

HENSLOWE. I didn't know you were a patron of the arts.
Get him a chair, someone.

WESSEX. *(to WILL)* You inconsequential coward. This time I
will cut you to pieces.

(BURBAGE enters.)

BURBAGE. Shakespeare! You owe me a play.

WESSEX. Shakespeare!?

*(WILL and WESSEX fight. The fight culminates in
WILL stabbing WESSEX with a dagger, much to the
COMPANY's horror.)*

WESSEX. *(realizing it is a theatrical prop, draws his own)* This is
a dagger.

(WILL and WESSEX continue to fight.)

WILL. This is the murderer of Kit Marlowe!

(WILL is about to deal the fatal blow...)

EVERYONE. No!!

WESSEX. I rejoiced at his death because I thought it was
yours. That is all I know of Marlowe.

NED. It's true, Will. It was a tavern brawl. Marlowe attacked –
got his own knife in his eye. A quarrel about the bill.

HENSLOWE. The bill! Oh, vanity, vanity.

NED. Not the billing. The bill.

(TILNEY enters with WEBSTER.)

TILNEY. Enough of this play-acting. This theatre is closed.

HENSLOWE. Mister Tilney. What is this?

TILNEY. The theatre. A pit of sedition, filth, and treachery.
I'd have them all ploughed into the ground and
covered over with lime— *(sees WESSEX and bows)* My
Lord Wessex.

WESSEX. Carry on, Tilney.

TILNEY. Under the seal of the Lord Chamberlain, the
Rose Theatre is closed for public indecency.

HENSLOWE. Admittedly we are under-rehearsed, but is this really a moral issue?

TILNEY. For the displaying of a female on the public stage.

(TILNEY grabs SAM and lifts up his skirt.)

WEBSTER. Not him. Her.

(WEBSTER advances on VIOLA.)

TILNEY. Him?!

HENSLOWE. Master Kent's a woman?!

TILNEY. Really?

WEBSTER. Look.

(WEBSTER whips off VIOLA's hat and moustache.)

TILNEY. My Lady de Lesseps!

HENSLOWE. Viola de Lesseps?

WESSEX. Viola! Good God. Here. Dressed as a common actor. Tilney, do your duty.

TILNEY. Henslowe!

HENSLOWE. I am amazed. I knew nothing of this.

VIOLA. Nobody knew.

WEBSTER. *(points to WILL)* He did. I saw him kissing her bobbies.

TILNEY. Kissing her where?!

WEBSTER. In the wardrobe. Him.

TILNEY. Let me be straight with you. Her Majesty is only too willing to bid these dens of vice farewell. Henslowe, you will never play again. The Rose Theatre is closed.

(TILNEY storms off.)

WESSEX. *(to WILL)* I came to have your life. But it is not worth the taking. Viola, come with me.

VIOLA. I am so sorry, Mister Henslowe, Mister Alleyn, Sam, Mister Wabash. I just wanted to be an actor.