

Scene Seventeen

MUSICIANS. (*sung*)

WHAT IS LOVE? 'TIS NOT HEREAFTER;
PRESENT MIRTH HATH PRESENT LAUGHTER;
WHAT'S TO COME IS STILL UNSURE:
YOUTH'S A STUFF WILL NOT EDURE.

(*Viola's bedroom. VIOLA runs in, distraught.
WILL follows.*)

WILL. Thomas? Viola? O brave new world! Are you my
actor or my muse?

VIOLA. I am both but should be neither.

WILL. Can you love a fool?

VIOLA. Can you love a player?

WILL. If he is made like you.

(*WILL gently takes off VIOLA's moustache.*)

VIOLA. Sir, I am a lady.

(*They are about to kiss.*)

WILL. Wait! You are still a maid and perhaps mistook in
me as I was mistook in Thomas Kent.

VIOLA. Are you not the author of the plays of William
Shakespeare?

WILL. I am.

VIOLA. Then kiss me for I am not mistook.

(*They kiss.*)

VIOLA. You have bound me to you.

WILL. Then let me unbind thee.

(*WILL tries to take off VIOLA's jacket to unwind
her binding but she takes pages from his pocket.*)

VIOLA. What is this?

WILL. Nothing.

VIOLA. What are these pages?

WILL. They can wait.

VIOLA. No, I must see them. (*reads*)

[*MUSIC NO. 24: "THE BEDROOM"*]

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

Is it the East, and Juliet is the sun!

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.

Oh, Will!

WILL. Do you like it?

VIOLA.

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp...

You—

WILL.

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

VIOLA.

Ay me!

This is wondrous.

WILL. (*from memory*)

She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel...

VIOLA. (*reading*)

Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

WILL.

O, be some other name!

VIOLA.

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.
Romeo, doff thy name;
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

(Reads on.)

I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised.

Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

WILL.

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

VIOLA. She leaves?

WILL. But returns. I came on something. The friar who
marries them will take up their destinies.

VIOLA. So it will end well for love?

WILL. In heaven perhaps. It is not a comedy I am writing
now.

VIOLA. A tragedy?

WILL. Come, there will be time for plays.

VIOLA. Wait. There is more.

I would I were thy bird.
Sweet, so would I.
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

My bounty is as boundless as the sea...

WILL & VIOLA.

My love as deep.

WILL.

The more I give to thee,
The more I have. For both are infinite.

(WILL and VIOLA dive into bed.)

End of Act One