

Shakespeare in Love Character Breakdown

(* = Principal role)

The Playwrights

***Will Shakespeare** — Male-presenting, late 20's, all ethnicities. Poet and playwright. Quick on his feet, friend to and playful competitor of Kit Marlowe. A passionate love-interest character who kisses Viola on stage.

***Kit Marlowe** — Male-presenting, late 20's, all ethnicities. Shakespeare's contemporary. A more successful playwright, smooth and charming, perpetually good-humoured and encouraging.

The De Lesseps House

***Viola de Lesseps/Thomas Kent** — Female-presenting, plays both genders, 20's, all ethnicities. Shakespeare's muse. A noblewoman who fiercely dreams of becoming an actor. Since it was illegal in Shakespearian times for women to perform on stage, at great personal risk, she disguises herself as Thomas Kent in order to perform in Romeo and Juliet. Betrothed to Lord Wessex. A passionate love-interest character who kisses Shakespeare on stage.

Nurse — Female-presenting, 40's, all ethnicities. Comic character. Viola's devoted servant and confidant. Helps her lady to dress as an actor and avoid Lord Wessex.

Sir Robert de Lesseps — Male-presenting, 50's, any ethnicity. Viola's father, who insists that Viola marry Wessex against her will.

***Lord Wessex** — Male-presenting, 30's, all ethnicities. A cash-poor nobleman betrothed to Viola.

Catling — Male-presenting, 20's to 40's, all ethnicities. A guard at De Lesseps Hall.

Guards (2) — Male-presenting, 20's to 40's, all ethnicities. They patrol De Lesseps Hall.

The Rose Theatre

***Henslowe** — Male-presenting, 40's-50's, all ethnicities. The owner and manager of the Rose Theatre, which will host Shakespeare's newest comedy.

***Fennyman** — Male-presenting, 40's-50's, all ethnicities. Producer of plays — aka The Money. A ruthless loan shark with no sense of humour.

Frees & Lambert — Male-presenting, 20's -40's, all ethnicities. Fennyman's flunkies who help him collect debts owed to him — aka The Muscle.

Ralph — Male-presenting, 30-50, all ethnicities. Bartender with actorly ambitions. (Plays Juliet's Nurse and Petruchio, a member of Tybalt's gang with only one line, in Romeo & Juliet.)

Nol — Male-presenting, 20-40, all ethnicities. An amateur actor. (Plays Benvolio, Lord Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin, and Sampson, a Capulet servant.)

Robin — Male-presenting, 20-40, all ethnicities. A novice actor. (Plays Lady Capulet. Can also play Abraham, one of Montague's servants.)

Adam — Male-presenting, 30's-60's, all ethnicities. A novice actor. (Plays Gregory, a Capulet servant, and the Servingman.)

John Webster — Male-presenting, young teenager, all ethnicities. Street urchin and troublemaker who aspires to be an actor, and possesses an unsettling fondness for plays featuring pain and gore.

Wabash — Male-presenting, 30-40, all ethnicities. Henslowe's tailor. An aspiring actor with a stammer. He delivers the prologue to Romeo and Juliet.

The Admiral's Men

Ned Alleyn — Male-presenting, late 20's, all ethnicities. Larger than life lead actor of the Admiral's Men. Plays Mercutio, Romeo's kinsman and close friend.

Sam — Male-presenting, teenager, all ethnicities. Sweet teenage actor who plays Juliet, and causes panic in Shakespeare's company when his voice changes on the day of Romeo and Juliet's first performance.)

Peter — Male-presenting, 20-40, all ethnicities. A novice actor who plays Tybalt, Juliet's cousin.

The Chamberlain's Men

***Richard Burbage** — Male-presenting, 30's-40's, all ethnicities. The lead actor of the Chamberlain's Men, a rival troupe to the Admiral's Men, and the owner of the Curtain Theatre.

Other Actors — Male-presenting, all ages, all ethnicities. Includes two who play Valentine and Proteus in The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Heavies (2) — Male-presenting, all ages, all ethnicities. Do Burbage's dirty work for him.

Dog — Gender flexible! Actor in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona". A calm, obedient dog, comfortable with people and large crowds.

The Palace

Mistress Quickly — Female-presenting, 25-45, all ethnicities. Wardrobe Mistress at Whitehall Palace.

Lord Edmund Tilney — Male-presenting, 50-60 years, all ethnicities. The Lord Chamberlain, and obsequious courtier to Queen Elizabeth. As manager of court entertainment, he is responsible for censorship of drama in England.

Queen Elizabeth I — Female-presenting, 50+ years, all ethnicities. The Queen of England — aka The Boss. Last monarch of the Tudor dynasty. Loves theatre but demands comedies that incorporate dogs.

The Tavern

Rower/Boatman — Male-presenting, 30's-60's, all ethnicities. A chatty aspiring playwright.

Server/Waiter — Gender flexible, any age, all ethnicities.

Bartender/Barman — Gender flexible, any age, all ethnicities.

Kate & Molly — Female-presenting, 20's-30's, any ethnicity. Tavern whores who flirt with Will and other patrons.