

NICK exits in a huff. NIGEL steadies himself.

NIGEL

Yes, you can. Yes, you can.

(HE sits, tries to write)

Uggggh, no you can't.

HE stands to leave and is blocked by A WOMAN IN A CLOAK (PORTIA).

Oh. Good day, mistress.

PORTIA

"Good days were those when lit with love, till dusk of death did herald th'eternal night"

NIGEL

Hey—I wrote that.

The WOMAN lowers her hood, revealing herself to be PORTIA.

PORTIA

Yes, I know.

(holding up a page)

I accidentally took this after our first encounter. Your sonnet. It's—perfection.

NIGEL

Really? You thought it was... good?

PORTIA

It... touched me in places I did not know could be touched.

PORTIA suddenly realizes how that sounded, turns away—embarrassed.

Forgive me. Poetry is forbidden in my house, especially poems of earthly love.

(melodramatically; to the heavens)

OH, IS THERE NO PITY SITTING IN THE CLOUDS THAT SEES INTO THE
BOTTOM OF MY GRIEF?!

NIGEL

Romeo and Juliet, Act 3, Scene 5.

PORTIA

You've seen it?

NIGEL

Six times, and you?

PORTIA

Eight! If my father knew, he would disown me.

NIGEL

My brother, too.

PORTIA

I adore Shakespeare.

NIGEL

Me, too! I've got a Comedy of Errors, first edition.

PORTIA

I've got Sonnet number 1. Signed!

NIGEL

Wow!

PORTIA

I know! Heh-heh, heh-heh...

NIGEL

Heh-heh, heh-heh...

THEY giggle together; nerdy, awkward laughs and snorts. Then...

NIGEL

(weakly)

That's awesome.

PORTIA

I think you're his equal — if not better.

NIGEL

What??? No way.

PORTIA

Oh yes. Your sonnet has Shakespearean sophistication mixed with the complexity of Daniel Webster and the sensitivity of Samuel Daniel.

#7 — *I Love the Way*

NIGEL

Wow. You really love poetry.

PORTIA

Oh, I do. I really, really do.

(SHE sings)

I LOVE SIDNEY AND MARLOWE
AND OFTEN I BORROW THEIR WORDS