

SCENE 4: Nick & Bea's House

NICK enters. NIGEL is at the table eating from a bowl. BEA is at the cast iron kettle over the fire.

NICK

Hello, darling. How was your day?

~~THEY kiss.~~

BEA

Interesting. I went to the stocks and watched the mob throw cabbages at the criminals.

NICK

What'd you do that for?? You hate all that!

BEA

I know, it was awful.

(handing him a bowl)

Boiled cabbage?

NICK

Ah. I see.

~~NIGEL~~

~~I think it's delicious.~~

BEA

~~Aw, thanks Nige.~~ There would've been meat, but the landlord came by demanding the rent— took our last shilling right out of my hand. Then I was gonna surprise you with some mutton— but sheep are *fast*.

NICK

Wait, wh— you chased a SHEEP? Alright, that's it.

HE pushes away from the table and heads for a WOODEN LOCK BOX on the mantle.

BEA

What are you doing?

NICK

I'm just...

HE grabs the money box. SHE quickly takes it away.

BEA

No! We've been through this, we do not touch the money box!

SHE puts it back.

NICK

Come on, Bea... we shouldn't have to live like this. You deserve better.

BEA

And so do you – we all do, and that's what we're saving for. A better life. A simple cottage in the country, for all of us. You, me, a couple of kids...

~~(taking money back, passing Nigel)~~

~~...a room for Nigel and maybe his wife one day?...~~

~~NIGEL~~

~~(embarrassed)~~

~~Oh, stop it..~~

BEA

Now, I know it's been a while since we've put any money in there, and that's why I was thinking – I should get a job.

NICK

What? No, if you get a job, that will just make me feel like a failure. None of the other writers' wives have jobs.

BEA

Well, they should. This is the nineties! We've got a woman on the throne and by the year 1600, women will be completely equal to men. Ooh! I just thought of the perfect job for me. I could be in your play!

NICK

What?? You can't act.

SHE BURST INTO TEARS, covers her face with her hands.

Sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

BEA

Gotcha. See I can act.

STOP

NICK

You know it's *illegal* to put women on stage.

NIGEL

And anyway, our play's been cancelled.

BEA

What?

NICK

Not cancelled, Nige. That's such a negative way to put it.