

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

lightly edited by Peter Gould

and rendered into SCENES with annotation

for "Get Thee to the Funnery" camp

Vermont, 2020

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
by William Shakespeare
lightly edited by Peter Gould (69%)
for "Get Thee to the Funnery" 2020

the CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF VENICE
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, suitor to Portia
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, suitor to Portia
ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice
BASSANIO, his friend, suitor to Portia
SALANIO, friend of Antonio and Bassanio
GRATIANO, friend of Antonio and Bassanio
SALERIO, friend of Antonio and Bassanio
LORENZO, in love with Jessica
SHYLOCK, a Jewish money-lender
TUBAL, a friend of Shylock
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a clown, servant to Shylock
LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio
BALTHASAR, servant to Portia
STEPHANO, servant to Portia
PORTIA, a rich heiress
NERISSA, her waiting-gentlewoman
JESSICA, daughter of Shylock
A JAILOR and OFFICERS OF THE COURT OF VENICE

SCENE I.

Venice. A street. Enter ANTONIO, SALERIO, and SALANIO

{In this scene we meet Antonio, who is sad, and his friends, who tell us why he must be sad: because all his money is tied up with his merchant vessels at sea. Antonio is the Merchant of Venice. It is never completely explained why he is sad. Depressed? Unlucky in love? Love of Bassanio, his close friend?}

ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,

What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
 I am to learn;
 And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
 That I have much ado to know myself.

SALERIO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
 Where all your argosies are under sail.

SALANIO

Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
 The better part of my affections would
 Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
 Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
 Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
 And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would make me sad.

SALERIO

My wind, cooling my broth,
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
 What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
 Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial.

SALANIO Should I go to church
 And see the holy edifice of stone,
 I would bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks—
 Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
 That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
 But tell not me; I know, Antonio
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO

Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one vessel trusted,
 My merchandise makes me not sad.

SALERIO

Why, then you are in love.

ANTONIO

Fie, fie!

SALANIO

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry—

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

SALANIO

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.

SALERIO

I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

SALANIO

Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

SALERIO

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Exeunt Salerio and Salanio

LORENZO

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

BASSANIO

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO

You look not well, Signior Antonio;
Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

ANTONIO

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO

Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
I tell thee what, Antonio--
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks--
But fish not, with this melancholy bait!

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO

Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRATIANO

Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO

BASSANIO

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more
than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two
grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you
shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you
have them, they are not worth the search.

{In the next part of the first scene—now that the other friends have left— the second point of the plot is revealed: Bassanio's love for Portia, and how he needs money from his friend to court her. Antonio displays his generosity and his love for Bassanio by pledging to support him however he can.}

ANTONIO

Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

BASSANIO

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By spending more than my faint means would grant.

But my chief care

Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

ANTONIO

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,

My purse, my person, my extremest means,
 Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.
 Then do but say to me what I should do
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left;
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages:
 Her name is Portia.
 From every coast the four winds do blow in
 Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
 That many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them,
 Then I should questionless be fortunate!

ANTONIO

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
 Neither have I money nor commodity
 To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do:
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is, and I no question make
 To have it of my trust or for my sake.

Exeunt

SCENE 2:

Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house. Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

{In this scene we learn another plot point: Portia must marry, but she must be courted and won by a suitor in the weird way her deceased father has commanded. So she and her serving maid review the candidates who have come, and left, and show their preference for Bassanio}

PORTIA

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of
 this great world.

NERISSA

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.

PORTIA

Good sentences and well pronounced.

NERISSA

They would be better, if well followed.

PORTIA

Tis not easy to follow one's own instructions:

I can easier teach

twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching.

But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!'

I may not choose whom I would, nor refuse

whom I dislike; a living daughter's will

is curb'd by a dead father. Is it not hard,

Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

NERISSA

Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

PORTIA and NERISSA discuss at length the awful suitors who have come forth thus far to woo her.... Eventually:

NERISSA

You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords:

they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

PORTIA

I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

NERISSA

Do you not remember, lady, a certain Venetian,
a scholar and a soldier, that came hither
once in company?

PORTIA

Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

NERISSA

True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish
eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

PORTIA

I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man (Stephano)

How now! what news?

SERVANT

The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take
their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a
fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the
prince his master will be here to-night.

PORTIA

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates

upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. *Exeunt*

SCENE 3.

Venice. A public place. Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK

{In this scene we meet Shylock, the Jewish person whom Bassanio seeks to borrow money from, since Antonio has no ready money. Antonio, however, agrees to be the person at risk in the transaction. He does this for his friend. We also see that there is no affection between Shylock and Antonio. Shylock doesn't like that Antonio lends money for free, therefore competing with Shylock who is a usurer. We hear also about the Jewish dietary restrictions, and the way that Antonio the Christian has previously treated Shylock. }

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats; well.

BASSANIO

Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK

For three months; well.

BASSANIO

For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

SHYLOCK

Antonio shall become bound; well. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO

May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK

Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK

Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripoli, another to the Indies; I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO

Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK

I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO

If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK

Yes, to smell pork! Ha; I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

BASSANIO

This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK

[Aside] How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian,

But more for that in low simplicity

He lends out money gratis and brings down
 The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
 He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
 Even there where merchants most do congregate,
 On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
 Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
 If I forgive him!

BASSANIO

Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK

I am debating of my present store,
 And, by the near guess of my memory,
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
 Do you desire? *To ANTONIO*

Rest you fair, good signior;
 Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO

Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
 By taking nor by giving of excess,
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
 I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
 How much ye would?

SHYLOCK

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO

And for three months.

SHYLOCK

I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
 Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
 Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
 Upon advantage.

ANTONIO

I do never USE it.

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
 Three months from twelve; then, let me see...

ANTONIO

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
 In the Rialto you have rated me
 About my moneys and my usances:
 Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
 For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
 You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
 And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
 And all for use of that which is mine own.
 Well then, it now appears you need my help:
 Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
 'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;
 You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
 And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
 Over your threshold: money is your suit.
 What should I say to you? Should I not say
 'Hath a dog money? is it possible
 A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
 Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
 With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Say this;
 'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time
 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
 I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

ANTONIO

I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends; But lend it rather to thine enemy,
 Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK

Why, look you, how you storm!
 I would be friends with you and have your love,
 Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
 Supply your present wants and take no doit
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
 This is kind I offer.

BASSANIO

This were kindness.

SHYLOCK

This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
 Be nominated for an equal pound
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

ANTONIO

Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
 And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

BASSANIO

You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
 I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

ANTONIO

Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
 Within these two months, that's a month before
 This bond expires, I do expect return
 Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

SHYLOCK

O father Abram, what these Christians are,
 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
 The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
 If he should break his day, what should I gain
 By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
 As flesh of muttens, beefs, or goats. I say,
 To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
 If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
 And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO

Yes Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK

Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
 Give him direction for this merry bond,
 And I will go and purse the ducats straight.

ANTONIO

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

SHYLOCK

Presently I will be with you.

Exit Shylock

ANTONIO

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

BASSANIO

I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

ANTONIO

Come on: in this there can be no dismay;

My ships come home a month before the day. *Exeunt*

SCENE 4. *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train;

PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending

{Here we meet the first of Portia's suitors, a North African Prince. It gives us also a nice discussion of race, and Portia's willingness to consider the Prince as a potential mate. We can see that the idea of marrying Portia is a HUGE risk for any man, since, if he fails the test--choosing the Right Box--he must vow never to marry anyone after. We also like the fact that Portia says, oh, no rush, Prince; let's go have a nice dinner first.}

MOROCCO

Mislike me not for my complexion,

The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,

To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

Bring me the fairest creature northward born,

Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,

And let us make incision for your love,

To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.

I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine

Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love I swear

The best-regarded virgins of our clime

Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,

Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA

In terms of choice I am not solely led

By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;

Besides, the lottery of my destiny

Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:

But if my father had not scanted me

And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself

His wife who wins me by that means I told you,

Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair

As any comer I have look'd on yet

For my affection.

MOROCCO

Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune...

PORTIA

You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

MOROCCO

Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

PORTIA

First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

MOROCCO

Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men. *Exeunt.*

SCENE 5. *Venice. A street. Enter LAUNCELOT*

{We meet the wonderful clown, Launcelot Gobbo, who gives us a pleasurable scene about trying to decide whether to stay with his old household--with Shylock--or to move to another service. It is a classic either -or speech with great opportunity for physicalization. }

LAUNCELOT

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from
this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and
tempts me saying to me 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good
Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo,' or good Launcelot
Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.
My conscience says 'No; take heed,' honest Launcelot;
take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, 'honest
Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.'
Well, the most courageous fiend bids me
pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the
fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,'
says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience,
hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely
to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest
man's son,' or rather an honest woman's son;

my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not.'
 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience.
 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well;' ' Fiend,'
 say I, 'you counsel well:' to be ruled by my
 conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master,
 who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to
 run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the
 fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil
 himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal;
 and, in my conscience, my conscience is but
 a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me
 to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more
 friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are
 at your command; I will run.

{In the next part of this same scene the Clown takes employment with Bassanio, and Bassanio accepts--with provisions---Gratiano's wish to go with him to Belmont. He is reasonably afraid that Gratiano's long-winded extrovert behavior might hurt his own chances with Portia.}

Enter BASSANIO

BASSANIO: What would thee?

LAUNCELOT

Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew,
 and have a desire, as I shall specify--

BASSANIO: Thy suit is?

LAUNCELOT

In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as
 your worship shall know by and by.

BASSANIO

What would you?

LAUNCELOT

Serve you, sir.

BASSANIO

I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
 Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
 And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
 To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
 The follower of so poor a gentleman.
 Go, take leave of thy master and inquire
 My lodging out.

LAUNCELOT

Well, if Fortune be a woman,
 she's a good wench for this gear.

I'll go back and take my leave and present me
at your lodgings in the twinkling of an eye!

Exeunt Launcelot.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO

Signior Bassanio!

BASSANIO

Gratiano!

GRATIANO

Bassanio!

BASSANIO

Gratiano!

GRATIANO

I have a suit to you.

BASSANIO

You have obtain'd it.

GRATIANO

You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

BASSANIO

Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;

Thou art too rude and bold of voice;

Pray thee, take pain

To allay with some cold drops of modesty

Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior

I be misconstrued in the place I go to,

And lose my hopes.

GRATIANO

Signior Bassanio, hear me:

If I do not put on a sober habit,

Talk with respect and swear but now and then,

Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demure,

Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes

Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen,'

Use all the observance of civility,

Like one well studied in a sad ostent

To please his grandma, never trust me more.

BASSANIO

Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO

Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me

By what we do to-night.

BASSANIO

No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. So, fare you well:
I have some business.

GRATIANO

And I will visit you at supper-time. *Exeunt*

SCENE 6. *A room in SHYLOCK'S house.*

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT

{Upon his leaving, the Clown receives affection from Jessica, Shylock's daughter, who sends a message with him to Lorezo, her suitor.}

JESSICA

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

LAUNCELOT

Adieu! Tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful
pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian did not play
the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu:
these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

JESSICA

Farewell, good Launcelot.

Exit Launcelot

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

Exit

SCENE 7: *The same. A street.*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALERIO, and SALANIO

{We meet again Lorenzo, Jessica's betrothed. He loves her in spite of her father. She will disguise herself as his page, and escape her house with her father's precious jewels etc.}

LORENZO

Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

GRATIANO

We have not made good preparation.

SALERIO

We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

LORENZO

'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us. *Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter*
Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

LAUNCELOT

An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

LORENZO

I know the hand: in faith.

GRATIANO

Love-news, in faith.

LAUNCELOT

By your leave, sir.

LORENZO

Whither goest thou?

LAUNCELOT

Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew
to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

LORENZO

Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica

I will not fail her. Speak it privately.

Go, gentlemen. *Exit Launcelot*

Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.

SALANIO

Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

SALERIO

And so will I.

LORENZO

Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALANIO

'Tis good we do so. *Exeunt SALERIO and SALANIO*

GRATIANO Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house,

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,

What page's suit she hath in readiness.

Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:

Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

Exeunt

SCENE 8. *The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house.*

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT

{Departing for the supper, Shylock warns Launcelot he won't have such a good time where he's going. He then commands Jessica to guard their house. To stay home, and open for no one.}

SHYLOCK

Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,

The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:--

What, Jessica!--thou shalt not gormandise,

As thou hast done with me:--What, Jessica!--

And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;--

Why, Jessica, I say!

LAUNCELOT

Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK

Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

LAUNCELOT

Your worship was wont to tell me that

I could do nothing without bidding. *Enter Jessica*

JESSICA *(to Launcelot)*

Call you? what is your will?

SHYLOCK

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:

There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?

I am not bid for love; they flatter me:

But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
 The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
 Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
 There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
 For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

LAUNCELOT

I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect
 your reproach.

SHYLOCK

So do I his. Hear you me, Jessica:
 Lock up my doors! and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
 Clamber not you up to the casements then,
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
 But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
 My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
 But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
 Say I will come.

LAUNCELOT

I will, sir. Mistress, look out for a Christian
 Who, when he comes, will be worth a Jewess' eye. *Exit*

SHYLOCK

What says that fool? Ha?

JESSICA

His words were 'Farewell mistress;' nothing else.

SHYLOCK

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
 More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;
 Therefore I part with him, and part with him
 To one that would have him help to waste
 His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in;
 Perhaps I will return immediately:
 Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
 Fast bind, fast find;
 A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. *Exit*

JESSICA

Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost. *Exit*

SCENE 9. The same.*Enter GRATIANO and SALANIO, masqued**{With his friends' help, Lorenzo helps Jessica escape her father's house and carry off his riches.}*

GRATIANO

This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

SALANIO

His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO

And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

SALANIO

Here comes Lorenzo! *Enter LORENZO*

LORENZO

Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes

JESSICA

Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

LORENZO

Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA

Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO

Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

JESSICA

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
Cupid himself would blush

To see me thus transformed to a boy.

LORENZO

Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

JESSICA

What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

LORENZO

Oh, you are sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.

But come at once,

For the close night doth play the runaway,

And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself

With some more ducats, and be with you straight. *Exit above*

GRATIANO

Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

LORENZO

Beshrew me but I love her heartily;

For she is wise, if I can judge of her,

And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,

And true she is, as she hath proved herself,

And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,

Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, below

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!

Our masquing mates by this time for us stay. *Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter ANTONIO

{In the second part of this scene, Gratiano is prevented from revelry, as Antonio warns him that, the wind being up, it's time to sail to Belmont. On board already is Bassanio, in a hurry to get to Portia's house to pass the test.}

ANTONIO

Who's there?

GRATIANO

Signior Antonio!

ANTONIO

Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?

'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.

No masque to-night: the wind is come about;

Bassanio presently will go aboard:

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO

I am glad on't: I desire no more delight

Than to be under sail and gone to-night. *Exeunt*

SCENE 10. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.
Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their trains

{The Prince of Morocco fails the test to win the hand of Portia. In the end of the scene, Portia is glad, as she has found him far too vain a suitor.}

But, briefly:

PORTIA

Go draw aside the curtains and discover
 The several caskets to this noble prince.
 Now make your choice.

MOROCCO

The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;'
 The second, silver, which this promise carries,
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;'
 This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 How shall I know if I do choose the right?

PORTIA

The one of them contains my picture, prince:
 If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

MOROCCO

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
 I will survey the inscriptions back again.
 What says this leaden casket?
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
 This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
 Do it in hope of fair advantages:
 A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
 I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
 What says the silver with her virgin hue?
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
 And weigh thy value with an even hand...
 Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
 Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
 From the four corners of the earth they come,
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint...
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation

To think so base a thought...
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold.

Deliver me the key:
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

PORTIA

There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours.

He unlocks the golden casket

MOROCCO

O hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

Reads

"All that glitters is not gold;
 Often have you heard that told:
 Many a man his life hath sold
 But my outside to behold:
 Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
 Fare you well; your suit is cold."
 Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
 Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
 Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart
 To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets

PORTIA

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
 Let all of his complexion choose me so. *Exeunt P & N*

SCENE 11. *Venice. A street.*

{In this scene we hear that Shylock has discovered Jessica's disappearance, and the loss of all his riches! The first thought of blame that he had, lights upon Antonio---without cause.}

Enter SALERIO and SALANIO

SALERIO

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
 With him is Gratiano gone along;
 And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

SALANIO

The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALERIO

He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

SALANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl!

SALERIO

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

SALANIO

Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

SALERIO

A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answer'd, "Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and to love..."
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

SALANIO

I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let's go find Antonio,
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

SALERIO

Do we so. *Exeunt*

*SCENE 12. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.
Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, and their trains*

{The Second Suitor, the Prince of Arragon, tries and fails the test. A pity for him, but a relief for Portia. Her suitors thus far are long-winded and self-congratulatory. In our edited version, we will skip this scene until Bassanio is announced, on the following page...}

NERISSA

The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently....

PORTIA

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

ARRAGON

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage: Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

PORTIA

To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

ARRAGON

And so have I address'd me...

{After much talk, he takes his chance on the silver casket, and loses...}

....Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

Exeunt Arragon and train. Enter Servant

SERVANT

Where is my lady?

PORTIA

Here: what would my lord?

SERVANT

Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before

To signify the approaching of his lord!

I have not seen

So likely an ambassador of love:

A day in April never came so sweet,

To show how costly summer was at hand,

As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

PORTIA

No more, I pray thee. Nerissa, let's go see

Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

NERISSA

Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! *Exeunt*

SCENE 13. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SALANIO and SALERIO

{Back on the Rialto, Antonio is suffering great losses with his vessels at sea; he will come under Shylock's revenge. Shylock is furious at his daughter; he curses her! We then hear more of Shylock's quarrel with Antonio}

SALANIO

Now, what news on the Rialto?

SALERIO

Why, Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas!

SALANIO

But is it true, that the good Antonio, the

honest Antonio,--O that I had a title good enough

to keep his name company!--

SALERIO

Come, the full stop.

SALANIO

Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship?

SALERIO

Aye, and I would it might prove the end of his losses.

SALANIO

Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my
prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

SHYLOCK

You know, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

SALERIO

That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

SALANIO

And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

SHYLOCK

She is damned for it.

SALANIO

That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

SHYLOCK

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

SALERIO

There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

SHYLOCK

There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

SALERIO

Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

SHYLOCK

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons,

subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT

Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

SALERIO

We have been up and down to seek him. *Enter TUBAL*

SALANIO

Here comes another of the tribe... *Exeunt SALANIO, SALERIO, and Servant*

SHYLOCK

How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

TUBAL

I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

SHYLOCK

Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge! No sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

TUBAL

Yes, other men have ill luck too:

Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,--

SHYLOCK

What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

TUBAL

---Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripoli.

SHYLOCK

I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

TUBAL

I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

SHYLOCK

I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news!

Ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

TUBAL

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

SHYLOCK

Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

TUBAL

There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

SHYLOCK

I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

TUBAL

One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

SHYLOCK

Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

TUBAL

But Antonio is certainly undone.

SHYLOCK

Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. *Exeunt*

SCENE 14. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and attendants

{In this scene Bassanio picks the right casket and wins the hand of Portia. Nearby, his friend Gratiano falls in love with Nerissa.}

PORTIA

I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
 Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
 I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
 There's something tells me I would not lose you—
 I would detain you here some month or two
 Before you venture for me. I could teach you
 How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
 So will I never be: so may you miss me;
 But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
 They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
 One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
 Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
 And so all yours.
 I speak too long; but 'tis to draw out time,
 To stay you from th' election.

BASSANIO

Let me choose
 For as I am, I live upon the rack.
 O happy torment, if my torturer
 Could teach me answers for deliverance!
 But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA

Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
 If you do love me, you will find me out.
 Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
 Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
 Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
 Fading in music: that the comparison
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
 And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
 And what is music then? Then music is
 Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
 To a new-crowned monarch: such it is
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
 And summon him to marriage... *Music, while BASSANIO ponders caskets*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell
I'll begin it,--Ding, dong, bell.

ALL: Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO

So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk!
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a dangerous sea. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I; joy be the consequence!

PORTIA

[Aside] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! O love,
Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy,
In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

BASSANIO *Opening the leaden casket*

What do I find here?

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Here are her lips,
Parted with sugar breath: Here in her hair

The painter plays the spider and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs; but her eyes,—
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
 The continent and summary of my fortune. *Reads:*

You that choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair and choose as true!
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content and seek no new,
 If you be well pleased with this
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
 Turn you where your lady is
 And claim her with a loving kiss.

PORTIA

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 Such as I am:
 A girl unlesson'd, unschooled, unpractised;
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old
 But she may learn; happier than this,
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
 Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.
 Myself and what is mine to you and yours
 Is now converted: but now I was the lord
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
 Queen o'er myself: and even now, but now,
 This house, these servants and this same myself
 Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
 Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
 Let it presage the ruin of your love
 And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASSANIO

Madam, you have bereft me of all words—
 Every thought of mine, being blent together,
 Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
 Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring

Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

NERISSA

My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

GRATIANO

My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

BASSANIO

With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

GRATIANO

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here with oaths of love--
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

PORTIA

Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA

Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

BASSANIO

And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO

Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO

Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.

{In the second part of this scene, Salerio brings news of Antonio's downfall. Portia shows her true colors, pledging her wealth to Bassanio to rescue his dear friend. A message from Antonio reveals how sad he is...}

GRATIANO

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? What,
and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALERIO, a Messenger from Venice

BASSANIO

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

PORTIA

So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

LORENZO

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

SALERIO

I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you.

Gives Bassanio a letter

BASSANIO

Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

SALERIO

Not well, my lord; his letter there
Will show you his estate.

GRATIANO

Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

SALERIO

I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Bassanio reads the letter

PORTIA

There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!

With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,
 And I must freely have the half of anything
 That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO

O sweet Portia,
 Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
 That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
 When I did first impart my love to you,
 I freely told you, all the wealth I had
 Ran in my veins. I was a gentleman;
 And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
 Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
 How much I was a braggart. When I told you
 My state was nothing, I should then have told you
 That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
 I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
 Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
 The paper as the body of my friend,
 And every word in it a gaping wound,
 Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
 Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
 From Tripoli, from Mexico and England,
 From Lisbon, Barbary and India?
 And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

SALERIO

Not one, my lord.
 Besides, it should appear, that if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew,
 He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
 So keen and greedy to confound a man:
 He plies the duke at morning and at night,
 And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
 If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
 The duke himself, and the magnificoes
 Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
 But none can drive him from the envious plea
 Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

JESSICA

When I was with him I have heard him swear
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
 If law, authority and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio.

PORTIA

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
 The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
 In doing courtesies, and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honour more appears
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA

What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO

For me, three thousand ducats.

PORTIA

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,
 Before a friend of this description
 Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
 First go with me to church and call me wife,
 And then away to Venice to your friend;
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
 My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
 Will live as maids or widows. Come, away!
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
 Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
 Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
 But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASSANIO

[Reads] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all
 miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is
 very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since

in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all
debts are cleared between you and me, if I might but
see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure:
if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

PORTIA

O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

BASSANIO

Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. *Exeunt*

SCENE 15. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALANIO, ANTONIO, and a Jailer

{Shylock revels in the punishment he is about to mete out. Antonio feels hopeless. He reveals how much he loves Bassanio.}

SHYLOCK

Jailer, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Jailer, look to him.

ANTONIO

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK

I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

ANTONIO

I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHYLOCK

I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

Exit

SALANIO

It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

ANTONIO

Let him alone:

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

SALANIO

I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANTONIO

The duke cannot deny the course of law:
"T would much impeach the justice of his state;
Since that the trade and profit of our city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, jailer, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! *Exeunt*

SCENE 16. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.
Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA

{Jessica make a plan. She leaves Lorenzo to manage her house, saying she and Nerissa are going to shelter in a convent while their new husbands are gone. But she has a coach waiting for them to speed to Venice instead.}

LORENZO

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of godlike amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

PORTIA Methinks this Antonio,
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
 How little is the cost I have bestow'd
 In purchasing the semblance of my soul
 From out the state of hellish misery!
 This comes too near the praising of myself;
 Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry and manage of my house
 Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return:
 There is a monastery two miles off;
 And there will we abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition;
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

LORENZO

Madam, with all my heart;
 I shall obey you in all fair commands.

PORTIA

My people do already know my mind,
 And will acknowledge you and Jessica
 In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
 And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

LORENZO

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

JESSICA

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA

I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
 To wish it back on you: fare you well Jessica.

Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO

Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
 That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
 Before they think of us.

NERISSA

Shall they see us?

PORTIA

They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack.

When we are both accoutred like young men,
We'll speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought our love,
Which we denying, they fell sick and died;

NERISSA

Why, shall we turn to men?

PORTIA

Come, come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When we are in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

Exeunt

SCENE 17. *Venice. A court of justice.*

*Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO,
SALERIO may enter later, and others*

{The courtroom, "quality of mercy" scene, in which we see that Shylock is merciless in his application of the legal argument. Things look bad for the merchant, until Portia-in-disguise comes in to save the day. In the end she shows no mercy to Shylock; she punishes, all punish, Shylock extremely for the penalty he was about to take from Antonio}

CRYER

All rise for the Duke of Venice!

DUKE

What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO

Ready, so please your grace.

DUKE

I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO

I have heard
 Your grace hath taken pains to qualify
 His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
 And that no lawful means can carry me
 Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
 My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
 To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
 The very tyranny and rage of his.

DUKE

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

SALERIO

He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord. *Enter SHYLOCK*

DUKE

Make room, and let him stand before our face.
 Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
 That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a portion of the principal;
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back.
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK

I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose;
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
 If you deny it, let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
 You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
 But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

BASSANIO

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

SHYLOCK

I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

BASSANIO

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO

Every offence is not a hate at first.

SHYLOCK

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

ANTONIO

I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK

If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

SHYLOCK

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
'The slaves are ours:!' so do I answer you:

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
 Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
 If you deny me, fie upon your law!
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
 I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

DUKE

Upon my power I may dismiss this court!

SALERIO

My lord, here stays without
 A messenger with letters from a lawyer,
 New come from Padua.

DUKE

Bring us the letter; call the messenger.

BASSANIO

Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
 The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
 Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

ANTONIO

I am a tainted wether of the flock,
 Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
 Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me
 You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
 Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk

DUKE

Came you from Padua?

NERISSA

I do, my lord. with letter for your grace. *Presenting a letter*

BASSANIO

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

GRATIANO

Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO

O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused!

for thy desires

Are wolvis, bloody, starv'd and ravenous.

SHYLOCK

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
I stand here for law.

DUKE

This letter doth commend
A young and learned lawyer to our court.
Where is he?

NERISSA

He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

DUKE

With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear this letter.

CLERK *[Reads]*

To his excellency the Doge of Venice:
Your Grace shall understand that here comes a young lawyer of Rome; his
name is Balthasar. He is acquainted with the cause in controversy between
Shylock the Jew and Antonio the merchant. He is furnished with great
learning, in despite to his lack of years. I leave him to your gracious
acceptance,

et cetera

et cetera

his excellency, the Baron of Belmont.

DUKE

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a Doctor of Laws

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA *(her voice disguised)*

I did, my lord.

DUKE

You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

PORTIA

I am informed thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA

Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK

Shylock is my name.

PORTIA

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
 Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
 Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
 You stand within his danger, do you not?

ANTONIO

Ay, so he says.

PORTIA

Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO

I do.

PORTIA

Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK

On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

PORTIA

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
 To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
 Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
 Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

SHYLOCK

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

PORTIA

Is he not able to discharge the money?

BASSANIO

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

PORTIA

It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:

'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

SHYLOCK

A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

PORTIA

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK

Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

PORTIA

Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

SHYLOCK

An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

No, not for Venice.

PORTIA

Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK

When it is paid according to the tenor.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
 You know the law, your exposition
 Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
 Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear
 There is no power in the tongue of man
 To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO

Most heartily I do beseech the court
 To give the judgment.

PORTIA

Why then, thus it is:
 You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

SHYLOCK

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA

Therefore lay bare your bosom.
 Is there a balance here to weigh the flesh?

SHYLOCK

I have them ready.

PORTIA

Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
 To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

SHYLOCK

Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA

It is not so express'd: but what of that?
 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK

I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

PORTIA

You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

ANTONIO

But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
 Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
 Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
 Commend me to your honourable wife:
 Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
 Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
 And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
 Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
 I repent not that I pay your debt;

And if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

BASSANIO

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

PORTIA

Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

GRATIANO

I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

NERISSA

'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

SHYLOCK

We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

PORTIA

A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

SHYLOCK

Most rightful judge!

PORTIA

And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

SHYLOCK

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

PORTIA

Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh:'
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO

O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

SHYLOCK

Is that the law?

PORTIA

Thyself shalt see the act:

For, as thou urgest justice, be assured

Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

GRATIANO

O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

SHYLOCK

I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice

And let the Christian go.

BASSANIO

Here is the money.

PORTIA

Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO

O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more

Or less than a just pound, be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance,

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn

But in the estimation of a hair,

Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO

A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

PORTIA

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

SHYLOCK

Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASSANIO

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

PORTIA

He hath refused it in the open court:

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

GRATIANO

A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

SHYLOCK

Shall I not have barely my principal?

PORTIA

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

SHYLOCK

Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

PORTIA

Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only.

In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contriv'd against the very life
Of the defendant.

Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

GRATIANO

Beg that he grant you leave to hang thyself!

DUKE

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

SHYLOCK

Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA

What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO

A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

ANTONIO

So please my lord the duke and all the court

To quit the fine for one half of his goods,

I am content; so he will let me have

The other half in use, to render it,

Upon his death, unto the gentleman

That lately stole his daughter:

Two things provided more, that, for this favour,

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,

Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

DUKE

He shall do this, or else I do recant

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

PORTIA

Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

SHYLOCK

I am content.

I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;

I am not well: send the deed after me,

And I will sign it.

DUKE

Get thee gone, but do it.

GRATIANO

Had I been judge, I would have brought thee to

The gallows, not the holy font.

Exit SHYLOCK

DUKE

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

PORTIA

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify this gentleman,

For, in my mind, you are much bound to him. *Exeunt Duke and his train*

BASSANIO

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO

And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

PORTIA

He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

BASSANIO

Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute.

PORTIA

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

To ANTONIO

Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;

To BASSANIO

And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO

This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

PORTIA

I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

BASSANIO

There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

PORTIA

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

BASSANIO

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;

And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

PORTIA

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. *(he gives her the ring)* Well, peace be with you!

Exeunt all. Portia and Nerissa hesitate.

NERISSA *[Aside to PORTIA]*

I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA *[Aside to NERISSA]*

Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.
Nerissa returns with ring. Exeunt

SCENE 18. *Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.*
Enter LORENZO and JESSICA

{The "such a night" word play scene. The recognition scene. All come back to Belmont, including Antonio for the first time. Confusion in darkness. The witty accusations of the lost rings! The making-up}

LORENZO

The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA

In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismay'd away.

LORENZO

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand

Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

JESSICA

In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old AEson.

LORENZO

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA

In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

LORENZO

In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

JESSICA

I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man. *Enter STEPHANO*

LORENZO

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO

A friend.

LORENZO

A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

STEPHANO

Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont.

LORENZO

Then go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT, night-blind!

LAUNCELOT

Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

LORENZO

Who calls?

LAUNCELOT

Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?

Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

LORENZO

Leave holla-ing, man: here.

LAUNCELOT

Sola! where? where?

LORENZO

Here.

LAUNCELOT

Tell him there's a post come from my master,
with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning.

Exit

LORENZO

Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in?

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,

Within the house, your mistress is at hand;

And bring your music forth into the air.

Exit Stephano

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music

Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patterns of bright gold. *Enter Musicians*

Music ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!

With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,

And draw her home with music.

JESSICA

I am ever merry when I hear sweet music.

{Music; the two dance. (in our version others, stumbling in the night's deep dark, can bump into each other, dance, and enjoy the beautiful evening. Such a night!}

Enter PORTIA .

PORTIA

That light we see is burning in my hall.

How far that little candle throws his beams!

Music! hark!

LORENZO

That is the voice,

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

PORTIA

He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

LORENZO

Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA

We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

LORENZO

Madam, they are not yet;
But there has come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

PORTIA

Go in, Lorenzo, please;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.
Nor any of you *(to the audience)*

Enter Gratiano, Nerissa, followed by Bassanio, Antonio, others

GRATIANO *[To NERISSA]*

By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

PORTIA

A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me once, whose posy was
'Love me, and leave me not.'

NERISSA

What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave!
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

GRATIANO

He will, an if he live to be a man.

NERISSA

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

GRATIANO

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
 A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
 No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk,
 A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
 I could not for my heart deny it him.

PORTIA

You were to blame, I must be plain with you
 To part so slightly with your wife's first gift:
 A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
 And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
 I gave my love a ring and made him swear
 Never to part with it; and here he stands;
 I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
 Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
 That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
 You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
 An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO

[Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
 And swear I lost the ring defending it.

GRATIANO

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
 Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed
 Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
 That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
 And neither man nor master would take aught
 But the two rings.

PORTIA

What ring gave you my lord?
 Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

BASSANIO

If I could add a lie unto a fault,
 I would deny it; but you see my finger
 Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

PORTIA

Even so void is your false heart of truth.
 By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
 Until I see the ring.

NERISSA

Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO

Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA

If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO

No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him any thing I have,
No, not my body nor my husband's bed:
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it:
Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus:
If you do not, if I be left alone,

Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

NERISSA

And I his clerk; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO

Well, do you so; let not me take him, then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO

Madam--I am Antonio,
I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA

Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
But grieve you not; you are welcome notwithstanding.

BASSANIO

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee,
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I vow
I never more will break an oath with thee.

ANTONIO

I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

PORTIA

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

ANTONIO

Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

BASSANIO

By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

PORTIA

I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio;
For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

NERISSA

And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano;
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this last night did lie with me.

GRATIANO

What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

PORTIA

Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed:

But see (*puts back disguise*) your Portia was the doctor,

Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you

And even but now return'd; I have not yet

Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;

And I have better news in store for you:

The last three vessels of your fleet

Are richly come to harbour suddenly:

(*to the audience*) You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced upon this news.

ANTONIO

I am speechless.

BASSANIO

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

GRATIANO

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,

Unless he live until he be a man.

BASSANIO

Sweet doctor, you shall be my bed-fellow:

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

ANTONIO

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

PORTIA

How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

NERISSA

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,

Awarded at the court.

LORENZO

Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way

Of starved people.

PORTIA

It is almost morning,

And yet I am sure you are not satisfied.

GRATIANO

“Tis truly so: the night is almost done.
To bed now, being scant two hours till day.
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Exeunt. Sweet music