

## Scene Three

(*Whitehall Palace, backstage.*)

[*MUSIC NO. 2A: "MISTRESS QUICKLY"*]

(*ACTORS prepare with a DOG. BURBAGE enters.*)

**BURBAGE.** Gentlemen of Verona. This is your two-minute call. Act One, Scene One. Wardrobe mistress, quickly.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY.** Ready, sir!

(*WILL arrives.*)

**WILL.** Burbage!

**BURBAGE.** Oh God, an author.

**WILL.** How dare you perform me here in front of the Queen without my say-so. I am still owed half of the commission.

**BURBAGE.** Not from me. I stole it from Henslowe. If he stole it from you that's his business.

**WILL.** Why is there a dog?

**BURBAGE.** The Queen loves a dog.

**WILL.** There's no dog in my *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

**BURBAGE.** There is now.

**WILL.** I demand to be paid for this, Burbage.

**BURBAGE.** I told you I will make you a partner, Shakespeare. For fifty pounds. Your hireling days will be over.

**WILL.** Where will I go for fifty pounds?

**BURBAGE.** I hear Anne Hathaway is a woman of property.

**WILL.** No, she has a cottage. What would you give me for a comedy all but done?

**BURBAGE.** What's the part?

**WILL.** Romeo. Wit, swordsman, lover.

**BURBAGE.** And the title?

**WILL.** *Romeo.*

**BURBAGE.** I shall play him. Here's two sovereigns, and two more when you show me the pages. Now begone!

*(TILNEY appears.)*

**TILNEY.** My masters, are you mad? Her Majesty is waiting!

**BURBAGE.** We are ready, Mister Tilney.

**TILNEY.** Is that the dog?

**BURBAGE.** Yes.

**TILNEY.** But it's a different dog.

**BURBAGE.** The other was eaten by a bear.

**TILNEY.** The only reason the Queen asked to see this circus – was the dog.

**ACTOR.** But Spot can do tricks, sir, look. Spot, jump! Spot, jump!

*(The DOG fails to jump.)*

**BURBAGE.** I assure you he brings the house down at the Curtain.

**TILNEY.** It doesn't look funny.

**BURBAGE.** Nerves. He's never played the Palace.

**TILNEY.** If you don't go up this instant I will revoke your charter.

**BURBAGE.** Gentlemen. Beginners, please.