

NELL. I saw it. In your face. You looked away. And your breath changed. You took a short breath.

CHARLES. Meaning what, exactly?

NELL. Meaning you're covering. You've got more in your pate than you're saying.

CHARLES. And what makes you so sure?

NELL. I'm an actress, sir. We trade in the language of the face. Go on. You sup from the very best china – but...

Pause.

CHARLES. But... my father was killed in front of a crowd. And I was there. I watched.

NELL. Sorry.

Pause.

CHARLES. People have expectations. Notions of what they want me to be.

NELL. I know all about that.

CHARLES. I suppose you do.

NELL. Still, I wouldn't swap.

CHARLES. Sorry?

NELL. Not being able to go where my feet take me or say what I like? I wouldn't be King for all your crown jewels.

CHARLES. That sounds like treason, young lady. I could have you strung up.

NELL. Now that would be a shame. If you had me killed in Act One, how'd you know what happens next?

CHARLES. Isn't it obvious? Boy meets girl, girl resists, then, after a bit of badinage... he bags her.

NELL. That's your experience, is it?

CHARLES. Every time.

NELL. You haven't been watching the right plays, sir. The girl in this tale isn't half so predictable.

Music.

And that's my cue. Anon. (*Exits.*)

CHARLES. I... (*Pause.*) Well, I'll be damned.

Scene Eleven

The Enchanted Island

Cut to a crisis. The COMPANY are gathered and tempers are frayed.

DRYDEN. So, far away on a distant shore, there is a wizard, who lives on an island. And his name is Prospero!

NANCY. Wait a minute –

DRYDEN. With his daughter Miranda –

HART. Dryden, is this your / idea?

DRYDEN. And his other daughter, Dorinda.

NED/NANCY. / Oh!

KYNASTON. Oh! Dorinda?

DRYDEN. Then, when a ship is wrecked off the coast in a tempest... – (*Looking warily at the others.*) tempest... uous storm, some men are washed ashore!

NELL. Sounds exciting.

NANCY. Sounds familiar.

KILLIGREW. Enough of that. This is *The Enchanted Island* by Mr Dryden. Nell, you're to play Miranda; Kynaston, Dorinda. Ned, you're the mermaid. And Hart, you can cheer up. You're to play Prospero.

HART. The strapping young hero?