

Scene Nine

(Inside De Lesseps Hall, decorated for a ball. The COMPANY dances. Out of the action emerges a conversation between WESSEX and SIR ROBERT DE LESSEPS.)

WESSEX. Where is she, Sir Robert? I am starting to wonder if she is a mythical beast of your invention.

DE LESSEPS. She will come, I assure you. She is a beauty, My Lord, as would take a king to church for a dowry of nutmeg.

WESSEX. My plantations in Virginia are not mortgaged for a nutmeg. I have an ancient name that will bring you preferment when your grandson is a Wessex. Is she fertile?

DE LESSEPS. She will breed. If she do not, send her back.

WESSEX. And obedient?

DE LESSEPS. As any mule in Christendom. But if you are the man to ride her, there are rubies in the saddle.

WESSEX. I like her.

DE LESSEPS. Come, she will be down any moment.

doors,
lready
now.
Wessex.