

VIOLA DE LESSUPS (early 20s) A young romantic isolated by her own nobility from the art she so desperately craves. She adores poetry and is in love with the idea of love. Passionate, confident, and full of life.

WILL SHAKESPEARE (20s) A poet trying to leave his artistic mark on the world. He is cunning, intelligent, passionate, with struggling confidence.

KIT MARLOWE (late 20s – mid 30s) A well respected playwright, although he needs to keep working to pay the bills. A little older, a little wiser, and a lot more confident than Will, he is both his mentor and his closest friend.

NURSE (late 20s – mid 50s) Viola's caretaker. Frustrated by Viola's tendency to buck societal trends, but devoutly loyal to her charge.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I (mid 30s – early 60s,) The head of state and the face of an entire nation. She enjoys the theatre, especially when there's a dog involved. She is wise and calculated, not necessarily cold, but well aware of the societal structure that she not only adheres to but represents.

JOHN WEBSTER (late teens –) A young man drawn to the theatre because of its potential for horrific gory scenes and bloody battles. A trouble maker by nature and a pain in the neck in rehearsals. A bit of a harmless psychopath.

NED ALLEYN (late 20s – late 30s, any race) One of the most popular actors of the day. A leading man who has drunk his own Kool-Aid 100%. Although seemingly egotistical, selfish, and opinionated at a glance, he takes his craft very seriously and has the deepest respect for committed theatre artists. He really likes himself on stage and off.

RICHARD BURBAGE (early 30s – mid 40s, any race) An accomplished stage actor who relishes his fame above all else. He is melodramatic, completely over the top, but undeniably talented. Pompous but likeable. He has earned enough success as a performer that he owns and operates his own theater.

LORD WESSEX (late 20s – mid 40s, any race) A man with a title but no money, a fact that fills him with frustration and insecurity. He has been trained in the noble arts of etiquette and swordplay, but is bad with words and worse with people. An unlikeable prig.

HENSLOWE (early 30s – late 50s, any race) Owner of The Rose Theater. He is a business man at heart, more concerned with turning a profit than creating fine art. He doesn't understand the intricacies of theatrical structure, but he knows what he likes: broad comedy. Calling him an idiot is an overstatement, but not a huge one.

FENNYMAN (mid 30s – late 50s, any race) A ruthless loan shark who finances theatre plays in return for a piece of the profit. He enjoys the theatre but knows very little about it. He is a bit of a gangster, unafraid to get his hands dirty when his clients are unable to repay their debts.

TILNEY (early 30s – mid 50s, any race) The Master of Revels for the English crown. Although his chief responsibility is to oversee royal festivities, he is concerned with stage censorship, which makes him both respected and feared by professional theatre artists, especially those seeking to create new works.

ENSEMBLE – There are 12-14 ensemble tracks to be played by actors of different genders, all of whom will play multiple roles in the production. Artistic and functional in their responsibilities, these are the individuals that make this show work.