

John, Henry, Alice, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Ben

JOHN. How? How how how is another one of us gone?

HENRY. Good night, sweet prince.

ELIZABETH. He wasn't that sweet. He'd be the first to admit it.

ALICE. True.

HENRY. Good night, proud, loud, and rowdy prince.

REBECCA. That's more like it.

ALICE. Certainly the Burbage I knew.

HENRY. *(A sudden toast.)* To good men, and good players.

JOHN. With good wives. Such good wives.

BEN. *Alewives.* They're the ones you can count on. *(To Alice.)* I'm looking at you.

ALICE. Please don't.

BEN. Can't help it.

ALICE. Please try.

ELIZABETH. I thought you didn't believe in love, Ben, your plays don't.

BEN. There is rational love and there is heedless passion, and only one of those is worth enshrining in literature.

ALICE. And only one of those is worth watching onstage, which is exactly why Will outdid you.

BEN. *Out-what?* He never outdid me in all my life, that untrained populist.

ALICE. *A poet of the heart always beats a scholar.* No highborn Latin rationalism can grip like a story of passion, of men and women alight with revenge or love or loss. You wrote for professors, he wrote for people. And for good or ill the latter rule the world I live in.

HENRY. I'll drink to that and so would Burbage.

BEN. Marry me.

ALICE. Aren't you already married?

BEN. Probably.

ALICE. To be so smart, Ben, you are so ridiculous.

BEN. You know it's only because I secretly love you that you get to talk to me that way.

REBECCA. Move away from my daughter, Ben. I like your plays but not your reputation.

BEN. I did not kill that man and if I did it was a long time ago. I'm going to bed.

JOHN. Leaving us so soon, Ben?

BEN. Yes I am because life is short and shitty and your daughter won't give me any more beer, and when friends and art are lost, what's left for men to seek but God and hops.

HENRY. Only one of those is supposed to answer prayers.

BEN. Oh shut up, Henry.

ELIZABETH. Do you need help home, Ben?

BEN. I just walked to Scotland and back, I can walk up the street.

ELIZABETH. Why'd you walk to Scotland, Ben?

BEN. *Because I'm a man and I felt like it and I did it and Will and Burbage and every good man is dying before our eyes and I'm tired and good night.*

Ben exits.

ALICE. Always a pleasure, that one.

Ben comes back in—

JOHN. What now, Ben?

BEN. *(To Alice.)* Did I tell you that I love you?

ALICE. You did.

BEN. Secretly?

ALICE. You did.

BEN. All right then.

Ben grabs whomever's beer is closest to him and finishes it as he really exits.

ELIZABETH. I'll retire as well, Henry. Sans pageant. Good night all and God bless.

HENRY. WaitWaitWait my dear. I just...I must say how lost and low I would be without you.

ELIZABETH. I know my love. Don't stay up too late. *(To Alice.)* Funerals always make them so sweet.

REBECCA. Wait, Liz, I'm off as well. The morning is nigh and I can neither spoil the children nor the produce. *(To Alice.)* See your father

finds a bed at some point. *(To the room.)* Good night and God rest his soul.

JOHN. HENRY. ALICE.

Good night. Good night, dear. Good night, Mum.

HENRY. I don't know how men do it without good women.

JOHN. Do what?

HENRY. Exactly.

JOHN. All right. One more and then to bed. *(Lifting a glass.)* To Burbage.

