

Scene Eleven

(Will's room. WILL is writing. MARLOWE appears.)

MARLOWE. Not so bad after all, Will.

WILL. Angels and ministers of grace defend us. Are you a ghost?

MARLOWE. If I am not, I'll break my quill. I was right, you are quite good.

WILL. They said you were dead.

MARLOWE. Yes, they say that. Your health, Will.

WILL. And yours, Kit.

MARLOWE. What's next?

WILL. A new play. For Twelfth Night.

MARLOWE. Good title.

WILL. Really?

MARLOWE. And the comedy?

WILL. Comedy! What will my hero be but the saddest wretch in the kingdom, sick with love.

MARLOWE. Good start. Let him be...a duke.

WILL. Orsino.

MARLOWE. Good name. And your heroine?

WILL. Sold in marriage and halfway to Americal And so my story begins at sea...a perilous voyage to an unknown land...a shipwreck—

MARLOWE. A shipwreck is good.

WILL. The wild waters roar and heave...the brave vessel is dashed all to pieces and all the hapless souls are drowned—

MARLOWE. A comedy?

WILL. —save one: a woman whose soul is greater than the ocean and her spirit stronger than the sea's embrace.

Not for her a watery end, but a new life beginning on a stranger shore, the province of the duke, Orsino.

MARLOWE. And then...

WILL. Fearful of her virtue she comes to him dressed as a boy.

MARLOWE. Thus unable to declare her love. Funny.

WILL. No, the comedy is with the clapped-out veterans and cross-gartered prigs who rule the household. Viola is the spirit of freedom, of true love trying against all bounds to be out.

MARLOWE. But how will it end?

(WILL is back at his desk, writing furiously.)

WILL. Happily.

MARLOWE. But how?

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

The End

[MUSIC NO. 45: "CURTAIN CALL"]

[MUSIC NO. 46: "HOUSE OUT"]