

(as the awful truth gets

through to him)

Sam�?

**SAM**

(in the same voice)

It is not my fault, Master

Shakespeare. I could do it yesterday.

**WILL**

Sam! Do me a speech, do me a line.

**SAM**

(the effect is horrible)

"Parting is such sweet sorrow�"

HENSLOWE has been overhearing.

**HENSLOWE**

Another little problem.

**WILL**

What do we do now?

**HENSLOWE**

The show must � you know

**WILL**

Go on.

**HENSLOWE**

Juliet does not come on for twenty

pages. It will be all right.

**WILL**

How will it?

**HENSLOWE**

I don't know. It's a mystery.

And he makes his way towards the front of the house.

**EXT. STREET. DAY.**

A furious WESSEX is hurrying along the road to the

theatre.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM/STAGE. DAY.**

VIOLA and the NURSE are arriving, and looking for a seat

in the gallery. BURBAGE and his MEN are standing at the

back, behind the people seated in the gallery. The first

scene of the play is continuing

**ARMITAGE AS ABRAM**

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

**JOHN HEMMINGS AS SAMPSON**

"I do bite my thumb, sir."

BURBAGE finds HENSLOWE plucking agitatedly at his sleeve.

**HENSLOWE**

Can we talk?

They are standing behind the back row of the gallery

seats. The spectator in front of them is the NURSE. She

turns round and shushes HENSLOWE up.

**HENSLOWE (CONT'D)**

(whispering to BURBAGE)

We have no Juliet!

**BURBAGE**

(forgetting to whisper)

No Juliet?!

**VIOLA**

(turning)

No Juliet?!

**HENSLOWE**

it will be all right, madam.

**VIOLA**

What happened to Sam?

**HENSLOWE**

Who are you?

**VIOLA**

Thomas Kent!

Their whispers are causing black looks and hushing noises

from the neighbours. HENSLOWE pulls VIOLA from her seat,

luckily an aisle seat.

**HENSLOWE**

Do you know it?

**VIOLA**

(showing the manuscript)

Every word.

HENSLOWE and BURBAGE look at each other. CUT TO:

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**PHILIP AS LADY CAPULET**

"Nurse, where is my daughter? Call her

forth to me."

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Now by my maidenhead at twelve year

old, I bade her come. What, lamb. What

ladybird."

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE WINGS/STAGE. DAY.**

SAM who gathers himself, to make his entrance, quietly

and horribly practising "How now, who calls?"

**RALPH AS NURSE**

(on stage)

"God forbid. Where's this girl?

The author and star, WILL SHAKESPEARE, has his back to

the stage, his hands over his ears. He is cowering in

dread anticipation.

**RALPH AS NURSE (CONT'D)**

"What, Juliet!"

As SAM is about to enter HENSLOWE'S hand yanks him by the

collar, and VIOLA overtakes him and steps on stage. Enter

"JULIET." VIOLA is not wearing the been hidden from us by

her cloak.

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"How now, who calls?"

**RALPH AS NURSE**

"Your mother."

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"Madam. I am here, what is your will?

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

There is a collective gasp. Nobody has ever seen a BOY

PLAYER like this.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE WINGS. DAY.**

WILL takes his hands from his ears, and turns round in

amazement at the sound of VIOLA'S voice.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM/STAGE. DAY.**

WESSEX has just arrived in the auditorium and jumps as if

he has been shot. He seems about to intervene, but

looking around at the rapt faces he realises he cannot.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE WINGS. DAY.**

HENSLOWE and BURBAGE look at each other.

**BURBAGE**

We will all be put in the clink.

**HENSLOWE**

(shrugs)

See you in jail.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

FENNYMAN, oblivious to the drama, is practising his lines

in a fever of nervousness.

**FENNYMAN**

"Such mortal drugs I have but Mantua's

Law Is death to any he that utters

them." Then him. Then me.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

Swordplay. An amazing performance that holds the audience

spellbound. "TYBALT" kills "MERCUTIO."

**ALLEYN AS MERCUTIO**

(to ROMEO)

"I am hurt.

**WILL AS ROMEO**

Courage man. The hurt cannot be much.

**ALLEYN A MERCUTIO**

Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find

me a grave man."

A roll of thunder. Over the heads of the audience, far

above the thatched roof of the theatre, clouds are

gathering in the sky. On stage "MERCUTIO" is in 'ROMEO'S"

arms, but the tone of the playing is unlike anything we

have seen before: without bombast, intense and real. And

the audience is quiet and attentive.

**ALLEYN AS MERCUTIO (CONT'D)**

"�--Why the devil came you between us?

I was hurt under your arms."

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

In the semirural view towards the City of London, there

can be discerned a gaggle of approaching MEN and three is

something orderly about them. As they come closer, we see

that they are a company of PIKE MEN, marching toward the

theatre, led by the Master of the Revels, TILNEY. Thunder

rolls.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

Figures are running across the stage, in the panic that

follows "TYBALT" death.

**ACTOR AS BENVOLIO**

"Romeo, away, be gone! The citizens

are up and Tybalt slain. Stand not

amazed. The prince will doom thee

death If thou art taken. Hence, be

gone away!"

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"I am fortune's fool!"

**ACTOR AS BENVOLIO**

"Why dost thou stay!"

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. BACKSTAGE. DAY.**

WILL has just 'killed' "TYBALT." He is still breathless

from fighting. he stands face to face with VIOLA.

**WILL**

I am fortune's fool.

They stare at each other, transfixed.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

You are married?

PAUSE. She cannot answer.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

If you be married, my gave is like to

be my wedding bed. The implication of

her silence fills the air. WILL does

not move.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

We cannot tell whether this is the play or their life.

The audience, and the rest of the world, might as well

not exist. WILL turn from her and begins to descend from

the 'balcony.'

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"Art thou gone so?

WILL stops.

**VIOLA AS JULIET (CONT'D)**

Love, lord, ay husband, friend, I must

hear from thee every day in the hour,

For in a minute there are many days.

O, by this count I shall be much in

years Ere I again behold my Romeo�"

WILL as "ROMEO" seems unable to speak. Then he says:

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"�Farewell�"

All other sounds drain away, and time seems to stop.

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"O think'st thou we shall ever meet

again�? Methinks I see thee, now thou

art so low, As one dead in the bottom

of a tomb. Either my eyesight fails,

or thou lookest pale."

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"Trust me, love, in my eyes so do you.

Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu.

Adieu"

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

Now the FRIAR is giving "JULIET' his potion.

**EDWARD AS FRIAR**

"No warmth, no breath shall testify

thou livest And in this borrow'd

likeness of shrunk death Thou shall

continue two and forty hours And then

awake as from a pleasant sleep�"

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

It's FENNYMAN'S moment. The "APOTHECARY" and "ROMEO."

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"Come hither, man. I see that thou art

poor. Hold, there is forty ducats. Let

me have A dram of poison--"

**FENNYMAN AS APOTHECARY**

"Such mortal drugs I have but Mantua's

law is death to any he that utters

them!"

FENNYMAN has cut in several lines early, but his

conviction is astonishing.

**FENNYMAN AS APOTHECARY**

"My poverty but not my will consents."

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"I pay thy poverty and not thy will."

**EXT. STREET. NEAR THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

TILNEY, on the march. His hand grips a copy of the

Curtain flyer.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

"JULIET" lies "dead." She lies on top of her tomb, "lying

in stage," her best dress, her hair done, her hands in

prayer at her breast, her eyes closed. "ROMEO" has found

her like this.

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"Eyes, look your last! Arms, take your

last embrace! and lips, Oh you The

doors of breath, seal with a righteous

kiss A dateless bargain to engrossing

death! Come, bitter conduct; come,

unsavory guide! Thou desparate pilot,

now at once run on The dashing rocks

thy seasick weary bark!"

As WILL embraces her, VIOLA'S eyes flicker open (shielded

by WILL from the audience) and the lovers look at each

other for a moment as WILL and VIOLA rather than as

"ROMEO" and "JULIET." Their eyes are wet with tears.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

BURBAGE and ROSALINE are watching.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

KEMPE is watching.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

We see that in the audience are several of the WHORES we

recognise from the brothel. They are weeping openly.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

WILL is raising the fatal drug in a last toast.

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"Here's to my love (he drinks) O true

Apothecary."

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE WINGS. DAY.**

FENNYMAN, moved but proud in the wings.

**FENNYMAN**

(whispers to himself)

I was good. I was great.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**WILL AS ROMEO**

"Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss

I die." (and he dies)

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

The NURSE is weeping too.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

"JULIET" wakes up with a start.

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"�Where is my lord?

I do remember well where I should be, And there I am.

Where is my Romeo?"

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

**NURSE**

(involuntarily)

Dead!

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"What here? A cup clos'd in my true

love's hand? Poison, I see, hath been

his timeless end."

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

"JULIET" takes "ROMEO'S" dagger.

**VIOLA AS JULIET**

"�O happy dagger

This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die."

She stabs herself and dies. The "inner curtain" closes

over the tomb.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE/AUDITORIUM. DAY.**

HIGH ANGLE on audience and stage. "THE PRINCE" played by

WABASH is having the last word.

**THE PRINCE**

"For never was a story of more woe

Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

The end. There is complete silence. The ACTORS are

worried. But then the audience goes mad with applause.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. THE INNER CURTAIN/STAGE. DAY.**

The inner curtain opens, but WILL and VIOLA, are in a

play of their own�embracing and kissing passionately,

making their own farewell. HENSLOWE is too stunned and

moved to react at first. Then he looks at the audience

and the penny drops. It's a hit.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. AUDITORIUM/STAGE. DAY.**

The audience roars. WILL, VIOLA, and THE COMPANY come

forward to meet the applause. TILNEY and his MEN burst

in. TILNEY jumps up onto the stage, where the ADMIRAL'S

MEN are taking their bows. TILNEY'S "COPS" ring the

stage, facing inwards.

**TILNEY**

(shouts triumphantly)

I arrest you in the name of Queen

Elizabeth!

The AUDIENCE goes quiet. BURBAGE jumps out of the

audience onto the stage.

**BURBAGE**

Arrest who, Mr. Tilney?

**TILNEY**

Everybody! The Admiral's Men, The

Chamberlain's Men and everyone of you

ne'er-do-wells who stands in contempt

of the authority invested in me by her

Majesty.

**BURBAGE**

Contempt? You closed the Rose--I have

not opened it.

TILNEY is at a loss but only for a moment.

**TILNEY**

(he points a "j'accuse"

finger at VIOLA)

That woman is a woman!

The entire audience and the actors, recoil and gasp. The

NURSE crosses herself.

**ALLEYN**

What?! A woman?! You mean that goat?!

He points at VIOLA, brazening it out without much chance.

**TILNEY**

I'll see you all in the clink! In the

same of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

And an authoritative voice from the audience interrupts

him.

**VOICE**

Mr. Tilney�!

It is QUEEN ELIZABETH herself, descending now, her hood

and cloak thrown back. She is an awesome sight. A shaft

of sunlight hits her.

**QUEEN**

Have a care with my name, you will

wear it out.

There is a general parting of the waves, soldiers and

actors, a general backing off and bowing as QUEEN

ELIZABETH takes the limelight.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

The Queen of England does not attend

exhibitions of public lewdness so

something is out of joint. Come here,

Master Kent. Let me look at you.

VIOLA comes forward, and is about to curtsey when she

catches the QUEEN'S eye, an arresting eye, which arrests

the curtsey and turns it into a sweeping bow.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

Yes, the illusion is remarkable and

your error, Mr. Tilney, easily

forgiven, but I know something of a

woman in a man's profession, yes, by

God, I do know about that. That is

enough from you, Maser Kent. If only

Lord Wessex were here.

**VOICE**

He is, Ma'am.

The voice belongs to JOHN WEBSTER. He points firmly at a

figure in the audience, WESSEX, trying to look

inconspicuous.

**WESSEX**

(weakly)

Your Majesty

**QUEEN**

There was a wager, I remember�as to

whether a play can show the very truth

and nature of love. I think you lost

it today.

(turning to WEBSTER)

You are an eager boy. Did you like the

play?

**WEBSTER**

I liked it when she stabbed herself,

your Majesty.

The QUEEN fixes WILL with a beady eye.

**QUEEN**

Master Shakespeare. Next time to you

come to Greenwich, Come as yourself

and we will speak some more. WILL bows

deeply. The QUEEN turns to leave. The

waves part for her.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. MAIN ENTRANCE. DAY.**

The QUEEN is bowed out through the doors.

**EXT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. DAY.**

A gaggle of the QUEEN'S favoured courtiers wait by her

carriage. WESSEX is hurrying down the exterior staircase

as the QUEEN emerges from the theatre. During the

following a general egress from the Auditorium is taking

place, including some of the actors crowding to see her

off. WESSEX bows out of breath.

**WESSEX**

Your Majesty!

**QUEEN**

Why, Lord Wessex! Lost your wife so

soon?

**WESSEX**

Indeed I am a bride short. How is this

to end?

VIOLA has come out of the theatre, amongst some of the

other players. The QUEEN catches her eye.

**QUEEN**

As stories must when love's

denied--with tears and a journey. Those

whom God has joined in marriage, not

even I can put asunder.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

(she turns to VIOLA)

Lord Wessex, as I foretold, has lost

his wife in the play- house--go make

your farewell and send her out. It's

time to settle accounts.

(to WESSEX)

How much was the wager?

**WESSEX**

Fifty shillings.

(the QUEEN gives him a look)

Pounds.

**QUEEN**

Give it to Master Kent. He will see it

rightfully home. WESSEX gives his

purse to VIOLA.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

(to VIOLA)

And tell Shakespeare something more

cheerful next time for Twelfth Night.

The QUEEN proceeds towards her carriage. There is an

enormous puddle between her and her carriage. The QUEEN

hesitates for a fraction and then marches through the

puddle as cloaks descend upon it.

**QUEEN (CONT'D)**

Too late, too late.

She splashes her way into her carriage, which departs.

**INT. THE CURTAIN THEATRE. STAGE. DAY.**

**WILL**

(heartbroken, testing her

name)

My Lady Wessex?

VIOLA nods, heartbroken too. For a long moment they

cannot say anything to each other. The she holds up

Wessex's purse.

**VIOLA**

A hired player no longer. Fifty

pounds, Will, for the poet of true

love.

**WILL**

I am done with theatre. The playhouse

is for dreamers. Look where the dream

has brought us.

**VIOLA**

It was we ourselves did that. And for

my life to come I would not have it

otherwise.

**WILL**

I have hurt you and I am sorry for it.

**VIOLA**

If my hurt is to be that you will

write no more, then I shall be the

sorrier.

WILL looks at her.

**VIOLA (CONT'D)**

The Queen commands a comedy, Will for

Twelfth Night.

**WILL**

(harshly)

A comedy! What will my hero be but the

saddest wretch in the kingdom, sick

with love?

**VIOLA**

An excellent beginning

(a beat)

Let him be�a duke. And your heroine?

**WILL**

(bitterly)

Sold in marriage and half way to

America.

**VIOLA**

(adjusting)

At sea, then--a voyage to a new

world?�she lands upon a vast and empty

shore. She is brought to the

duke�Orsino.

**WILL**

(despite himself)

Orsino�good name

**VIOLA**

But fearful of her virtue, she comes

to him dressed as a boy

**WILL**

(Catching it)

and thus unable to declare her love

Pause. They look at each other. Suddenly the conversation

seems to be about them.

**VIOLA**

But all ends well.

**WILL**

How does it?

**VIOLA**

I don't know. It's a mystery

WILL half smiles. Then he's serious. They look deeply at

each other�and rush into each other's arm.

**WILL (CONT'D)**

You will never age for me, nor fade,

nor die.

**VIOLA**

Nor you for me.

**WILL**

Good bye, my love, a thousand times

good bye.

**VIOLA**

Write me well.

She kisses him with finality. Then turns and runs from

him. WILL watches as she goes.

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY.**

A blank page. A hand is writing: TWELFTH NIGHT. We see

WILL sitting at his table.

**WILL (VO)**

My story starts at sea�a perilous

voyage to an unknown land�a shipwreck

**EXT. UNDERWATER. DAY.**

Two figures plunge into the water

**WILL (VO)**

the wild waters roar and heave�the

brave vessel is dashed all to pieces,

and all the helpless souls within her

drowned

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY.**

WILL at his table writing

**WILL (VO)**

all save one � a lady

**EXT. UNDERWATER. DAY.**

VIOLA in the water

**WILL (VO)**

whose soul is greater than the ocean �

and her spirit stronger than the sea's

embrace � not for her watery end, but

a new life beginning on a stranger

shore

**EXT. BEACH. DAY.**

VIOLA is walking up a vast and empty beach �.

**WILL (VO CONTINUED)**

It will be a love story � for she will

be my heroine for all time

**INT. WILL'S ROOM. DAY.**

WILL looks up from the table.

**WILL (VO CONTINUED)**

and her name will be � Viola.

He looks down at the paper, and writes: "Viola" Then:

"What country friends is this?"

**EXT. BEACH. DAY.**

DISSOLVE slowly to VIOLA, walking away up the beach

towards her brave new world.

**THE END**