

Scene Three

SIDE #3

*(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.)

END

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.