

Scene Five

(De Lesseps Hall, Viola's bedroom.)

[MUSIC NO. 5: "BED ARRIVES"]

(VIOLA is performing for an imaginary audience.)

VIOLA.

What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?
 What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?
 Unless it be to think that she is by
 And feed upon the shadow of perfection.

~~MUSICIANS. *(sung)*~~

~~O, STAY AND HEAR! YOUR TRUE LOVE'S COMING,
 THAT CAN SING BOTH HIGH AND LOW.~~

VIOLA.

Except I be by Silvia in the night,
 There is no music in the nightingale;
 Unless I look on Silvia in the day,
 There is no day for me to look upon.

Such poetry...

(Viola's NURSE enters.)

...But how can one care for Silvia while she is – by
 the order of the Lord Chamberlain – played by a
 pipsqueak boy in petticoats!

NURSE. I liked the dog.

VIOLA. Stage love will never be real love until we women
 can be onstage ourselves. Yet when can we see
 another?

NURSE. When the Queen commands it.

VIOLA. But at the playhouse.

NURSE. Playhouses are not for well-born ladies.

VIOLA. I am not so well-born.

NURSE. Well-monied is the same as well-born these days and well-married better than both. Lord Wessex was looking at you tonight.

VIOLA. All the men at court are without poetry. If they look at me they see my father's fortune. I will have poetry in my life. And adventure. And love. Love above all.

NURSE. Like Valentine and Silvia?

VIOLA. No – not the artful postures of love, but the love that overthrows life. Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a riot in the heart, and nothing to be done, come ruin or rapture. Love like there has never been in a play. I will have love or I will end my days –

NURSE. As a nurse?

VIOLA. But I would be Valentine and Silvia too, somehow. Good Nurse, God save you and good night. I would stay asleep my whole life if I could dream myself into a company of players.