

WILL. Good luck, Sam.

(SAM makes a long, deep growling sound.)

Sam?!?

HENSLOWE. All those expectant faces. Expecting a man with a dog. Never mind, eh? Good luck everybody.

(The COMPANY ritually touches hands.)

COMPANY. One, two, three...to silence.

HENSLOWE. Off we go.

WILL. Good luck, Mister Wabash.

WABASH. Break a leg yourself, W...W...W...Will.

HENSLOWE. I think he'll be fine. Music, trumpets!

(Fanfare.)

[MUSIC NO. 35: "R&J PROLOGUE"]

And...the Chorus. Mister Wabash, on you go.

(The scene flips front, facing the audience.)

WABASH is agonisingly alone on stage. An awful pause.)

Begin: WABASH. T-t-t-t-t- *(stops and decides to have another go)* T-t-t-t-t t-t-t-t-t-t-t-t-t-t-twooooo...h-h-households b-both alike in d-d-d-ignity. *(suddenly finds his voice and is wonderfully fluent)*

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife...

[MUSIC NO. 36: "R&J PROLOGUE END"]

(The scene flips to backstage.)

HENSLOWE. It's a mystery, Mister Shakespeare. A mystery.

(WABASH collapses, overcome.)

End