



قسم اللغة الانجليزية



جامعة جنوب الوادي

# مقرر

# الدراما

الفرقة ..... الثالثة

قسم ... اللغة الانجليزية

أستاذ المقرر

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## **The Merchant of Venice**

## The text

### ACT I

#### SCENE I. Venice. A street.

*Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

##### ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:  
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;  
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.

##### SALARINO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;  
There, where your argosies with portly  
sail,  
Like signiors and rich burghers on the  
flood,  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven  
wings.

##### 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.

##### SALARINO

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. Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not 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,  
And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the  
thought  
To think on this, and shall I lack the  
thought  
That such a thing bechanced 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 bottom  
trusted,  
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate  
Upon the fortune of this present year:  
Therefore my merchandise makes me  
not sad.

**SALARINO**

Why, then you are in love.

**ANTONIO**

Fie, fie!

**SALARINO**

Not in love neither? Then let us say you  
are sad,  
Because you are not merry: and 'twere  
as easy  
For you to laugh and leap and say you  
are merry,  
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-  
headed Janus,  
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her  
time:  
Some that will evermore peep through  
their eyes  
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,  
And other of such vinegar aspect  
That they'll not show their teeth in way of

smile,  
Though Nestor swear the jest be  
laughable.

*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.

**SALARINO**

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

**ANTONIO**

Your worth is very dear in my regard.  
I take it, your own business calls on you  
And you embrace the occasion to depart.

**SALARINO**

Good morrow, my good lords.

**BASSANIO**

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

**SALARINO**

We'll make our leisures to attend on  
yours.

*Exeunt Salarino 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;  
You have too much respect upon the  
world:  
They lose it that do buy it with much care:  
Believe me, you are marvellously  
changed.

**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.  
Why should a man, whose blood is warm  
within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the  
jaundice  
By being peevish? I tell thee what,  
Antonio--  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks--  
There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing  
pond,  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,  
As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'  
O my Antonio, I do know of these  
That therefore only are reputed wise  
For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn  
those ears,  
Which, hearing them, would call their  
brothers fools.  
I'll tell thee more of this another time:  
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,  
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.  
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  
moe,  
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine  
own tongue.

**ANTONIO**

Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

**GRATIANO**

Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only  
commendable  
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not  
vendible.

*Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO*

**ANTONIO**

Is that any thing now?

**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.

**ANTONIO**

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

**BASSANIO**

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,  
How much I have disabled mine estate,  
By something showing a more swelling  
port  
Than my faint means would grant  
continuance:  
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged  
From such a noble rate; 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.

**BASSANIO**

In my school-days, when I had lost one  
shaft,  
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
The self-same way with more advised  
watch,  
To find the other forth, and by  
adventuring both  
I oft found both: I urge this childhood  
proof,  
Because what follows is pure innocence.  
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,  
That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
To shoot another arrow that self way  
Which you did shoot the first, I do not  
doubt,  
As I will watch the aim, or to find both  
Or bring your latter hazard back again  
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

**ANTONIO**

You know me well, and herein spend but  
time  
To wind about my love with  
circumstance;  
And out of doubt you do me now more  
wrong  
In making question of my uttermost  
Than if you had made waste of all I have:  
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, nothing undervalued  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:  
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her  
worth,  
For the four winds blow in from every

coast  
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks  
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;  
Which makes her seat of Belmont  
Colchos' strand,  
And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
O my Antonio, had I but the means  
To hold a rival place with one of them,  
I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
That 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:  
That shall be rack'd, even to the  
uttermost,  
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 II: Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S  
house.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

**PORTIA**

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is  
awearry 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. It  
is no mean happiness therefore, to be  
seated in the  
mean: superfluity comes sooner by white  
hairs, but  
competency lives longer.

**PORTIA**

Good sentences and well pronounced.

**NERISSA**

They would be better, if well followed.

**PORTIA**

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of 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**

I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

**NERISSA**

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

**PORTIA**

Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith.

**NERISSA**

Then there is the County Palatine.

**PORTIA**

He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

**NERISSA**

How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

**PORTIA**

God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of

frowning than  
the Count Palatine; he is every man in no  
man; if a  
throstle sing, he falls straight a capering:  
he will  
fence with his own shadow: if I should  
marry him, I  
should marry twenty husbands. If he  
would despise me  
I would forgive him, for if he love me to  
madness, I  
shall never requite him.

**NERISSA**

What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the  
young baron  
of England?

**PORTIA**

You know I say nothing to him, for he  
understands  
not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin,  
French,  
nor Italian, and you will come into the  
court and  
swear that I have a poor pennyworth in  
the English.  
He is a proper man's picture, but, alas,  
who can  
converse with a dumb-show? How oddly  
he is suited!  
I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his  
round  
hose in France, his bonnet in Germany  
and his  
behavior every where.

**NERISSA**

What think you of the Scottish lord, his  
neighbour?

**PORTIA**

That he hath a neighbourly charity in him,  
for he  
borrowed a box of the ear of the  
Englishman and  
swore he would pay him again when he  
was able: I  
think the Frenchman became his surety  
and sealed  
under for another.

**NERISSA**

How like you the young German, the  
Duke of Saxony's nephew?

**PORTIA**

Very vilely in the morning, when he is  
sober, and  
most vilely in the afternoon, when he is  
drunk: when  
he is best, he is a little worse than a man,  
and  
when he is worst, he is little better than a  
beast:  
and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I  
shall  
make shift to go without him.

**NERISSA**

If he should offer to choose, and choose  
the right  
casket, you should refuse to perform your  
father's  
will, if you should refuse to accept him.

**PORTIA**

Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray  
thee, set a  
deep glass of rhenish wine on the  
contrary casket,  
for if the devil be within and that  
temptation  
without, I know he will choose it. I will do  
any  
thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a  
sponge.

**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 and 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**

If I live to be as old as Sibylla, 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  
woolers

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, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

**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*

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**

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before. Whiles we shut the gates

upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE III. Venice. A public place.**

*Enter BASSANIO and 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.

**BASSANIO**

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

**SHYLOCK**

Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

**BASSANIO**

Your answer to that.

**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 Tripolis, 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; to eat of the habitation  
which  
your prophet the Nazarite conjured the  
devil into. 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.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
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**

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's  
sheep--  
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,  
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,  
The third possessor; ay, he was the third-

**ANTONIO**

And what of him? did he take interest?

**SHYLOCK**

No, not take interest, not, as you would  
say,

Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.

When Laban and himself were  
compromised

That all the eanlings which were streak'd  
and pied

Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes,  
being rank,

In the end of autumn turned to the rams,  
And, when the work of generation was  
Between these woolly breeders in the  
act,

The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain  
wands,

And, in the doing of the deed of kind,  
He stuck them up before the fulsome  
ewes,

Who then conceiving did in eaning time  
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were  
Jacob's.

This was a way to thrive, and he was  
blest:

And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

**ANTONIO**

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served  
for;

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of  
heaven.

Was this inserted to make interest good?

Or is your gold and silver ewes and  
rams?

**SHYLOCK**

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:

But note me, signior.

**ANTONIO**

Mark you this, Bassanio,

The devil can cite Scripture for his

purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A goodly apple rotten at the heart:

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

**SHYLOCK**

Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round  
sum.

Three months from twelve; then, let me  
see; the rate--

**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: moneys 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; for when did friendship  
take

A breed for barren metal of his friend?  
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 muttons, 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,

See to my house, left in the fearful guard

Of an unthrifty knave, and presently

I will be with you.

**ANTONIO**

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

*Exit Shylock*

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*

## ACT II

### SCENE I. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending*

#### 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. By this scimitar  
That slew the Sophy and a Persian  
prince  
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,

I would outstare the sternest eyes that  
look,

Outbrave the heart most daring on the  
earth,

Pluck the young sucking cubs from the  
she-bear,

Yea, mock the lion when he roars for  
prey,

To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!

If Hercules and Lichas play at dice  
Which is the better man, the greater  
throw

May turn by fortune from the weaker  
hand:

So is Alcides beaten by his page;  
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,

Miss that which one unworthier may  
attain,

And die with grieving.

#### 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.

*Cornets, and exeunt*

### SCENE II. Venice. A street.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

#### 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; for,  
 indeed, my father did something smack,  
 something  
 grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, 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.

*Enter Old GOBBO, with a basket*

**GOBBO**

Master young man, you, I pray you,  
 which is the way  
 to master Jew's?

**LAUNCELOT**

[Aside] O heavens, this is my true-  
 begotten father!

who, being more than sand-blind, high-  
 gravel blind,  
 knows me not: I will try confusions with  
 him.

**GOBBO**

Master young gentleman, I pray you,  
 which is the way  
 to master Jew's?

**LAUNCELOT**

Turn up on your right hand at the next  
 turning, but,  
 at the next turning of all, on your left;  
 marry, at  
 the very next turning, turn of no hand, but  
 turn  
 down indirectly to the Jew's house.

**GOBBO**

By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to  
 hit. Can  
 you tell me whether one Launcelot,  
 that dwells with him, dwell with him or  
 no?

**LAUNCELOT**

Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

*Aside*

Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.  
 Talk you  
 of young Master Launcelot?

**GOBBO**

No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his  
 father,

though I say it, is an honest exceeding  
poor man  
and, God be thanked, well to live.

**LAUNCELOT**

Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk  
of  
young Master Launcelot.

**GOBBO**

Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

**LAUNCELOT**

But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I  
beseech you,  
talk you of young Master Launcelot?

**GOBBO**

Of Launcelot, an't please your  
mastership.

**LAUNCELOT**

Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of  
Master  
Launcelot, father; for the young  
gentleman,  
according to Fates and Destinies and  
such odd  
sayings, the Sisters Three and such  
branches of  
learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you  
would say  
in plain terms, gone to heaven.

**GOBBO**

Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very  
staff of my  
age, my very prop.

**LAUNCELOT**

Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a  
staff or  
a prop? Do you know me, father?

**GOBBO**

Alack the day, I know you not, young  
gentleman:  
but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God  
rest his  
soul, alive or dead?

**LAUNCELOT**

Do you not know me, father?

**GOBBO**

Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you  
not.

**LAUNCELOT**

Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you  
might fail of  
the knowing me: it is a wise father that  
knows his  
own child. Well, old man, I will tell you  
news of  
your son: give me your blessing: truth will  
come  
to light; murder cannot be hid long; a  
man's son  
may, but at the length truth will out.

**GOBBO**

Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are  
not  
Launcelot, my boy.

**LAUNCELOT**

Pray you, let's have no more fooling  
about it, but  
give me your blessing: I am Launcelot,  
your boy  
that was, your son that is, your child that  
shall  
be.

**GOBBO**

I cannot think you are my son.

**LAUNCELOT**

I know not what I shall think of that: but I  
am  
Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure  
Margery your  
wife is my mother.

**GOBBO**

Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be  
sworn, if thou  
be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh  
and blood.

Lord worshipped might he be! what a  
beard hast thou  
got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin  
than  
Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

**LAUNCELOT**

It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail  
grows  
backward: I am sure he had more hair of  
his tail  
than I have of my face when I last saw  
him.

**GOBBO**

Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

**LAUNCELOT**

Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

*Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers*

**BASSANIO**

You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

*Exit a Servant*

**LAUNCELOT**

To him, father.

**GOBBO**

God bless your worship!

**BASSANIO**

Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

**GOBBO**

Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,--

**LAUNCELOT**

Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify--

**GOBBO**

He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve--

**LAUNCELOT**

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

**GOBBO**

His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins--

**LAUNCELOT**

To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you--

**GOBBO**

I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is--

**LAUNCELOT**

In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

**BASSANIO**

One speak for both. What would you?

**LAUNCELOT**

Serve you, sir.

**GOBBO**

That is the very defect of the matter, 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.

**LAUNCELOT**

The old proverb is very well parted  
between my  
master Shylock and you, sir: you have  
the grace of  
God, sir, and he hath enough.

**BASSANIO**

Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy  
son.

Take leave of thy old master and inquire  
My lodging out. Give him a livery  
More guarded than his fellows': see it  
done.

**LAUNCELOT**

Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I  
have  
ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any  
man in  
Italy have a fairer table which doth offer  
to swear  
upon a book, I shall have good fortune.  
Go to,  
here's a simple line of life: here's a small  
trifle  
of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing!  
eleven  
widows and nine maids is a simple  
coming-in for one  
man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice,  
and to be  
in peril of my life with the edge of a  
feather-bed;  
here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune  
be a  
woman, she's a good wench for this gear.  
Father,  
come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the  
twinkling of an eye.

*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo*

**BASSANIO**

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:  
These things being bought and orderly  
bestow'd,  
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night

My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie  
thee, go.

**LEONARDO**

My best endeavours shall be done  
herein.

*Enter GRATIANO*

**GRATIANO**

Where is your master?

**LEONARDO**

Yonder, sir, he walks.

*Exit*

**GRATIANO**

Signior 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 wild, too rude and bold of  
voice;

Parts that become thee happily enough  
And in such eyes as ours appear not  
faults;

But where thou art not known, why, there  
they show

Something too liberal. 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

demurely,  
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 grandam, 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. But fare you  
well:

I have some business.

**GRATIANO**

And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:  
But we will visit you at supper-time.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE III. The same. A room in  
SHYLOCK'S house.**

*Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT*

**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 IV. The same. A street.**

*Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO,  
SALARINO, and SALANIO*

**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.

**SALARINO**

We have not spoke us yet of  
torchbearers.

**SALANIO**

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,  
And better in my mind not undertook.

**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, 'tis a fair hand;  
And whiter than the paper it writ on  
Is the fair hand that writ.

**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.

**SALANIO**

And so will I.

**LORENZO**

Meet me and Gratiano  
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

**SALARINO**

'Tis good we do so.

*Exeunt SALARINO 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.  
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:  
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,  
Unless she do it under this excuse,  
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.  
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou  
goest:  
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

*Exeunt*

## **SCENE V. The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house.**

*Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT*

**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**

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.

**LAUNCELOT**

An they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

**SHYLOCK**

What, are there masques? 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 go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this, There will come a Christian boy, will be worth a Jewess' eye.

*Exit*

**SHYLOCK**

What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, 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 VI. The same.**

*Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued*

**GRATIANO**

This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo

Desired us to make stand.

**SALARINO**

His hour is almost past.

**GRATIANO**

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

**SALARINO**

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont

To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

**GRATIANO**

That ever holds: who riseth from a feast With that keen appetite that he sits

down?  
Where is the horse that doth untrede  
again  
His tedious measures with the unbated  
fire  
That he did pace them first? All things  
that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
How like a younker or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native  
bay,  
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet  
wind!  
How like the prodigal doth she return,  
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged  
sails,  
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet  
wind!

**SALARINO**

Here comes Lorenzo: more of this  
hereafter.

*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:  
But love is blind and lovers cannot see  
The pretty follies that themselves commit;  
For if they could, 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?  
They in themselves, good-sooth, are too  
too light.  
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;  
And I should be obscured.

**LORENZO**

So are you, 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*

**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 VII. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.**

*Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, with  
the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their  
trains*

**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:

If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet  
enough

May not extend so far as to the lady:

And yet to be afraid of my deserving

Were but a weak disabling of myself.

As much as I deserve! Why, that's the  
lady:

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,  
In graces and in qualities of breeding;

But more than these, in love I do  
deserve.

What if I stray'd no further, but chose  
here?

Let's see once more this saying graved 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:  
 The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds  
 Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now  
 For princes to come view fair Portia:  
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head  
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar  
 To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,  
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.  
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.  
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation  
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross  
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.  
 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. They have in England  
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel  
 Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;  
 But here an angel in a golden bed  
 Lies all within. 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.  
 Had you been as wise as bold,  
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,  
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd:  
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.  
 Cold, indeed; and labour lost:  
 Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!  
 Portia, adieu. I have too grieved 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*

**SCENE VIII. Venice. A street.**

*Enter SALARINO and SALANIO*

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

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 from me by my daughter!  
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,  
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;  
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

Marry, well remember'd.  
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,  
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part  
The French and English, there miscarried  
A vessel of our country richly fraught:  
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;  
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

**SALANIO**

You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;  
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

**SALARINO**

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 such fair ostents of love

As shall conveniently become you there:'  
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 us go and find him out  
And quicken his embraced heaviness  
With some delight or other.

**SALARINO**

Do we so.

*Exeunt*

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

*Enter NERISSA with a Servitor*

**NERISSA**

Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:  
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,  
And comes to his election presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, and their trains*

**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. Fortune  
now  
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and  
base lead.  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard  
all he hath.'  
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.  
What says the golden chest? ha! let me  
see:  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many  
men desire.'  
What many men desire! that 'many' may  
be meant  
By the fool multitude, that choose by  
show,  
Not learning more than the fond eye doth  
teach;  
Which pries not to the interior, but, like  
the martlet,  
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
Even in the force and road of casualty.  
I will not choose what many men desire,  
Because I will not jump with common  
spirits  
And rank me with the barbarous  
multitudes.  
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-  
house;  
Tell me once more what title thou dost  
bear:  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as  
he deserves.'  
And well said too; for who shall go about  
To cozen fortune and be honourable  
Without the stamp of merit? Let none  
presume  
To wear an undeserved dignity.  
O, that estates, degrees and offices  
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear  
honour

Were purchased by the merit of the  
wearer!  
How many then should cover that stand  
bare!  
How many be commanded that  
command!  
How much low peasantry would then be  
glean'd  
From the true seed of honour! and how  
much honour  
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times  
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my  
choice:  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as  
he deserves.'  
I will assume desert. Give me a key for  
this,  
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*He opens the silver casket*

**PORTIA**

Too long a pause for that which you find  
there.

**ARRAGON**

What's here? the portrait of a blinking  
idiot,  
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.  
How much unlike art thou to Portia!  
How much unlike my hopes and my  
deservings!  
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as  
he deserves.'  
Did I deserve no more than a fool's  
head?  
Is that my prize? are my deserts no  
better?

**PORTIA**

To offend, and judge, are distinct offices  
And of opposed natures.

**ARRAGON**

What is here?

*Reads*

The fire seven times tried this:  
Seven times tried that judgment is,  
That did never choose amiss.  
Some there be that shadows kiss;

Such have but a shadow's bliss:  
There be fools alive, I wis,  
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.  
Take what wife you will to bed,  
I will ever be your head:  
So be gone: you are sped.  
Still more fool I shall appear  
By the time I linger here  
With one fool's head I came to woo,  
But I go away with two.  
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,  
Patiently to bear my wroth.

*Exeunt Arragon and train*

**PORTIA**

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.  
O, these deliberate fools! when they do  
choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to  
lose.

**NERISSA**

The ancient saying is no heresy,  
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

**PORTIA**

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter a 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;  
From whom he bringeth sensible  
regreets,  
To wit, besides commends and courteous  
breath,  
Gifts of rich value. Yet 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: I am half afraid  
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to  
thee,  
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in  
praising him.  
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see  
Quick Cupid's post that comes so  
mannerly.

**NERISSA**

Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

*Exeunt*

**ACT III**

**SCENE I. Venice. A street.**

*Enter SALANIO and SALARINO*

**SALANIO**

Now, what news on the Rialto?

**SALARINO**

Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that  
Antonio hath  
a ship of rich lading wrecked on the  
narrow seas;  
the Goodwins, I think they call the place;  
a very  
dangerous flat and fatal, where the  
carcasses of many  
a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my  
gossip  
Report be an honest woman of her word.

**SALANIO**

I would she were as lying a gossip in that  
as ever  
knapped ginger or made her neighbours  
believe she  
wept for the death of a third husband. But  
it is  
true, without any slips of prolixity or  
crossing the  
plain highway of talk, that the good  
Antonio, the  
honest Antonio,--O that I had a title good  
enough  
to keep his name company!--

**SALARINO**

Come, the full stop.

**SALANIO**

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

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

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; and then it is the complexion of  
them all  
to leave the dam.

**SHYLOCK**

She is damned for it.

**SALARINO**

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

**SHYLOCK**

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

**SALARINO**

Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these  
years?

**SHYLOCK**

I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

We have been up and down to seek him.

*Enter TUBAL*

**SALANIO**

Here comes another of the tribe: a third  
cannot be  
matched, unless the devil himself turn  
Jew.

*Exeunt SALANIO, SALARINO, 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:  
nor no in luck stirring but what lights on  
my  
shoulders; 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  
Tripolis.

**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 II. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.**

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO,  
NERISSA, and Attendants*

**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, but it is not  
love,

I would not lose you; and you know  
yourself,

Hate counsels not in such a quality.

But lest you should not understand me  
well,--

And yet a maiden hath no tongue but  
thought,--

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. O, these naughty times  
Put bars between the owners and their  
rights!

And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it  
so,

Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.

I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,  
To eke it and to draw it out in length,  
To stay you from election.

**BASSANIO**

Let me choose

For as I am, I live upon the rack.

**PORTIA**

Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess  
What treason there is mingled with your  
love.

**BASSANIO**

None but that ugly treason of mistrust,  
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my  
love:

There may as well be amity and life  
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my  
love.



**PORTIA**

Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,  
Where men enforced do speak anything.

**BASSANIO**

Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

**PORTIA**

Well then, confess and live.

**BASSANIO**

'Confess' and 'love'

Had been the very sum of my confession:

O happy torment, when my torturer

Doth 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. Now he  
goes,

With no less presence, but with much  
more love,

Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy

To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice  
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,  
With bleared visages, come forth to view

The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!  
Live thou, I live: with much, much more  
dismay

I view the fight than thou that makest the  
fray.

*Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on  
the caskets to himself*

**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 deceived with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,

But, being seasoned with a gracious  
voice,

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,  
What damned error, but some sober  
brow

Will bless it and approve it with a text,  
Hiding the grossness with fair 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;

And these assume but valour's  
excrement

To render them redoubted! Look on  
beauty,

And you shall see 'tis purchased by the  
weight;

Which therein works a miracle in nature,  
Making them lightest that wear most of it:

So are those crisped snaky golden locks  
Which make such wanton gambols with  
the wind,

Upon supposed fairness, often known  
 To be the dowry of a second head,  
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.  
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore  
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous  
 scarf  
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,  
 The seeming truth which cunning times  
 put on  
 To entrap the wisest. 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**

What find I here?

*Opening the leaden casket*

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god  
 Hath come so near creation? Move these  
 eyes?  
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,  
 Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd  
 lips,  
 Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar  
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here  
 in her hairs  
 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.  
 A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;  
 I come by note, to give and to receive.  
 Like one of two contending in a prize,  
 That thinks he hath done well in people's  
 eyes,  
 Hearing applause and universal shout,  
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt  
 Whether these pearls of praise be his or  
 no;  
 So, thrice fair lady, stand I, even so;  
 As doubtful whether what I see be true,  
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

**PORTIA**

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I  
 stand,  
 Such as I am: though for myself alone  
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you  
 I would be trebled twenty times myself;  
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand

times more rich;  
That only to stand high in your account,  
I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends,  
Exceed account; but the full sum of me  
Is sum of something, which, to term in  
gross,  
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd,  
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,  
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;  
And there is such confusion in my  
powers,  
As after some oration fairly spoke  
By a beloved prince, there doth appear  
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;  
Where every something, 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;  
You loved, I loved for intermission.  
No more pertains to me, my lord, than  
you.  
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,  
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;  
For wooing here until I sweat again,  
And sweating until my very roof was dry  
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,  
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.

**GRATIANO**

We'll play with them the first boy for a  
thousand ducats.

**NERISSA**

What, and stake down?

**GRATIANO**

No; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down.

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 sick, my lord, unless it be in mind; Nor well, unless in mind: 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.

**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 Tripolis, 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 and 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 I, 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 III. Venice. A street.**

*Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO,  
and Gaoler*

**SHYLOCK**

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

**SALARINO**

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.

**SALARINO**

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

**ANTONIO**

The duke cannot deny the course of law:  
For the commodity that strangers have  
With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
Will much impeach the justice of his  
state;

Since that the trade and profit of the 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, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio  
come

To see me pay his debt, and then I care  
not!

*Exeunt*

### **SCENE IV. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.**

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO,  
JESSICA, and BALTHASAR*

**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**

I never did repent for doing good,  
Nor shall not now: for in companions  
That do converse and waste the time  
together,  
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke Of  
love,  
There must be needs a like proportion  
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;  
Which makes me think that 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 breathed 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*

Now, Balthasar,  
As I have ever found thee honest-true,  
So let me find thee still. Take this same  
letter,  
And use thou all the endeavour of a man  
In speed to Padua: see thou render this  
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;  
And, look, what notes and garments he  
doth give thee,  
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined  
speed  
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry  
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in  
words,  
But get thee gone: I shall be there before  
thee.

**BALTHASAR**

Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

*Exit*

**PORTIA**

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. I'll hold thee any  
wager,  
When we are both accoutred like young  
men,  
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,  
And wear my dagger with the braver  
grace,  
And 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 my love,  
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;  
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,  
And wish for all that, that I had not killed  
them;  
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,  
That men shall swear I have discontinued  
school  
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my  
mind  
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging  
Jacks,  
Which I will practise.

**NERISSA**

Why, shall we turn to men?

**PORTIA**

Fie, what a question's that,  
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!  
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device  
When I am 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 V. The same. A garden.**

*Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA*

**LAUNCELOT**

Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the  
father  
are to be laid upon the children:  
therefore, I  
promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain  
with  
you, and so now I speak my agitation of  
the matter:  
therefore be of good cheer, for truly I  
think you  
are damned. There is but one hope in it  
that can do  
you any good; and that is but a kind of  
bastard  
hope neither.

**JESSICA**

And what hope is that, I pray thee?

**LAUNCELOT**

Marry, you may partly hope that your  
father got you  
not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

**JESSICA**

That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed:  
so the  
sins of my mother should be visited upon  
me.

**LAUNCELOT**

Truly then I fear you are damned both by  
father and  
mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your  
father, I  
fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you  
are  
gone both ways.

**JESSICA**

I shall be saved by my husband; he hath  
made me a  
Christian.

**LAUNCELOT**

Truly, the more to blame he: we were  
Christians  
enow before; e'en as many as could well  
live, one by  
another. This making Christians will raise the  
price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-  
eaters, we  
shall not shortly have a rasher on the  
coals for money.

*Enter LORENZO*

**JESSICA**

I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you  
say: here he comes.

**LORENZO**

I shall grow jealous of you shortly,  
Launcelot, if  
you thus get my wife into corners.

**JESSICA**

Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo:  
Launcelot and I  
are out. He tells me flatly, there is no  
mercy for



me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

**LORENZO**

I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

**LAUNCELOT**

It is much that the Moor should be more than reason: but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for.

**LORENZO**

How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

**LORENZO**

Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

**LORENZO**

Will you cover then, sir?

**LAUNCELOT**

Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

**LORENZO**

Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning:

go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern.

*Exit*

**LORENZO**

O dear discretion, how his words are suited! The fool hath planted in his memory An army of good words; and I do know A many fools, that stand in better place, Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word Defy the matter. How cheerest thou, Jessica? And now, good sweet, say thy opinion, How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

**JESSICA**

Past all expressing. It is very meet The Lord Bassanio live an upright life; For, having such a blessing in his lady, He finds the joys of heaven here on earth; And if on earth he do not mean it, then In reason he should never come to heaven Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match And on the wager lay two earthly women, And Portia one, there must be something else Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world Hath not her fellow.

**LORENZO**

Even such a husband Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

**JESSICA**

Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

**LORENZO**

I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

**JESSICA**

Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

**LORENZO**

No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;  
' Then, howso'er thou speak'st, 'mong  
other things  
I shall digest it.

**JESSICA**

Well, I'll set you forth.

*Exeunt*

## **ACT IV**

### **SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.**

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

**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 ta'en great 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 moiety of the principal;

Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,  
That have of late so huddled on his back,  
Enow to press a royal merchant down  
And pluck commiseration of his state  
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of  
flint,

From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never  
train'd

To offices of tender courtesy.

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?  
What if my house be troubled with a rat  
And I be pleased to give ten thousand  
ducats

To have it baned? What, are you  
answer'd yet?  
Some men there are love not a gaping  
pig;  
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;  
And others, when the bagpipe sings i' the  
nose,  
Cannot contain their urine: for affection,  
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your  
answer:  
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,  
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;  
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;  
Why he, a woollen bagpipe; but of force  
Must yield to such inevitable shame  
As to offend, himself being offended;  
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;

You may as well forbid the mountain  
pines

To wag their high tops and to make no  
noise,

When they are fretten with the gusts of  
heaven;

You may as well do anything most hard,  
As seek to soften that--than which what's  
harder?--

His Jewish heart: therefore, 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**

What judgment shall I dread, doing  
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 purchased  
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,  
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,  
Whom I have sent for to determine this,  
Come here to-day.

**SALERIO**

My lord, here stays without  
A messenger with letters from the doctor,  
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, from Bellario?

**NERISSA**

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

*Presenting a letter*

**BASSANIO**

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

**SHYLOCK**

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

**GRATIANO**

Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,

No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness  
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

**SHYLOCK**

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

**GRATIANO**

O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!  
And for thy life let justice be accused.  
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith  
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,  
That souls of animals infuse themselves  
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit  
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,  
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,  
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,  
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires  
Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

**SHYLOCK**

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,  
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:

Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall  
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

**DUKE**

This letter from Bellario doth commend  
A young and learned doctor 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 Bellario's letter.

**Clerk**

[Reads]

Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of

your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that

your messenger came, in loving visitation was with

me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I

acquainted him with the cause in controversy between

the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er

many books together: he is furnished with my

opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the

greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes

with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's

request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of

years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend

estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so

old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better

publish his

commendation.

**DUKE**

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:

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**

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,  
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,  
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**

For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty,  
Which here appeareth due upon the  
bond.

**SHYLOCK**

'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!  
How much more elder art thou than thy  
looks!

**PORTIA**

Therefore lay bare your bosom.

**SHYLOCK**

Ay, his breast:

So says the bond: doth it not, noble  
judge?

'Nearest his heart:' those are the very  
words.

**PORTIA**

It is so. Are there 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;  
For herein Fortune shows herself more  
kind

Than is her custom: it is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his  
wealth,

To view with hollow eye and wrinkled  
brow

An age of poverty; from which lingering  
penance

Of such misery doth she cut me off.

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.

Repent but you that you shall lose your  
friend,

And he repents not that he pays your  
debt;

For 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**

These be the Christian husbands. I have  
a daughter;

Would any of the stock of Barrabas

Had been her husband rather than a  
Christian!

*Aside*

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, 'gainst all other voice.  
In which predicament, I say, thou  
stand'st;  
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,  
That indirectly and directly too  
Thou hast contrived against the very life  
Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd  
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.  
Down therefore and beg mercy of the  
duke.

**GRATIANO**

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang  
thyself:

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the  
state,

Thou hast not left the value of a cord;  
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the  
state's charge.

**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.

**PORTIA**

Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

**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.

**PORTIA**

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

**SHYLOCK**

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**

In christening shalt thou have two god-  
fathers:

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have  
had ten more,  
To bring thee to the gallows, not the 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  
And therein do account myself well paid:  
My mind was never yet more mercenary.  
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,  
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,  
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

**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. Well, peace be with you!

*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa*

**ANTONIO**

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:  
Let his deservings and my love withal  
Be valued against your wife's commandment.

**BASSANIO**

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou  
canst,  
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.

*Exit Gratiano*

Come, you and I will thither presently;  
And in the morning early will we both  
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio.

*Exeunt*

## **SCENE II. The same. A street.**

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

**PORTIA**

Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this  
deed  
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night  
And be a day before our husbands home:  
This deed will be well welcome to  
Lorenzo.

*Enter GRATIANO*

**GRATIANO**

Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en  
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice  
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth  
entreat  
Your company at dinner.

**PORTIA**

That cannot be:  
His ring I do accept most thankfully:  
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,  
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's  
house.

**GRATIANO**

That will I do.

**NERISSA**

Sir, I would speak with you.

*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.

*Aloud*

Away! make haste: thou knowist where I  
will tarry.

**NERISSA**

Come, good sir, will you show me to this  
house?

*Exeunt*

## **ACT V**

### **SCENE I. Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.**

*Enter LORENZO and JESSICA*

**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 Troyan  
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; she doth stray about  
By holy crosses, where she kneels and  
prays

For happy wedlock hours.

**LORENZO**

Who comes with her?

**STEPHANO**

None but a holy hermit and her maid.  
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

**LORENZO**

He is not, nor we have not heard from  
him.

But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,

And ceremoniously let us prepare  
Some welcome for the mistress of the  
house.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

**LAUNCELOT**

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

**LORENZO**

Who calls?

**LAUNCELOT**

Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?

Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

**LORENZO**

Leave hollaing, 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 patines of bright gold:

There's not the smallest orb which thou

behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

*Enter Musicians*

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!  
With sweetest touches pierce your  
mistress' ear,  
And draw her home with music.

*Music*

**JESSICA**

I am never merry when I hear sweet  
music.

**LORENZO**

The reason is, your spirits are attentive:  
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,  
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,  
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and  
neighing loud,  
Which is the hot condition of their blood;  
If they but hear perchance a trumpet  
sound,  
Or any air of music touch their ears,  
You shall perceive them make a mutual  
stand,  
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest  
gaze  
By the sweet power of music: therefore  
the poet  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones  
and floods;  
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of  
rage,  
But music for the time doth change his  
nature.  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet  
sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the  
music.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

**PORTIA**

That light we see is burning in my hall.  
How far that little candle throws his  
beams!  
So shines a good deed in a naughty  
world.

**NERISSA**

When the moon shone, we did not see  
the candle.

**PORTIA**

So doth the greater glory dim the less:  
A substitute shines brightly as a king  
Unto the king be by, and then his state  
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook  
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

**NERISSA**

It is your music, madam, of the house.

**PORTIA**

Nothing is good, I see, without respect:  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by  
day.

**NERISSA**

Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

**PORTIA**

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the  
lark,  
When neither is attended, and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by  
day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be  
thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by season season'd  
are  
To their right praise and true perfection!  
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with  
Endymion  
And would not be awaked.

*Music ceases*

**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 is come a messenger before,  
To signify their coming.

**PORTIA**

Go in, Nerissa;

Give order to my servants that they take  
No note at all of our being absent hence;  
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.

*A tucket sounds*

**LORENZO**

Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:

We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

**PORTIA**

This night methinks is but the daylight sick;

It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,  
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

*Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers*

**BASSANIO**

We should hold day with the Antipodes,  
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

**PORTIA**

Let me give light, but let me not be light;  
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,

And never be Bassanio so for me:  
But God sort all! You are welcome home,  
my lord.

**BASSANIO**

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio,  
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

**PORTIA**

You should in all sense be much bound to him.

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

**ANTONIO**

No more than I am well acquitted of.

**PORTIA**

Sir, you are very welcome to our house:  
It must appear in other ways than words,  
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

**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, whose posy was  
For all the world like cutler's poetry  
Upon a knife, '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:

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,

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.

What man is there so much  
unreasonable,  
If you had pleased to have defended it  
With any terms of zeal, wanted the  
modesty  
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?  
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 enforced to send it after him;  
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**

I am the unhappy subject of these  
quarrels.

**PORTIA**

Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome  
notwithstanding.

**BASSANIO**

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;  
And, in the hearing of these many  
friends,  
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair  
eyes,  
Wherein I see myself--

**PORTIA**

Mark you but that!  
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;

In each eye, one: swear by your double  
self,  
And there's an oath of credit.

**BASSANIO**

Nay, but hear me:  
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear  
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**

Why, this is like the mending of highways  
In summer, where the ways are fair  
enough:

What, are we cuckolds ere we have  
deserved it?

**PORTIA**

Speak not so grossly. You are all  
amazed:

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;  
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:

There you shall find that 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  
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;  
There you shall find three of your

argosies

Are richly come to harbour suddenly:

You shall not know by what strange  
accident

I chanced on this letter.

**ANTONIO**

I am dumb.

**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;

For here I read for certain that my ships  
Are safely come to road.

**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,

After his death, of all he dies possess'd  
of.

**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

Of these events at full. Let us go in;

And charge us there upon inter'gatories,  
And we will answer all things faithfully.

**GRATIANO**

Let it be so: the first inter'gatory

That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,

Whether till the next night she had rather  
stay,

Or go to bed now, being two hours to  
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*

## **I- Plot: Four Separate but**

### **Intertwined Stories**

There are four different stories going on in this play. First there is the most serious one, that of Antonio, Bassanio, and Shylock's connection with the borrowed money and the bond. This story gives the play its tragic structure. The scenes involved in this story are tense because of the anti-Semitism that is portrayed and because of the threat to Antonio's loss of money and the threat to his life, as well as Shylock's losses. Many critics view this as the major plot of the drama.

The next story of importance is that of the three caskets. This story has a little tension but it is light-hearted and often quite humorous, especially when the extravagant suitors, Arragon and Morocco, try to decipher the messages and choose the correct casket. This story reflects some of the elements in the bond story in that it involves the glitter of gold and the weight of making decisions.

A third story is that of Lorenzo and Jessica's love, deception, and elopement. This story is used to compare the two daughter's relationships with their fathers: Jessica and Shylock; and Portia and her deceased father. By Jessica leaving and taking her father's money, this story adds tension and depth to Shylock's losses at the trial in the bond story. Finally, this story demonstrates a reconciliation between Jews and Christians that is lacking in the bond story. Finally, as if tacked on to the end of the play to lighten the tension of the courtroom scene,

there is the story of the rings. Portia and Nerissa trick their husbands, testing their husbands' loyalty by asking for their rings (while disguised as young male lawyers). Bassanio and Gratiano, indebted to the young lawyers for saving Antonio's lives, give the rings away. In the final scene, the husbands are shamed and ask forgiveness. They are given a second chance, thus ending the play on a happy note, rather than ending with the trial scene, which would make this play resonate with tragedy.

## **II- Jews in England**

One of the first documented statements of Jews in England was recorded in 1075 in Oxford. At this time, and for another hundred years or so, Jews, unlike their counterparts in other European countries, were not forced to live in a ghetto—especially designated sections of a town or city. Jewish people in England were banned from certain professions, though, with most taking up jobs peddling wares and moneylending. They also could not own land.

In the twelfth century, sentiments against Jews were on the rise. The Christian Crusades were in full force and heretics were being burned to death in nearby Spain. Christians called Jews heretics because Jews did not believe that Jesus was the true Messiah. During the twelfth century, Jews suffered through

two massive massacres in England, one in 1189 and another in the following year. Things did not improve in the next century. Laws were passed stating that Jewish people could no longer make a living lending money; Jewish families also suffered through having to pay unusually heavy taxes. Then in 1290, King Edward I decreed that Jewish people were a threat to England and banished them from the country.

In the sixteenth century, in Shakespeare's time, most English people would have been familiar with Jewish people not from acquaintance but from the stories told about them, most of which would have been prejudicial. Some of these stories included such false statements as Jewish people were spreading the dreaded Bubonic Plague. Other false beliefs included that Jewish people worshipped the devil and had been granted magical powers because of a pact they made with Satan. Jews were also

accused of stealing Christian children at Easter time and using them in bloody rituals.

In Elizabethan times, although still banished, some Jews lived in England. If they practiced Judaism, they did so secretly. Outwardly, they tried to conform to Christian ways, even professing conversion to the Christian faith. Even so, Jews were still restricted to two main professions: usury and peddling.

#### Jewish Ghetto

Although there were no Jewish ghettos in England in Shakespeare's time, there were ghettos in Venice. The absence of ghettos in England were a result of Jewish people having been technically banned from England. Those Jews who did live there were supposedly assimilated into the Christian faith and lived as Christians, scattered throughout the cities' neighborhoods.

Ironically, it is from the Venetians, from a city that was at that time known for its tolerance of different religions, that the word ghetto is derived. Venice was

not the first city to create a ghetto for Jews. It was, however, the city that first devised the term ghetto, in 1516, when it established a special section in the northern part of the city. This was not the most pleasant part of the city. It was a place of industry, in particular iron foundries were located there with their polluting exhausts and smells. This was also an isolated part of the city, cut off by water from the main section of Venice. In order to gain access to the city proper, people had to cross one of two bridges. At night, these bridges were barred, forcing the Jewish people who lived in the ghettos to remain at home until the gates were re-opened.

The land area in the Venetian Ghetto was not large enough to house the Jewish population, so homes built in that area tended to have five or more stories, unlike the typical houses in other parts of the cities. As the population continued to expand, additional lands were dedicated to the ghettos. In 1630, there were about 4000 Jewish people living in the Venetian Ghetto, in what would amount today to about two and a half city squares. When Napoleon took control of Venice in the eighteenth century, he ordered the gates on the bridges to the city to be torn down. Jewish people gained some rights after this but not the right to citizenry.

### **III- Reformation and Usury**

Charging interest on loans was for a long time prohibited by many different religions and decried as a poor practice by many philosophers in ancient times. Religions that preached against usury included the Moslem faith and the Christian faith. There was even a precept in Judaism that forbade usury; but it was limited. Jewish people could not charge interest on loans to other Jews. However, they could collect interest from non-Jews. There are passages in the Old Testament,

the New Testament, and the Qur'an that speak out against usury.

### **IV- Italian Renaissance**

The Italian Renaissance was a period of time roughly between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries (although there are arguments for even earlier and later Renaissance movements in other parts of the world) when scholars, philosophers, and other students of history and culture examined the past, evaluated it, took the knowledge they collected, and slowly began to create a new

The Reformation, led by Martin Luther, sweeps across Europe. Queen Elizabeth I demands a unified England, outlawing all religions except for Protestantism, under the Church of England. Venetians make fortunes as their city is the greatest shipping port in Europe. Typical cargo ships improved over the Middle Age models and now have as many as four masts with two sails each. society based on new scientific and artistic ideas. Often, the Renaissance is used to mark the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age in Europe, although the changes happened gradually and the dates of one era beginning and another one ending are rather arbitrary. In Italy, however, approximately during this time span, scientific and artistic discoveries enjoyed new, exciting, and dramatic changes.

Some of the earliest of the Renaissance writers in Italy were the poet Dante (1265–1321, known for his poem *The Divine Comedy*, written somewhere between 1310 and

1314) and the poet Petrarch (1304–1374, known for his series of love poems, written about a woman called Laura,

begun somewhere around 1327). Both of these writers' works would seriously affect authors in other parts of Europe, especially in England, as the changes of the Renaissance swept through Europe. The Elizabethan Age in England is said to represent the height of the Renaissance in England. Authors such as dramatists William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe (1564– 1593, who wrote *The Jew of Malta*), as well as poet John Milton (1608–74, who is known for his poem "Paradise Lost"), and many others wrote enduring works which are still studied today.

Venetian Economy in the Renaissance The city of Venice is built on marshy islands, with many so-called streets actually comprised



of water canals. Boats and ships were a part of most every Venetian's life because water was everywhere in the city. Because of its strategic position on the Adriatic Sea, Venice became a major shipping port, controlling most of the trade between Europe and the Far East up until the end of the Renaissance. Shipping was a very important part of the city's economy, and money flowed into the hands of the many families involved in the trade. In past ages, the money had been controlled by the nobility, whose wealth was invested in the land. With the large shipping industry in Venice, though, the power of money moved into the merchant class. People in the banking industry also gained wealth, as aristocrats began a trend of borrowing money for frivolous things, such as gambling and partying, and then failed to repay their loans. Bankers often took portions of the nobility's landholdings in payment, thus increasing the bankers' profits. The business class of merchants grew drastically during the Renaissance. Many merchants invested large amounts of money into the building of great mansions and churches during this time. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of the Venetian Renaissance are considered the golden age of Venetian wealth.

#### **V - SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS:**

Shakespeare's decision to name The Merchant of Venice after a minor character serves to increase attention on the true hero of the play, Portia. Throughout the play, Portia proves herself to be more knowledgeable and clever than any of the male characters. Given how Portia dominates the action of the play, Crow contends, "Shakespeare must surely have intended the title of the play to be ironic."

In The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare has woven together two stories. One is a revenge drama, set in Venice and based on the tensions between two business practices. Antonio represents the Christian merchants, who make their living trading

with other nations, running risks posed by storms and pirates. Shylock represents the Jews, a marginalised group, locked into the 'ghetto' at night, who, because of restrictions imposed by the ruling Christians, can only make a living by lending money at fixed rates of interest. Antonio's contempt for Shylock is not just because he is a 'misbeliever' (I.iii.103), but also because he is a 'cut-throat dog', taking no risks and making profit out of the merchants. The other story is a romantic comedy, set in the fictional world of Belmont, and based on the fairy tale device of a wealthy woman bound by her father's will to marry the first man to choose the correct casket from gold, silver and lead.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, designed to appeal to both courtier and citizen, has wide ranging variety presented with original and experimental dramatic devices. It combines an enchanted princess episode at Belmont with a folk-tale bond plot set in commercial Venice; it contains a trial, an elopement, a teasing trick over rings, and woman disguised as men. Its experiments and original methods are bold and imaginative. The Principal lovers are married in Act III instead of at the end of the play. Into the midst of romantic story and comic clownery Shakespeare has thrust a tragic villain, Shylock, an experiment that is unique in his comedies. Those natural enemies in Elizabethan eyes, love and friendship are shown on the contrary as fulfilling each other in harmony. The denouement of the bond plot with the departure of Shylock in Act IV again is unusual. The use of music as a background for Lorenzo's speech, with musicians brought actually on to the stage or on to stage level (V. I) is almost a forerunner of recitative, and together with the musical 'composition' of the earlier conversation

between Lorenzo and Jessica it is an unparalleled attempt to create a mood of peace, serenity and universal harmony.

Shakespeare further emphasizes this by placing side by side sharply contrasting themes and characters; it is one of his favorite dramatic techniques, and he uses it boldly in this play. Portia and Antonio are both contrasted with Shylock, the New Law with the Old Law, the marriage bond with the flesh bond, love with hatred, deceptive appearances with inner truth, generosity with miserliness.

For good measure, he adds discussions or comments on friendship, usury, melancholy, music, national characteristics, and that perennial, light-hearted topic, the oddity of a young Englishman's clothes. There is a song, there is instrumental music, and there is a brilliant display of pageantry at Belmont and in Venice, perhaps the most colourful in any of Shakespeare's comedies.

Such a mixture was not devised for idle amusement only, or to allow the spectators to escape into world of romance and comic interludes; it sets up values and judgements of good and evil, the proclaimed purpose of Elizabethan literature in general. The Merchant of Venice contains themes of deep moral and social concern presented morality tale in action, or in discussion or in a soliloquy – the relationship of justice and mercy, sacrifice, the reconciliation of love and friendship, the Old Testament doctrine and the New Testament teaching, Christian charity in practice. Some scholars consider that each of Shakespeare's plays has one theme or governing moral idea which pervades and controls the play and to which all other themes contribute. The theme of love and friendship has been suggested for The Merchant of Venice. The opposition of justice and mercy in the trial scene, viewed in the light of the allegory of the Four Daughters of God, has also been proposed. This judgement theme is shown to permeate the whole play. The falsity of appearances beside the

truth of reality which is openly stated. Bassanio's soliloquy over the caskets and implicit in the discussion over usury (I. ii) and in Shylock's pretence of friendship (I. ii) is another possibility. Love's wealth or the prosperity and happiness of mind that spring from giving rather than from taking have also been suggested. A further suggestion is that love and friendship, above the false show of material things, is prepared to make an entire sacrifice, and in so doing is shown to be a reflection in human terms of the Christian Redemption. The characters serving different dramatic purposes are variously presented. Shylock is revealed in soliloquy and in dialogue; Portia and Antonio are revealed by the descriptions of others as well as in dialogue; Bassanio reveals himself almost entirely in dialogue. Generally in a comedy the lesser characters 'speak for themselves'. However they reveal themselves, Shakespeare's genius gives them vivid human touches; the figures of Shylock and Antonio engage our thought so deeply that we are often deceived into thinking of them as they had life outside a the play. The tradition of the stage produced a number of stock characters who invariably behave like puppets in the same limited way. When Shakespeare uses one of them, Launcelot Gobbo, for example, he invests the character with a fresh, life-like appearance. A minor character such as Launcelot, Nerissa, Salerio, Solanio and Gratiano are not only Antonio's friends, they act as a chorus in making the kind of comment on affairs expected from an observer. Occasionally characters represent a quality or state. In The Merchant of Venice the dukes of Morocco and Arragon are allegorical figures personifying fleshly desire and pride. A number of characters in Shakespeare's tragedies, while they are not personifications in this way, are clearly involved in moral qualities, states or ideas; this is also true of some characters in his comedies. At times their human qualities are uppermost; at other times they speak as if they were mouthpieces of some quality.

Shakespeare characteristically says more than one thing at a time, sometimes his characters play as it were more than one part, and his plots tell more than one story. This makes interpretation of a play such as The Merchant of Venice very difficult. Because of Shakespeare's methods and the changes in intellectual opinion and social custom, much in his plays is likely to be meaningless or imperfect to our minds unless some attempt is made to recover even a little of the Elizabethan attitude of mind and scope of their knowledge.

#### VI- Love And Money

The thriving merchant city of Venice was a prototype for London in the 1590s. Through trade, the English capital was becoming increasingly wealthy. The cultured circles of its population were self-consciously aware of the wide-ranging effects of prosperity. On the one hand, riches could be regarded as a social blessing, bringing colour and the joy and release festivity. On the other, increasing capital caused a growing unease about the power of money to corrupt, deprave and shatter social relations. The Merchant of Venice vividly portrays wealth in its conflicting roles, compares and contrasts it with the currency of love, and in the process articulates the need for an enlightened, liberal and, above all, social approach to money.

The play's opening immediately makes the association between riches and a decorous feeling for manners and colourful, civilized, structured society. For Salerio, Antonio's argosies (I,i):

*Like signors and rich burghers on the flood,*

*Or as it were the pageants of the sea-*

*Do overpeer the petty traffickers*

*That curtsy to them...*

Wealth is thus a gorgeous spectacle, a source of pleasure and the basis for graceful social relationships. Antonio has lent Bassanio large sums to support his opulent, gregarious lifestyle. In this way, money can be used for the sake of friendship, and Bassanio's latest venture provides the perfect opportunity for it to serve in affairs of the heart: one more loan will secure his friend's happiness by enabling him to win the hand of the woman he loves. It will also ensure that he is able to indulge his extravagant, festive temperament, for Portia has almost unlimited means. Hence money may be used to nurture love and contentment, to enrich the quality of life.

Generosity, that ability to give for love without thought of personal profits, is the ideal of the play. Portia also conforms to it well, joyfully giving herself and everything she owns to Bassanio, and declaring her willingness to pay his debt 'twenty times over' (III, ii)

The love versus friendship theme was felt and closely debated in the Renaissance. It appeared in differing story forms; in some of which one of the friends was killed, but the version which Shakespeare adopted in The Merchant of Venice placed the claims of friendship above those of love between man and woman.

There are three love affairs in The Merchant of Venice, each having its own peculiar quality. There is the love of Bassanio and Portia, there is the Jessica-Lorenzo love affair, and there is also the love affair of Nerissa and Gratiano. The love affair of Bassanio and Portia is the most outstanding in the play.

The friendship between Antonio and Bassanio is of compound nature. Antonio is the more important figure. He is a wealthy merchant in the city of Venice. He is a leading citizen, commanding great respect. Bassanio had once taken a loan from Antonio, but had not paid back. He asks Antonio for another loan. Antonio had no

cash in hand just now, but he is willing to help Bassanio. He bids Bassanio to approach any money-lender in the city of Venice and take a loan on Antonio's behalf.

Bassanio approaches Shylock who is a Jew and a professional money-lender, and asks for a loan of three thousand ducats in Antonio's name. Antonio then signs, regardless of the danger which it implies. There is in it a clause according to which Shylock would be entitled to cut off a pound of Antonio's flesh from nearest his heart in case Antonio fails to repay the loan within a period of three months. Antonio willingly signs this bond to meet the needs of his friend (Bassanio). He is willing to risk his life for the sake of his friend.

Another major trait of Antonio's nature is his capacity for friendship, and his profound affections for Bassanio. Their friendship has been idealized and glorified by Shakespeare. Antonio, unhesitatingly shares his wealth with Bassanio in spite of the latter's confession of his shortcomings. In this he enhances his own character by behaving in correct Christian and as the complete friend.

Antonio's attitude towards Shylock is partly dictated by the accepted belief that usury and friendship were enemies, the former destructive of the latter. To an audience unaware of the plot Antonio's sadness and Shylock's declared hatred may well raise fears after the bond has been sealed that Antonio may have to sacrifice his life. His offer is the greater since, according to a medieval belief, he put himself like Christ into the power of Jewry. In their conversation Antonio declares the opposition between usury and friendship, and Shylock, seizing his chance baits with an offer of friendship. Antonio, who represents friendship, is unable in his melancholy state to see the deception of an offer made in the name of friendship.

*Hie thee gentle Jew,*

*The Hebrew will turn Christian,*

*He grows kind.*

Act 1, iii

When the news of Antonio's misfortune reaches Belmont, Bassanio with fine integrity confesses the debt he owes to Antonio, because of the honourable course expected of him as a friend, may well destroy his new happiness. His divided loyalties are reconciled by the wisdom of Portia who perceives that true love is achieved only by preserving friendship, urges him to save his friend's life: *'O love, dispatch all business and be gone'*.

Her sacrifice is considerable. As man and wife, she and Bassanio are 'one flesh', but as friends Bassanio and Antonio are 'one soul in bodies twain', and she accepts the superiority of that claim as her conversation with Lorenzo (III. Iv) makes clear.

Bassanio offer of his life in the trial scene is seriously meant, and not the 'manifest lie' which one critic, mistaking the stage for reality, has suggested. Similarly, his offer to renounce his wife to save his friend is a serious offer although Shakespeare quickly turns it to jest with Portia's comment.

It has been suggested that Antonio's voluntary sharing of his wealth Bassanio is precisely balanced-to the delight of an Elizabethan audience-by the retribution that befalls Shylock. He, the pretended friend, is ordered to share his wealth with Antonio, his bond-brother, and so carry out the accepted doctrine that friends should share their goods.

The ring episode is another bond pledge. Bassanio allows the request of his friend to overrule his wife's wishes, that is he places friendship above love. Again Bassanio confesses what happened, and this time Antonio makes a deeper sacrifice, he offers to acknowledge Portia's claim to Bassanio and offers her that



which he shares with Bassanio, 'one soul in bodies twain'. The resolving of love and friendship in harmony symbolized by the music of Act V is complete.

Against all this is set the coldly calculating character of Shylock. The usurer lends money for profit not for love. The character of Shylock had received different critical opinions. One eminent critic regards Shylock as essentially a tragic character, while another eminent one conceives him in a different light. He is undoubtedly a villain. In fact, he is one of the most notorious characters in the entire range of Shakespearean drama. Shylock is a usurer, a fanatical Jew, a heartless man, a miserly employer, and a narrow-minded and tyrannical father. Indeed, he strikes us a kind of monster whom we detest and abhor.

#### **VII- The attitude of the Elizabethan audience towards Shylock:**

A very important aspect of the play is the antagonism which existed in those days between the Jews and the Christians. The Christians of the time harboured many prejudices against the Jews who, in their opinion, were not only great misers but also merciless usurers. One other point of conflict between the two religious communities was the fact that the Jews did not and still do not eat pork, while pork was and continues to be, the staple and favorite meal, and a delicacy for the Christians. In those days, the Jews in general were not only held in contempt by the Christians but also treated as outcasts and as worse than dogs.

The manifestation of Shylock for anti-Semitic purposes:

Recently, during the World War 11, Hitler sustained that same persecution against the Jews, expelled them from his country, and confiscated their properties and wealth. Hence, he offered them an everlasting opportunity to manipulate, and repudiate their suffering in the German Holocausts. It was the Moslems, in general and the Palestinians in particular, who had to, and still do, pay the fees. It is their own

lot to tolerate and defy the Jews' attempt to rehabilitate, to secure themselves a second home in Palestine. Paradoxically, while the leading nations stood still, and handicapped in front of Hitler's illegitimate assaults against the Jews, they do not react to the Jews conflict with the Arabs in the same way. The Israel lobby plays a very powerful role in the politics and economy of the United States of America. Consequently, the State of Israel used to get, and still gets the utmost financial and spiritual aid from America.

In the Elizabethan times, of course, Shylock stands out as a representative of his race; a wholly evil person, and as a veritable devil. In most of the scenes of the play, he struck the audience as a hateful person and in a few of the scenes he evoked their ridicule.

One of the ways in which Shakespeare makes Shylock a figure of fun is by exploiting the comic potential of the traditional stage Jew. An Elizabethan audience would often have seen Jews comically caricatured as greedy misers and moneylenders. The association of Jews with devils was a standing joke, and in Act III Scene i, when Salanio sees Shylock, he says that the devil is coming 'in the likeness of a Jew'. We have already noted, in act III scene i, amidst his grief for his daughter's elopement, and the loss of his fortune, Shylock's remark that Antonio 'will feed my revenge', an extension of the grotesque belief that Jews did eat human flesh. He wears the traditional garb-a 'Jewish gabardine'. (I, iii)- and has the standard comic obsession of a miser. For example, he is anxious, in Act II Scene V, because he has been dreaming of moneybags. Launcelot Gobbo, the clown, complains that he is 'famished' in Shylock's service, but the latter considers himself to have been excessively generous, for when Launcelot declares

his intention to serve Bassanio, Shylock says that he will not be able to 'gormandize' as he has done in the past.

Paradoxically, he gives a prolonged moralizing lecture over the value of forgiveness, wondering: 'why revenge'. Moreover, he invests the occasion to his own good, begins a series of complaints of persecution:

**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.*

*Act III, i*

Upon hearing the news of Antonio bankruptcy, Shylock rejoices it, forgetting his entire past epigram, and threatens: 'I will have the heart of him if he forfeit'

When Shylock enters the court, he is fully determined to demand the pound of flesh to which he is entitled because of Antonio's failure to have repaid to him the loan. Shylock, then, is an outsider not only because he is a Jew, but because of his selfishness and the way he talks and behaves. During our reading of the play, we realize that the fact that he is a Jew is only one of the many things which separates and alienates him from the prevailing mood and atmosphere. His isolation is at least partly of his own choosing, and he outrages the gregariousness, or social and community spirit, of his environment. His entry in act I Scene iii puts a stop to the colourful, playful and gracious talk which we have enjoyed in the first scene. The Duke calls him, with justification 'a stony adversary' (IV, i) For all these reasons, Shylock should not win any of our sympathy too. Even his fate at the end of the play provoked only mirth and laughter.

## The Theme of Loneliness

The central conflict in the play is not between the keen, calculating business world of Shylock and the romantic world of love and marriage symbolized by Belmont. Shylock and Antonio are the two focal points of the play, both of them are studies of loneliness and isolation. There are marked similarities and contrasts between the two men. Being a Jew, Shylock is an alien and outcast in Christian Venice and Antonio is also an alien to the Venetian and Belmont worlds of love and marriage.

About Shylock the important thing to note is that he is a Jew in a Christian society. He is tolerated but not accepted. His being a Jew is not important in itself; what is important is what being a Jew has done in his personality. He is a stranger, proud of his race and its traditions, strict in his religion. Around him is the society of Venice, a world of golden youth, richly dressed, accustomed to luxury, to feasting, to masking, of a comparatively easy virtue.

The first time Antonio is introduced into the play, he seems to be in a melancholic temperament. His friends inquire him about the reason behind his seeming depressed mood, and wonder if it is because all his ships are at the sea, jeopardized by its storms and rocks. Antonio replies that his melancholic mood is congenital, and that 'my merchandise makes me not sad'. He also tells them that he perceives the world as "A stage where every man must play a part, and mine a sad one".

## **VIII- The choice of the Caskets**

On the surface, no doubt, the choice of a casket to determine a candidate's suitability as a husband for Portia looks absurd. It would seem that a suitor's

choice of the right casket in The Merchant of Venice would be purely a matter of chance, and not an indication of the good qualities which he might be possessing. In other words, it seems to have been a sheer whim or caprice on the part of Portia's late father to have devised this strange method for the selection of a husband for Portia. And Portia therefore seems to be a stupid woman who blindly believes in the method laid down by her late father. The choice of a casket as a test of a character therefore seems to be one of the many absurdities in this play which has sometimes been compared to a fairy tale.

The choice has to be made from amongst three caskets which are made of gold, silver, and lead respectively. Each casket bears an inscription as a sort of clue to guide the suitor. The inscription on the gold casket is: "Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire." The inscription on the silver casket reads thus: "Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves." And the inscription on the leaden casket is: "Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath."

Apparently, there is no good reason for preferring one of the caskets to the other two. There is an equal balancing of the alternatives. Portia's portrait could have been placed in any of these caskets; and the successful chooser could then have been described as the wisest or the most suitable man to marry the lady. After all, the arguments given by the prince of Morocco are very strong, and so are the arguments given by the Prince of Arragon.

Hence, we are dealing with an intentional puzzle, the key to the fate of a suitor is not to be found in the reasoning which he goes through. The prince of Morocco looks at the inscriptions which the three caskets bear and asks himself by what means he can choose the right casket. He prays to god to direct his judgement. He then reads the inscriptions once again. The leaden casket requires the chooser to

give and hazard all he has. The Prince of Morocco thinks these words to be a threat, and says that men, who hazard all, do so in the hope of getting a fair return. A golden mind, he further says, does not stoop to anything that is worthless such as lead, and so the Prince of Morocco decides not to give or hazard anything for the sake of lead. He possesses a regal pride and, he therefore, thinks himself to be half-divine. He dislikes lead because of his exalted view of himself; and he rejects silver because of a touch of modesty in his pride. He doubts whether he really deserves Portia; and so he chooses the gold casket. The Prince of Arragon possesses the pride of family and, having a high opinion of his merit and ability, thinks that he fully deserves Portia. Accordingly, he chooses the silver casket. Bassanio possesses the pride of a soldier who is not discouraged by any threat or danger; and so he chooses the leaden casket. Besides, he is a lover who will hazard everything for the sake of love. And so he chooses a casket which threatens rather than promises anything. And thus the strange puzzle, conceived by the holy father who was divinely inspired while dying, has actually proved to be the true test for the inmost character of each suitor.

Our initial impression of Bassanio is that he is a dowry-seeker or a fortune hunter, and that he is an irresponsible man living above his means and borrowing money from his rich friend whenever he is in need of it. If we think of Bassanio in these terms, we cannot believe that he could have chosen the right casket. And so one comes back to the point from the very beginning. It is really difficult to decide over the reliability of that test of the casket as a proof of good intentions and true love.

The first time Bassanio's name is mentioned is amidst a conversation between Portia and her maid Nerissa. Nerissa is reminding Portia of him as 'a Venetian, a

scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?' Nerissa gives him the credit of being 'the best deserving a fair lady'. Portia seems to approve on Nerissa's exaggerated praise of Bassanio. This contradicts her apparent discouraging attitude towards the other forerunners.

When Bassanio comes to make his choice of a casket, Portia urges him to stay at her house for a day or two before he actually proceeds to make his choice. She says that if he chooses the wrong casket, he would have to leave her house immediately, and that she would then be in no position to enjoy his company. Then she tells him that some inner voice is telling her that she would not lose him. She seems to be

When Bassanio has chosen the leaden casket, Portia in an aside says that before Bassanio had made his choice, she was astounded by feelings of suspense, apprehension, doubt, and despair. His success transforms her emotions into intense joy.

Bassanio, on his part, when he opens Portia's portrait, he becomes totally obsessed by her beauty. But it is not only in his love and gregariousness that he seems to have, as Launcelot says, 'that grace of God' (II, ii). He is sensitive and perceptive, and has the ability to see beneath the surface of things, an essential capacity in an imperfect world. So unlike Antonio, Bassanio is instinctively suspicious of Shylock's pretence of kindness and generosity in the wording of the bond: 'I like not terms and a villain's mind (I, iii). It is exactly this awareness that things may not be as they seem which enables him Portia: he rejects the golden casket because 'ornament', a beautiful exterior, may be 'The seeming truth which cunning times put on. To entrap the wisest' (III, ii). We know that Bassanio is careless of money, and he passes over the silver, which symbolizes it,

with barely a glance. By choosing the lead casket he shows himself as one who scorns to judge by superficialities, identifying his love for Portia as something far deeper and more noble than mere physical attraction.

In spite of all this, there is a certain irony in Bassanio's choice. He rejects the temptation of money and ornament symbolized by the silver and gold caskets, but he feels that in order to woo Portia he must have sufficient means to enhance and embellish his suit. Moreover, he is impressed by the inscription which threatens rather than promises: 'who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath'; but after all it is neither his wealth nor his life which is at stake.

So, although we enjoy and admire Bassanio's carefree liberality, there are times in the play when his purely idealistic and emotional approach might have very unpleasant consequences for those around him. As Antonio stands in peril of his life, Bassanio's extravagant instincts lead him to make an extraordinary declaration: to save his friend, he would sacrifice his own life, all the world, and Portia too (IV, i). He may be partially excused for such rashness: the offer is made as Bassanio is suffering almost unbearable feelings of pain and guilt. Nevertheless, were it not for the comic appeal of the situation (unbeknown to him, Portia has heard every word), this would simply shock and outrage.

Here Bassanio is preserved from moral condemnation because our first instinct is to laugh, in the play as a whole Shakespeare makes it clear that only the contrivances of comedy prevent his actions from resulting in disaster. It takes all Shakespeare's artfulness to save Antonio. Bassanio acts from the best of motives, but, with all the good will in the world, difficulties and conflicts of interests arise. For instance, in the ring episode it seems that whatever he does will



damage his honour. If he gives it to the ‘ young doctor’, he is being unfaithful; if he keeps it, he could be accused of ingratitude.

### **IX- The Merchant of Venice as a romantic comedy**

Fortunately, comedy licenses extravagance and impulsiveness, and resolves conflict: without knowing it, Bassanio returns the ring to his wife. His fortune is prodigal’s dream come true: the carefree spendthrift is rewarded for his love and liberality, and protected from the complications and dire consequences which might arise in real life, by the devices of an artificial world.

The ancient Greeks believed that the aim of comedy should be to ridicule the vices and follies of society. So they displayed on the stage types rather than individuals, and dealt mainly with stock types of character which would be readily recognised by the audiences. Shakespeare did not follow this tradition. His characters are individual and real human beings and never become types. Englishmen in Shakespeare's days were distinctly romantic in their tastes, and not classical. We may explain this in the broadest possible manner by saying that they preferred free exercise of the imagination of the dramatist, who would supply them with plays of thrilling incident, exciting adventure, the supernatural and mysterious, and many other features which were directly in contrast to every-day life. The classical comedy, in the hands of Jonson, became a series of character sketches in extreme types of character, known as “humours” and tended to show forth eccentric and peculiar individual types. While his handling is always romantic, Shakespeare was not altogether unaffected by the prevailing taste for the depiction of “humours”. His character of Jaques in *As You Like It* is a study in a strange and unusual type of reflective melancholy; in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare has set forth a character of such unusual melancholy and morbid

introspection that the critics have not yet been able to agree about his real nature. But Shakespeare's comedies were never studies in humours; they were free and universal in the picture of life which they presented.

The Merchant of Venice is a comedy of romantic incident, full of thrills because the events presented are far removed from the ordinary dull course of everyday life. In his first attempts to write plays for the public, Shakespeare tried to show humorous events on the stage and to give amusing dialogues. Out of this, he gradually evolved a definite Shakespeare wrote to scheme. It must be stressed that he did not write suit the actors in his company from pure love of literary creation, but also to provide employment for himself and his company of actors. The box-office, or its equivalent, was an important feature. If a play succeeded, Shakespeare would follow with another on the same lines, a course that is widely followed by modern playwrights and novelists. Moreover he had actors in regular employment in his company, so that the character parts in any drama had to fit in with their abilities and their limitations. In plays appearing about the same time as The Merchant, particularly Twelfth Night, As You Like II, and Much Ado, we find a striking resemblance. In all these plays, there are two female characters associated together as are Portia and Nerissa. Then are Olivia and Viola in Twelfth Night, Rosalind and Celia in As You Like It, and Hero and Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing. Shakespeare seems to have been writing for a Company which had two clever boy actors, one taller than the other, and suitable for serious parts, while the shorter was definitely a wit. In every play there is a male character corresponding to Bassanio, nominally the chief male character, but by no means the "hero", and of less appeal than the female characters. Perhaps, Shakespeare had not at that time any male actor capable of a great and heroic part. Afterwards when the great character actor, Richard Burbage, joined the

Company, Shakespeare may have been influenced thereby when he produced plays like Hamlet and Macbeth, which were plays around the fate of one great and central character.

All the comedies have a humorous element, and in Twelfth Night and As You Like It we have a full-time Clown or jester. There is no such character in The Merchant but Launcelot is a comic character whose ridiculous errors in speech were designed to make the groundlings laugh. Even in tragic plays Shakespeare sometimes brought in a grim element of jest to relieve the tension of tragedy.

The Merchant is a love story which leads up to a happy marriage. The central story is the wooing of Portia, and her love appears more disinterested than that of Bassanio; but there is also the love of Antonio for Bassanio. The theme of love and friendship is a dual one. The problem which arises is the danger of the exacting of the bond, which had not appeared a serious transaction at first. There is danger and suspense, both in the Caskets Scene and the Trial Scene, before the problems are solved.

This is what we know as plot, and is an advance on the early plays of the Comedy of Errors style, in which a series of amusing incidents takes the place of a central problem. In plays contemporary with The Merchant of Venice, the ending is happy, though in Much Ado there are grave happenings before all is resolved satisfactorily.

All the comedies have a marked humorous element, and almost all the tragedies, though the tradition from the days of the Greeks had been against the combination of tragic and comic elements. Shakespeare did not feel tied down by this. Even in a deeply tragic drama like King Lear, there is a Fool who jests even in the most tragic scenes. In Macbeth, immediately after the murder of King Duncan, knocking is heard at the door and a porter comes on the stage and delivers a soliloquy of humorous and topical interest. Perhaps Shakespeare

felt it necessary to let his audiences have what they wanted, even at the sacrifice of his own ideas on art. Equally he may have believed that a mingling of grave and gay, of tears and laughter, is true to life, and that introduction of humour will give relief from tragic tension, and at the same time render tragedy more intense by contrast.

The Merchant of Venice is included among the comedies. The element of the humorous seems hardly to merit that title, and the trial scene seems perilously near to tragedy. The true definition of comedy was "a play with a happy ending," rather than a play of a humorous and comic nature. In the older stories considered by Shakespeare, there was practically no humour. We have seen that Shakespeare was a practical producer of plays, with a keen eye upon the public taste. He knew that the uneducated "groundlings" who formed a large of proportion of his audiences did not like too many humour intellectual problems in their dramas, but enjoyed farce and comic dialogue. In many of the plays of Shakespeare, even in the tragedies, there is a clown and an element of comedy as a concession to the London public. This explains why we have a comic character Launcelot Gobbo, and another outspoken humorist in Gratiano, to create laughter.

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The "pound of flesh" bond and the story of the caskets were selected because of their romantic appeal. The English audiences like striking incidents. There are more incidents in this play than in *As You Like It*, where the action appears at times to be held up by long scenes which are all dialogue. In *Measure for Measure*, there is so much action that it might be called a tale; whereas *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a

comedy of pure imagination. Though such differences exist, the characters of all these plays are true to Nature, and give an air of reality to the action such as was not previously attained by the shadowy characters of the old tales which Shakespeare so successfully transformed. Even the minor characters, often lightly sketched, have human interest and dramatic probability.

This play is a love story which ends happily in marriage. There is also an interest of friendship, or we might express this by saying that the theme shows the love of man for man and of The idea of love and woman for man. The central story is the wooing that of friendship of Portia, (where disinterested love appears on forms the theme of her part, rather than on that of Bassanio) broadened by the love of Antonio for Bassanio. It strikes at their note of friendship when it shows Antonio as sad, the probable explanation being that Bassanio's love for him has been challenged by the freshly arisen desire for Portia. This sadness of Antonio is a result of the first stage of Bassanio's wooing of Portia, though it serves to hint at graver causes of sadness in the future. The next step in the play is to bring in the beautiful heroine and to acquaint the audience with the ordeal of choosing the right casket. Thus the difficulty which lies in the path of Bassanio's wooing is revealed; and interest is correspondingly increased.

It is noteworthy that the love of Bassanio and Portia pursues a normal course, and follows the natural trend to a great extent. The lottery of the caskets is not an essential part of their love, but a romantic addition for dramatic and dramatic irony stage effect. In Shakespeare, the course and the choice of true love are, as a rule, free. We learn in this play that Bassanio and Portia have met before, and it is only necessary to read between the lines in order to see that they are already in love with each other. Before he makes his choice between the caskets, their love has become overwhelming. The episode of the caskets is solely an expedient to show that the love

of Bassanio is of the right kind, and that he alone, of all the suitors, is prepared “to give and hazard all the hath.” It serves also to impart a strong element of dramatic irony to the play, for the audience has had the previous experience gained by the failures of Morocco and Arragon. All the audience know, while Bassanio is choosing, that the leaden casket is the right one. This supplies just the situation that the Elizabethans loved, namely, that they should be in possession of knowledge which some characters on the stage did not possess. It is possible that Shakespeare foresaw the strong stage appeal of such a striking situation of dramatic irony, and so selected the caskets story as likely to delight Elizabethan audiences.

On the question of dramatic irony, there are two instances in *The Merchant of Venice* where women disguise themselves as men. Jessica leaves the Jew's house disguised as Lorenzo's The masquerade of torch-bearer, and Portia and Nerissa as boys supplies dramatic irony. It is evident that in every case this leads to situations which are full of irony, because the disguised women may deceive other actors on the stage, but they can never deceive the audience, who always know their true identity. To be in the secret is to be correspondingly delighted, so Shakespeare obliged by supplying such situations in plenty.

Another motive is possible for this. There were no women actors on the Elizabethan stage, and the parts of Portia and Nerissa would be The stage considera played by boys. This may have been a weakness in practice, for even the most talented of prompted this male boy actors is bound to be a little unconvincing masquerade in the rendering of a female part. Shakespeare may have felt it advisable to allow his boy actors to revert for a time to their own proper sex upon the stage, for the sake of naturalness and ease in acting. The boy who played the part of Portia would be allowed to speak and act as a man all through the difficult trial scene, where he would

thus be more natural and convincing. But the problem was not altogether so simple as this, for if the audience had been allowed to see only two men in the doctor of laws and his assistant, the effect would have been lost and the desired irony not attained. Hence the audience must ever be reminded that the characters are two women playing the parts of men.

Shakespeare is concentrating upon a genial and happy ending, and the humour and irony of the "rings" story go a long way towards the accomplishment of this. In addition, the episode of the ring which Portia has given Bassanio at the time of his successful choosing is taken back from him at the trial scene, and the final humorous "quizzing" of the pened Bassanio takes place again in the surroundings where he first received the ring. This episode is a strong connecting link between the Bond and the Caskets divisions, and plays an important part in establishing complete dramatic unity. It enables Act V to maintain a high level of interest, so that the play comes to a serene and graceful conclusion by degrees, although the main action and events are concluded by the end of Act IV. It is probably the only occasion on which Shakespeare occupied a whole Act with purely artistic "finishing off."

Every incident and subsidiary action of *The Merchant of Venice* is an integral part of the central story, and has a distinct part to play in furthering the action.

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This play is a love story which ends happily in marriage. There is also an interest of friendship, or we might express this by saying that the theme shows the love of man for man and of The idea of love and woman for man. The central story is the wooing that of friendship of Portia, (where disinterested love appears on forms the theme of her part, rather than on that of Bassanio) broadened by the love of Antonio for Bassanio. It strikes at their note of friendship when it shows Antonio as sad, the probable explanation being that Bassanio's love for him has been challenged by the freshly arisen desire for Portia. This sadness of Antonio is a result of the first stage of Bassanio's wooing of Portia, though it serves to hint at graver causes of sadness in the future. The next step in the play is to bring in the beautiful heroine and to acquaint the audience with the ordeal of choosing the right casket. Thus the difficulty which lies in

the path of Bassanio's wooing is revealed; and interest is correspondingly increased.

It is noteworthy that the love of Bassanio and Portia pursues a normal course, and follows the natural trend to a great extent. The lottery of the caskets is not an essential part of their love, but a romantic addition for dramatic and dramatic irony stage effect. In Shakespeare, the course and the choice of true love are, as a rule, free. We learn in this play that Bassanio and Portia have met before, and it is only necessary to read between the lines in order to see that they are already in love with each other. Before he makes his choice between the caskets, their love has become overwhelming. The episode of the caskets is solely an expedient to show that the love of Bassanio is of the right kind, and that he alone, of all the suitors, is prepared "to give and hazard all the hath." It serves also to impart a strong element of dramatic irony to the play, for the audience has had the previous experience gained by the failures of Morocco and Arragon. All the audience know, while Bassanio is choosing, that the leaden casket is the right one. This supplies just the situation that the Elizabethans loved, namely, that they should be in possession of knowledge which some characters on the stage did not possess. It is possible that Shakespeare foresaw the strong stage appeal of such a striking situation of dramatic irony, and so selected the caskets story as likely to delight Elizabethan audiences.

On the question of dramatic irony, there are two instances in *The Merchant of Venice* where women disguise themselves as men. Jessica leaves the Jew's house disguised as Lorenzo's torch-bearer, and Portia and Nerissa as boys supplies dramatic irony. It is evident that in every case this leads to situations which are full of irony, because the disguised women may deceive other actors on the stage, but they can never deceive the audience, who always know their true identity. To be in the secret is to be correspondingly delighted, so Shakespeare obliged by supplying such

situations in plenty.

Another motive is possible for this. There were no women actors on the Elizabethan stage, and the parts of Portia and Nerissa would be The stage considera played by boys. This may have been a weakness in practice, for even the most talented of prompted this male boy actors is bound to be a little unconvincing masquerade in the rendering of a female part. Shakespeare may have felt it advisable to allow his boy actors to revert for a time to their own proper sex upon the stage, for the sake of naturalness and ease in acting. The boy who played the part of Portia would be allowed to speak and act as a man all through the difficult trial scene, where he would thus be more natural and convincing. But the problem was not altogether so simple as this, for if the audience had been allowed to see only two men in the doctor of laws and his assistant, the effect would have been lost and the desired irony not attained. Hence the audience must ever be reminded that the characters are two women playing the parts of men.

Shakespeare is concentrating upon a genial and happy ending, and the humour and irony of the "rings" story go a long way towards the accomplishment of this. In addition, the episode of the ring which Portia has given Bassanio at the time of his successful choosing is taken back from him at the trial scene, and the final humorous "quizzing" of the pened Bassanio takes place again in the surroundings where he first received the ring. This episode is a strong connecting link between the Bond and the Caskets divisions, and plays an important part in establishing complete dramatic unity. It enables Act V to maintain a high level of interest, so that the play comes to a serene and graceful conclusion by degrees, although the main action and events are concluded by he end of Act IV. It is probably the only occasion on which Shakespeare occupied a whole Act with purely artistic "finishing off."

Every incident and subsidiary action of *The Merchant of Venice* is an integral part of the central story, and has a distinct part to play in furthering the action.

## **X- Shylock and Antonio**

Shylock, the Jew, lived at Venice; he made himself very rich by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants. Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, forced men to pay the money he lent with such cruelty, that he was much hated by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice. And Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in trouble, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great hatred between the Jew and the kind merchant Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock he used to attack him for hard dealings; and this the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly planned to hurt him.

Antonio was the kindest man that lived. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having only a small property, and wasted it by living in too costly a manner (as young men of high rank with small fortunes often do). Whenever Bassanio wanted money, Antonio helped him ; and it seemed as if they had but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to make a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved. Her father, who was lately dead, had left her a large property. In her father's lifetime (he said) he used to visit her at her house, and sometimes he thought this lady had sent him messages with her eyes; but not having money to make himself appear the lover of so rich a lady, he begged Antonio to lend him three thousand pounds.

Antonio had no money by him at the time to lend his friend; but expecting soon to have some ships come home with goods for sale, he said he would go to Shylock, the rich money-lender, and borrow the money.

Antonio and Bassanio went together to Shylock, and Antonio asked the Jew to lend him three thousand pounds upon any interest he wished, to be paid out of the goods in his ships at sea.

On this, Shylock thought within himself, "If I can once catch him, I will feed the hatred that I bear him; he hates our Jewish nation; he lends out money without interest; and among the merchants he curses me and my goods business. May my tribe be cursed if I forgive him!".

Antonio, seeing he was thinking and did not answer, and being anxious to get the money, said, "Shylock, do you hear? Will you lend the money?" .

To this question the Jew replied, "Signor Antonio, many a time you have cursed me, and I have borne it quietly; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spat on my Jewish garments, and kicked at me with your foot, as if I was a dog. Well, then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me, and say, Shylock, lend me money.

Has a dog money ? Is it possible a dog should lend three thousand pounds? Shall I bend low and say, "Fair sir, you spat upon me on Wednesday last; another time you called me dog; and for these kind deeds I am to lend you money" .

Antonio replied, "I am as likely to call you so again, to spit on you again, and kick at you too. If you will lend me this money, lend it not as to a friend, but rather lend it as to an enemy, that, if I cannot pay again, you may with better face punish me".

“Why, look you, “said Shylock,” how you storm! I would be friends with you, and have your love. I will forget the shame you have upon me. I will supply your wants, and take no interest for my money .” This offer greatly surprised Antonio; and then Ahylock, still pretending kindness, again said he would lend him three thousand pounds, and take no interest for his money; only Antonio should go with him to a lawyer, and sign in merry sport a bond, that if he did not repay the money be a certain day, he would lose a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of his body that Ahylock pleased.

“Content, “said Antonio,” I will sign this bond, and say there is much kindness in the Jew.”

Bassanio said Antonio should not sign such a bond for him; but still Antonio said that he would sign it, for before the day of payment came, his ships would come back with many times the balue of the money.

Shylock, hearing this talk, carried out, “ O father Abraham, what evil these Christians think! Their own hard dealings teach them to think evil. I pray you tell me this, Bassanio; if he should break his bond, what should I gain. A pound of man’s flesh, taken from a man, is not worth so much as the flesh of mutton or of beef.



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