

HENRY. (*The start of an idea.*) What if we...gather them. Collect them all.

JOHN. Isn't that what we just said we're doing?

HENRY. Collect them not in a drawer somewhere but in a...a book.

ALICE. A book?

JOHN. Of Will's plays?

HENRY. Something simple, just to have them all together, so we know they're safe. Have Crane pen them on fine paper. A collection of Will's work, for *us*.

JOHN. It would be nice to see them all again.

HENRY. Wouldn't it? I don't think Will would mind.

ALICE. I think he'd love it.

JOHN. Aye. He would.

HENRY. (*Another idea.*) And. If we're going to collect them all in a book anyway we could just...publish them.

JOHN. Now we're publishers?

ALICE. Publish all the plays.

HENRY. Yes, and not in some cheap quarto like those pirated versions, *our* version, the real plays by William Shakespeare set down as they were done by us. But for everyone.

ALICE. I don't know, I think that's rather brilliant.

JOHN. Aye but rather futile. Henry, it's scores of plays. The book would be as big as a log. And we don't have the rights to half of them anyway.

HENRY. Yes we do. The King's Men have the rights to *all* Will's plays. He wrote for *us*.

JOHN. For *performance* not printing. The rights to print the plays go to whoever prints it first, hence the artless quartos with Will's name.

HENRY. Exactly! We can't let that be what's remembered. We publish the right plays rightly. We must.

JOHN. Even if we could get the rights we don't have the money to do this.

HENRY. We can find the money.

JOHN. You mean *I* can find the money.

HENRY. Exactly what I meant.

JOHN. Henry.

HENRY. John. Publish or vanish. That's the choice I see.

*Beat.*