

SCENE 3: Under London Bridge

Underneath London Bridge, NIGEL enters. PORTIA emerges from hiding.

NIGEL

Portia!

THEY embrace.

PORTIA

Oh, Nigel! You made it! I had to climb out the window, but I don't think anyone saw me...

NIGEL

Are you certain you want to do this?

PORTIA

Yes.

NIGEL

Because we don't have to if you don't want to.

PORTIA

No, no, I *want* to. I'm just... nervous.

NIGEL

So am I.

(lays his coat on the ground)

Is here okay?

SHE nods, sits. NIGEL reaches into his ^{Satchel} ~~coat~~ piece, feeling for something. Portia looks away – until Nigel pulls out a PARCHMENT and reads.

NIGEL

"ODE TO Portia" – by Nigel Bottom.

(very fast)

"Like-stars-and-sun-together-never seen,
yet-heaven-made-us-one-our-flames to-shine,"

PORTIA

Whoa, whoa. Slow down.

NIGEL

Sorry – guess I'm more nervous than I thought. Let me try that again...

(deep breath, starting over)

Like stars and sun together never seen, yet heaven made us one our flames to shine...

PORTIA

Oh God...

SHE'S overcome with sensation that is new to her.

NIGEL

Through night and day, no dusk or dawn between, and none could dim our light nor love divine...

PORTIA

Mmmmm-hmmm...

NIGEL

(a little faster)

"Astronomers — behold these starry eyes!"

PORTIA

Mmm-HMMM...

NIGEL

"Forbidden love — bid secret hearts beat loud!"

PORTIA

Keep going...

NIGEL

"If laws of man our stately love denies."

PORTIA

Don't stop...

NIGEL

"In laws of nature is our love allowed."

PORTIA

Yes!

NIGEL

(really fast)

"And-to-the-stars-will-fly the elusive-dove-to-heaven's-gate-with-my-eternal-love!"

(breathless, turns away)

I finished too quickly. I skipped straight to the final couplet.

PORTIA

It's okay.

(goes to him, hugs him from behind)

It was beautiful. Will you write me another?

NIGEL

What, straight away?

PORTIA

No, not straight away. But—this is what you should be writing, words that feel true to *you*.

NIGEL

You mean instead of *Omelette*? I know. That just doesn't feel right...

PORTIA

Then don't write it. Write from your heart. It will move others as it has moved me.

NIGEL

Will it move your father? Change his mind? He doesn't approve of us.

PORTIA

Neither does your brother. Oooh! Does that make us star-crossed??

NIGEL, PORTIA

<GASP – then giggle>

NIGEL

Wait, that's not a good thing. We both know how that story ends— with me drinking poison and you with a dagger in your heart.

#14 – *We See the Light*

PORTIA

Maybe it doesn't have to. Maybe we can write a *different* ending.

(singing)

I'M TIRED OF LISTENING
TO THE SAME SAD STORY
HOW LOVERS FAIL
BECAUSE IT'S WRITTEN IN THE STARS
THE FEUDING FAMILY PLOT
IS STARTING TO BORE ME
I'M THINKING WE
CAN SHOW 'EM THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE

IT MAY TAKE A LITTLE MORE PERSUADING
FOR THOSE WHO THINK IT'S BETTER