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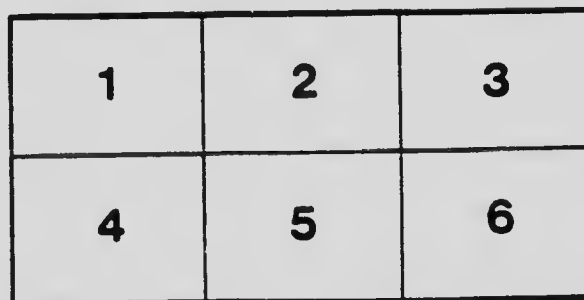
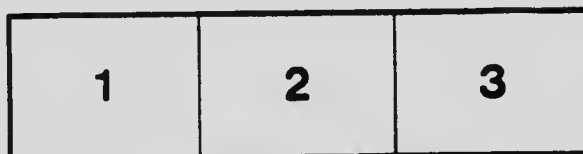
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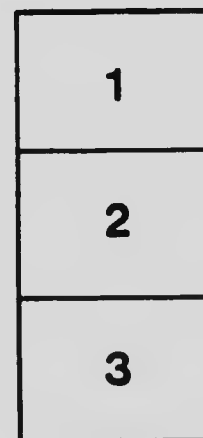
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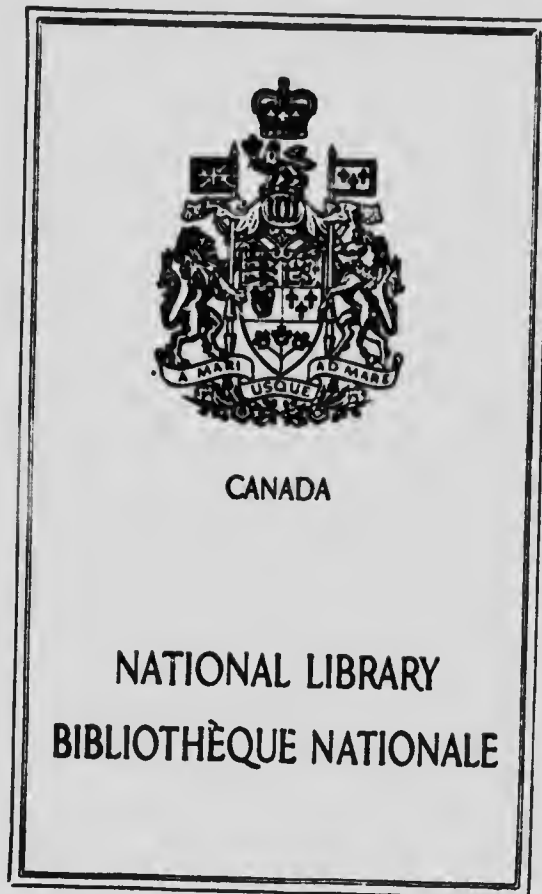
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SHAKESPEARE'S
The Merchant of Venice

EDITED WITH NOTES

BY

GERTRUDE LAWLER, M.A.

ENGLISH SPECIALIST, HARBORD COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, TORONTO

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INTRODUCTION

DATE OF THE PLAY

Eighteen of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays are known to have been separately printed in small quarto form during his life-time. *The Merchant of Venice* was one of those eighteen plays. It was published twice in 1600, and has enjoyed a continuous popularity for three centuries.

KIND OF PLAY

Tragedy deals with grave topics, rests on the virtues, crime and sufferings of mankind, and is intended to arouse the deepest feelings of admiration, pity, and awe; comedy chooses mirthful topics, rests on the humours, follies, and pleasures of mankind, and is intended to provoke merriment.

Both tragedy and comedy must contain a plot, unity of action, at least one leading personage, and several less important personages.

The Merchant of Venice is tragi-comedy—a blending of tragedy and comedy, comedy predominating. It is a romantic drama; *i.e.*, Shakespeare uses stories of romance as the warp and woof of his magic web. But he is a subtle weaver, and his poetic tapestry is a most original production—a unique picture of mediæval life; of the Venice of our dream—its gondolas, its carnivals, its money-lenders, its princely merchants, its magnificoes, doges, and ladies; of companionship and isolation, of friendship and enmity, of reality and appearance, of joy and sorrow, of generosity and greed, of the spirit and the letter.

OUTLINE OF THE PLOT

When Venice was queen of the Adriatic, Signior Antonio was one of her wealthiest merchants. Suddenly a cloud of gloom enveloped him, and no sunshine of his friends' affection could cheer him; but when his kinsman Bassanio, a scholar and soldier, appeared, the cloud dissolved.

Bassanio needed money to hold a rival place among princely suitors of beautiful Portia, a wealthy heiress of Belmont.

Antonio was glad to aid Bassanio, but had not the three thousand ducats in ready money; so, Antonio said to Bassanio: You may borrow in my name either from the money-lenders or from my friends. Bassanio went forth. The first person he met was a Jewish money-lender named Shylock, an inveterate enemy of Antonio, partly because of the hostility existing between Christians and Jews, and partly because Shylock charged exorbitant rates of interest on loans, and Antonio, not believing in interest, lent money gratis and so thwarted Shylock's greed. Impulsive Bassanio asked Shylock to lend the money; and, while the Jew was considering the loan, Antonio joined them. Not wishing to offend Bassanio, Antonio asked Shylock to lend the money for three months, at a certain rate. After much talk, Shylock proposed a compromise. Since Antonio believed in the profit made by cattle breeding cattle, but not in that made by metal begetting metal, Shylock would lend the money without interest for three months; if the money was not repaid in three months, the penalty would be, not cattle or money, but a pound of Antonio's flesh. Expecting his merchantmen home in a month, and spiritedly not flinching where he scented danger, Antonio signed the bond, Bassanio protesting.

Three months fled away without bringing to Venice any of Antonio's merchantmen. Bassanio absent, Antonio was not often present at social gatherings. When fortune was unkind, Antonio was probably far more anxious to be unseen than his friends were to see him. Shylock claimed the forfeiture. Antonio sent word to Bassanio. The letter reached Bassanio in his first transports of joy at having won Lady Portia by a successful choice of one of three caskets. Bassanio and Portia were married at once; then Bassanio hastened away to save Antonio by means of the gold that Portia gladly provided. Not content with that, Portia, instructed by her cousin, a famous jurisconsult, and disguised as a doctor of law, hastened to the court, freed Antonio, and made Shylock sign a deed giving at his death all his wealth to his daughter Jessica, who, the very night that Bassanio set sail from Venice, robbed Shylock of many ducats and jewels, eloped with Lorenzo, one of Bassanio's friends, and came to Belmont with Antonio's messenger

Portia arrived home before Bassanio; and, by means of her betrothal ring, which she obtained as a favour from Bassanio after the trial, because she saved Antonio's life, she persuaded Bassanio that she was the doctor of law. She gave joy to Antonio by assuring him that three ships richly laden had come to port, and gladdened Jessica and Lorenzo, who remained at Belmont during the trial, with Shylock's deed of gift.

SOURCES OF THE PLOT

These are the supposed sources whence Shakespeare obtained his stories in *The Merchant of Venice*.

I. An old play called *The Jew and Ptolome*, wherein are combined two stories showing "the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers."

II. The *Adventures of Giannetto* in a collection of stories called *Il Pecorone*, written by Giovanni Fiorentino, and published in Milan, 1581. This gave Shakespeare the story of the bond, the name Belmont, the quibble of the flesh and blood, and the ring episode.

III. The *Gesta Romanorum*, a Latin collection of stories. Among them is the story of the caskets.

IV. The *Ballad of Gernutus*, which contains the incident about Shylock's whetting of his knife.

V. *The Orator*, which contains some of the arguments used by Shylock.

UNITY OF ACTION

The main story is that of the pound of flesh. The second story is the choice of caskets. These two stories are unified by having Antonio borrow the money from Shylock for Bassanio, who wins Portia.

Bassanio's successful choice of caskets is the real crisis of the play; it is, also, the mechanical centre of the play, the middle of the third act, the keystone of the dramatic arch. Antonio, Shylock, Bassanio, and Portia, the four essential personages of the play, meet in the trial scene, the second crisis of the play; second because it depends on the first.

The play contains three other stories—the story of Jessica and Lorenzo, and the two ring episodes. All five stories meet in the scene where Bassanio chooses the casket. The three minor stories assist the two main stories by smoothing their

mechanism, by interweaving them closely and intricately, and by throwing the four chief personages into physical, mental, and moral relief.

The unity of action is accentuated by the coherence of place and time. The place is either in Venice or at Belmont, twenty miles apart (III, iv, 550). The three months slip imperceptibly away. As soon as Bassanio chooses the casket, we are reminded that the time has flown. We look backward and find pleasure in tracing its actual flight.

In I, i, 70, 71, Lorenzo says to Bassanio—

At dinner-time,

I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Again, in line 105 of the same scene—

“Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time.”

At the close of the scene, Antonio says—

“Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is.”

Since Bassanio goes at once, and his efforts are recorded in the third scene of the first act, it follows that the first act concludes before dinner on the same day. Dinner was served at 11 a.m. in Elizabethan England.

Since I, ii, is dovetailed between the first and the third, it is dramatic economy to suppose that the second scene takes place at Belmont while the first scene is taking place in Venice. Moreover, by a kind of telepathy, Bassanio and Portia are thinking fondly of each other. At the close of the second scene, we learn that Morocco is expected that night.

The first scene of the second act takes place before dinner (line 44) on the following day. In II, vii, Morocco chooses; *i.e.*, after dinner on that day, the second day of the play. The scenes between the first and the seventh are all after dinner. See II, 234, III, 239, IV, 254, 261, V, 303, VI, 411.

The eighth scene of the second act is the third day of the play, the day after Jessica's elopement.

Before the ninth scene of the second act, three months all but two weeks transpire. Those ten weeks are necessary to have Antonio's ships miscarry, to give time for Tubal's search for Jessica, and to allow Bassanio to purchase “gifts of rich value”—gifts that surpass those of all princely rivals.

At the close of the second act, Bassanio's approach is heralded --

"A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand."

April and May bring summer, and two weeks will bring Bassanio. Impatient to be at Belmont, Bassanio sends his post a fortnight ahead. (III, I, 107).

"Thus, the three months have flown."

THE PERSONAGES

Antonio. The royal merchant Antonio gives the name to the drama, not because he is its hero, but because he is its mainspring. In the first act, he is the Venetian trafficker that sets the machinery of the play in motion by borrowing from Shylock the three thousand ducats that enable Bassanio to reach Belmont. In the second act, Antonio is feasted, and is admired for his manly affection. Vague rumours of wrecked merchantmen cause many sympathetic eyes to turn towards him. In the third act, disastrous rumours take shape; Antonio is undone; Shylock claims the forfeiture; and the duke, the magnificoes, and Antonio plead in vain. In the fourth act, Portia saves the bosom lover of her lord from Shylock's hellish cruelty. In the fifth act, Antonio becomes surety for Bassanio, and rejoices in the return of three argosies richly laden. Thus at the beginning and at the end of the drama Antonio is a prosperous merchant; but during the course of the drama, Antonio's credit sinks so low that his very life is at stake.

Antonio is the first personage to attract attention. He does so by arousing sympathy on account of his sadness. Those inclined to believe that "coming events cast shadows before" see in Antonio a common, irrational perturbation that is a canker worm to the rose of content, but are strengthened in their doctrine of presentiment by Shylock's bond. Readers fretted with worries find in Antonio a reflection of themselves, and notwithstanding his denial assert that his mind must be overtaxed, although unconsciously, by commercial speculation. Perhaps both are correct; but is not Antonio sad because his beloved Bassanio has found some one who will henceforth share that love Antonio was wont to possess? Almost angrily Antonio says Fie, fie! at Salarino's suggestion of love, because

Salarino came near naming the true cause of the sadness. Later on, Salarino notices that "affection wondrous sensible," Antonio's "eye being big with tears" at Bassanio's departure; and Salarino remarks that Antonio "loves the world" only for Bassanio. Moreover, previous to the opening scene of the play, Bassanio promised to tell Antonio of some lady. Of that, Salanio and Salarino know nothing. Perhaps Antonio, unaccustomed to self-examination, is not fully conscious of the cause of his own depression; but, in the presence of Bassanio, Antonio's sadness vanishes, Antonio's tongue is loosened, Antonio turns questioner—

"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?"

Antonio is beloved for his generosity, his magnanimity.
His words—

"My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions,"

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,"

almost make us err with indignant Bassanio, and interrupt Shylock's "Antonio is a good man" and ask, "Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?" It is Antonio's magnanimity that makes Bassanio exclaim—

"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."

What but magnanimity can be inferred from the words of the "true gentleman"—

"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."

What but magnanimity caused him to make the pun—

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

Antonio was not addicted to punning. He was serious. He held that the world was—

“A stage where every man must play a part,”

and his part was sad, yet not affectedly sad as Gratiano thought.

It may have been that some Christians believed it virtuous to abuse, to rob, and to persecute Jews because all Jews were thought to be stiff-necked and stubborn in their denial of Christianity. It is incredible that all Christians held such treatment of Jews praiseworthy or justifiable. It is disappointing to hear Antonio reply to Shylock's charge—

“You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine—”

with—

“I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.”

And when Shylock demands his forfeiture it is not pleasant to hear Antonio whine—

“Hear me yet, good Shylock.”

Moreover, the mercy that Antonio rendered Shylock in the trial scene recalls Shylock's words—“If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge.”

ANTONIO'S FRIENDS. Antonio has many friends. Among them are the duke, the magnificoes of greatest port, Salanio, Salarino, Lorenzo, Gratiano, and Bassanio.

The *duke* shows his friendship for Antonio by trying to soften Shylock's heart of flint. The *magnificoes* plead in vain.

Salanio and *Salarino* seem to be very solicitous of Antonio's welfare. When he is melancholy, they try to cheer him; when Lorenzo, Gratiano, and Bassanio appear, Salanio and Salarino politely withdraw; when Shylock storms about stolen ducats, and when shipwrecks are mentioned, the faithful pair think of good and honest Antonio. Salarino accompanies Antonio to beseech Shylock to be merciful; and both Salanio and Salarino were doubtless present at the trial and rejoiced at Antonio's delivery.

Lorenzo may have won Antonio's gratitude for sympathy in the words—

“I must be one of these same wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.”

Lorenzo was not particularly amorous, but he was the first of Antonio's bachelor friends to become a benedict. Indeed, Lorenzo allowed Jessica to devise the elopement and to provide the page's suit; sent a verbal reply by a servant to her written communication; ungallantly and unasked gave Gratiano her love letter to peruse, and was almost too late in coming for her. Recklessly exchanging jewels for monkeys in Genoa, and wrapped in music and moonlight at Belmont, Lorenzo is oblivious of Antonio's precarious condition; but, when an opportunity presented itself, Lorenzo said to Portia—

"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."

No doubt, Lorenzo's discretion prevented him from being present at Antonio's trial; but Antonio's solicitude for unthrifty Lorenzo is evident in the deed of gift. Lorenzo robbed Shylock by strategy; Antonio robbed Shylock by law.

Lorenzo, like Antonio, had a serious disposition, and was not prone to jest. Lorenzo rebuked Gobbo thus: "I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots." In his comments on the music of the spheres and on "the man that hath no music in himself," Lorenzo accentuated his poetic sadness. Lorenzo made Jessica a Christian; Antonio did the same for Shylock.

Volatile *Gratiano* "speaks an infinite deal of nothing" to entertain his serious friend Antonio. Being in attendance on Bassanio, Gratiano is not aware of Antonio's danger. When messengers arrive at Belmont from Venice, Gratiano asks—

"How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success."

At the trial, Gratiano's hostility towards Shylock and love of Antonio are most pronounced. Gratiano wishes his newly wedded wife in heaven to intercede for Antonio, and tantalises Shylock almost beyond endurance. Although he models his life after Bassanio's, there is a commendable individuality in Gratiano's voluble wit, even if it does lack Bassanio's wisdom. Nerissa's husband is most attractive when he is trying to prove

his honesty to her who, to his great surprise, is able to out-talk himself. We feel sure that Nerissa's ring is safe.

Lord *Bassanio* is Antonio's noble kinsman and chief friend. Bassanio lived in lordly style, but beyond his means. In company of the Marquis of Montferrat, Bassanio visited Portia's father at Belmont, and received from Portia's beautiful eyes fair speechless messages. When Bassanio heard of the lottery by which Portia was to be obtained, he longed to hold a rival place with her suitors, but lacked money. That money Antonio gladly provided. In borrowing the money Bassanio said—

"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."

Those words in themselves might seem to stamp Bassanio as a fortune hunter, but he knew of Antonio's sadness at the thought of a wife's sharing that love which was all Antonio's. It is noteworthy that Bassanio said to Antonio nothing of the peculiar way in which Portia was to be won. However, it was not necessary to make question of Antonio's uttermost.

Nerissa called Bassanio a scholar and a soldier. His scholarship is apparent in his eloquence in the casket scene; a trace of the soldier is evident in his choice of the casket that threatens most.

It is sufficient that Bassanio is dearly beloved by Antonio and Portia. We like Lord Bassanio when, in return for old Gobbo's "God bless your worship!" the gay young Venetian replies heartily "Gramercy!"; when, intent on his own affairs, he listens to the Gobbos, no doubt on account of the aged father, and hires Launcelot; when, after chastising Gratiano, Portia's suitor grants Gratiano's request; when, perplexed in gratifying the judge, the newly wedded husband parts from the betrothal ring; when, more perplexed in defending that action, he does not say that Antonio advised it; above all, when we know that he loves Portia and Portia loves him.

Portia is the heiress of Belmont, an orphan lady of wondrous virtues, a worthy namesake of that chaste and just Portia who was the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus. Nevertheless,

Bassanio's Portia finds that to know what is good to be done is easier than to do it.

Portia's wit in describing her suitors is delightfully entertaining because eminently truthful. Moreover, although her pleasantries are whispered into the ear of her lady-in-waiting, Portia apologises for her mockery and her own shortcomings. She may truthfully say to Morocco that he stands as fair in her regard as do any of the other comers on whom she has looked; but the truth-lover must acknowledge her equivocation, may sympathise with Morocco in sincerely thanking her for a dubious compliment, and is doubtless glad Morocco is out of earshot when she says—

"Let all of his complexion choose me so."

Portia would "set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket" to mislead the Duke of Saxony's nephew. She does give Morocco a hint when she says—

"After dinner

Your hazard shall be made."

But he does not notice that "hazard" is a word of the motto on the leaden casket—a motto that is Shakespeare's own invention. She is equally generous to Arragon when she says—

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

but his ears are dull.

Bassanio's ears are sharper.

"Pause a day or two

Before you hazard."

She repeats the thought in—

"I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me."

She tells him that, if he will stay, she will teach him how to choose—and all know that the only lesson to be taught is not to choose what has a goodly outside. She blames it on his eyes that he has bewitched her so that—

"One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours."

If all of hers is his, surely he will hazard all he hath for her. She orders music in his hearing and sends him forth as Hercules; and that music, whether of her choice or not, teaches

in a few moments that lesson which she might have taught in a day or two—do not choose a glittering outside. Yet Portia is unconscious that she is forsworn, just as she is unconscious that she is making a lengthy speech; for she says—

“A maiden hatn no tongue but thought.”

She does remarkably well for a girl that is unlessoned, unschooled, and unpractised—and her father would be proud of her; prouder of her when she finds in Bassanio her lord, her governor, her king, and when, by her bright intelligence, she tempers justice with mercy in the trial scene; and proudest of her when, after the trial, she wins Shylock's love, reconciles Antonio and Shylock, and unites Jessica, Lorenzo, and Shylock. When Shylock, inflated with death-dealing avarice, proudly declared—

“By my soul, I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me,”

deep-hearted Portia knew that there was such power in a woman's tongue; and Shylock no doubt repeated Jessica's words—

“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 no. her fellow.”

ANTONIO'S ENEMY. Antonio and Shylock are inveterate enemies in religion and finance. The Hebrew, like the Christian, has sufficient religion to make him hate, but not love, his enemy. Shylock is surely not an ideal Jew when he proposes the merry bond; when he says he would not break his oath to heaven lest he perjure himself; and when he exclaims, “I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you,” and yet consents to take supper with Bassanio “in hate.” It was the Roman, not the Jewish creditors, that hacked the debtor to pieces; and the orthodox Hebrew obeyed the command, “Thou shalt not kill,” and believed in mercy and practised it.

Shylock is tenacious of purpose, resolute in will, and keen in intellect. If the bond is merry, why have it signed before a notary? Shylock certainly intends to exact his forfeiture

if possible, to be revenged on Antonio, and to remove a man that hindered the making of millions of ducats. When the Jew says to Bassanio—

"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,"

neither Antonio nor Bassanio has wit enough to say as Shylock says later: "If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge." Again when Shylock says—

"To bury his favour, I extend this friendship,"

neither Venetian replies that genuine favours are not venal. True, Bassanio does not like "fair terms and a villain's mind"; and Antonio has no dismay because of the certainty of the return of richly laden argosies; but neither takes any means to redeem the bond, and both seem to rely on the mercy of an enemy. Shylock is outwitted by Jessica and hypocritical Tubal, but Shylock trusts both, and his trust in his own child and in his best friend is misplaced.

In the trial scene Shylock at first brilliantly replies to Bassanio and Gratiano's sallies, demands that the bond be declared legal, and explains that he will not be merciful because of a loathing, instinctive hatred towards Antonio. Portia makes it very evident in the court that Shylock intends to have Antonio's life, and then she pronounces a judgment that staggers Shylock. There is a flaw in the bond! In proposing the bond, Shylock speaks of "an equal pound of fair flesh, a pound of man's flesh." Shylock neglects to insert blood. Shylock himself is accustomed to make the distinction; for, speaking of Jessica to Salanio, the Jew says: "My own *flesh* and *blood* to rebel!" Salario's words emphasise the distinction: "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." When Portia tells Shylock to take his pound of flesh, he pauses to debate whether he will take Antonio's life and lose his own, or set Antonio free. Had Shylock decided to take Antonio's life, Portia was ready to read the Venetian law against homicidal aliens—a law that originated in Shakespeare's brain; a law

that makes Shylock a criminal notwithstanding the wording of the bond; for Shakespeare knew that the right to cut the pound of flesh conferred the right to shed the necessary blood.

At worst, Shylock is a miserly murderer; at best, he is a thrifty Hebrew sorely tantalised by bigoted Christians and ruthlessly betrayed by a degenerate daughter. The villainy taught him, he executed; and he bettered the instruction.

Jessica's character is not pleasant to study. We see her first in secret talk with her father's servant. She says to Launcelot—

"Our home is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness."

We naturally ask what part *Jessica* plays in that hell. A moment after, she is alone. Our pity is excited when we hear her say—

"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."

She seems to be between love and duty, and love wins. We may overlook her unwomanliness in the elopement and be content to say with Salarino—"Lorenzo and his amorous *Jessica*." But what of her treatment of her father? He trusts his daughter with the keys to his treasures, and she steals his ducats, his jewels, his turquoise—the betrothal ring from Leah, his dead wife—and exchanges it for a monkey. Out upon her! At Belmont, *Jessica*, with no delicacy of feeling, no compunction, and without being asked, testifies against her father and pities poor Antonio. Out upon her! When out-nighting Lorenzo, *Jessica* can still jest about stealing from Shylock; and, when Portia returns to Belmont, there is no question from *Jessica* about Shylock. Out upon *Jessica*!

And out upon perfidious Tubal! Out upon Arragon for his inordinate pride of family name, and his conceited assumption of desert; but hail to old Gobbo with his dish of doves, and to Young Master Launcelot; hail to honest, true Balthasar, and to that winsome little brunette Nerissa!

And all-hail to Shakespeare for his fascinating Venetian romance!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, } suitors to Portia.
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, }

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.

SALANIO, }
SALARINO, } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.
GRATIANO, }

LORENZO, in love with Jessica.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.

BALTHASAR, } servants to Portia.
STEPHANO, }

PORTIA, a rich heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-maid.

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler,
Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia,
on the Continent.*

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

SCENE I. Venice. A Street.

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.

Ant. In sooth,¹ I know not why I am so sad:
It² wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by³ it,
What stuff 't is made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;⁴

6

And such a want-wit⁵ sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado⁶ to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean⁷;
There, where your argosies⁸ with portly sail,
Like signiors⁹ and rich burghers¹⁰ on the flood,
Or as it were, the pageants¹¹ of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

10

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture¹² forth,
The better part of my affections would

15

¹ Sooth—Truth. Cf. soothsayer.

² It—My sadness.

³ Came by—Obtained.

⁴ Am to learn—Shall inevitably find out.

⁵ Want-wit—Lackbrain, blockhead, fool.

⁶ Ado—Trouble, difficulty.

⁷ Ocean—Pronounce ó-she-án. Cf. oceanic.

⁸ Argosies—Merchantmen, galleons. To some "argosy" recalls *Argo*, Jason's ship; to others, a ship built at Ragusa, a port in Dalmatia.

⁹ Signiors—Italian lords.

¹⁰ Burghers—Citizens.

¹¹ Pageants—Movable wooden theatres. Here, queenly barges as showy as festive floats. Read Scott's *Kenilworth*, chapters XV and XVII.

¹² Venture—Commercial speculation.

Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still¹
 Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
 Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads²;
²⁰ And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind cooling my broth
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
 What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
²⁵ I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy Andrew³ dock'd in sand,
 Vailing⁴ her high-top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial.⁵ Should I go⁶ to church
³⁰ And see the holy edifice of stone,
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which touching but⁷ my gentle vessel's side,
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
³⁵ And, in a word, but even now worth this,⁸
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have⁹ the thought
 To think¹⁰ on this, and shall I lack the thought
 That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
 But tell not me; I know, Antonio
⁴⁰ Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,

¹ Still—Constantly.

² Roads—Roadsteads.

³ Andrew—Suitable name for an Italian merchantman. Andrea Doria, the great Genoese admiral, died in 1560.

⁴ Vailing—Lowering to the valley.

⁵ To kiss her burial—In humiliation, to repose in her burial place. Cf. to kiss the dust, to kiss the sod.

⁶ Should I go—If I should go.

⁷ Touching but—Only, merely touching.

⁸ This—Cargo of spices and silks. A flourish of the right arm is a significant gesture to indicate the wealth of the vessel at one minute; a fillip, the complete loss that occurs in the next minute.

⁹ Shall I have—If I shall have. Cf. l. 29 above.

¹⁰ To think—From thinking.

I
Scene I] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

3

Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

45

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant.

Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 't were as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed¹ Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes²
And laugh like parrots³ at a bag-piper,⁴
And other⁵ of such vinegar aspect⁶
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor⁷ swear the jest be laughable.

50

55

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO.

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

Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented⁸ me.

60

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

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

65

¹ **Two-headed Janus.**—Janus was an ancient Latin god, the spirit of opening. From him January is named. He had two faces, one looking backwards, the other forwards. In some images, one face is a laughing Apollo; the other, a grave Saturn.

² **Peep through their eyes**—Almost shut their eyes in laughter.

³ **Like parrots**—Senselessly.

⁴ **Bag-piper**—An English pleasantry at the expense of the Scotchman.

⁵ **Other**—Often used in Elizabethan literature for others.

⁶ **Aspect**—In Shakespeare, always accent "aspect" on the second syllable.

⁷ **Nestor**—Connotes wisdom and old age, because Nestor was the wisest and oldest of the Greek heroes in Homer's *Iliad*. Nestor would not laugh unless the joke was good.

⁸ **Prevented**—Anticipated

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?¹ say, when?
You grow exceeding strange:² must it be so?

Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*]

Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

⁷⁰ We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:³

⁷⁵ They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

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

Gra. Let me play the fool:

⁸⁰ With mirth and laughter let old⁴ wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying⁵ groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster⁶?

⁸⁵ 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,
⁹⁰ And do a wilful stillness entertain,⁷
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,⁸
As who should say⁹ "I am Sir Oracle,

¹ When shall we laugh?—When shall we spend a merry hour together?

² Grow exceeding strange—Are becoming quite strangers.

³ Respect upon the world—Consideration for worldly affairs.

⁴ Old—Of age.

⁵ Mortifying—Death-producing. Groaning was believed to drain the blood from the heart.

⁶ Alabaster—White stone used for ornamental purposes.

⁷ Entertain—Maintain.

⁸ Conceit—Intellect.

⁹ As who should say—As if one should say. Sir is contemptuous.

Scene I] *THE MERCIANT OF VENICE*

5

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.¹
 I'll tell thee more of this another time:
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
 For this fool gudgeon,² this opinion.³
 Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

95

100

Lor. 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.

105

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,⁴
 Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.⁵

110

Gra. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
 In a neat's tongue dried. [*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*]

Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. 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.

Ant. 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?

120

Bass. 'T is 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:

125

¹ Call their brothers fools—See *Matt.* v, 22.

² Gudgeon—A small fish, easily caught and common in the streams
 of England. It is used as a bait for pike.

³ Opinion—Pronounce o-pín-i-ón.

⁴ Moe—Mo, or moe, meant more in number; more, larger. Mo
 is not a positive form of the comparative more.

⁵ For this gear—On account of this affair in hand; *i.e.*, Gratiano's
 diatribe against affected silence.

- Nor do I now make moan to be abridged¹
 From such a noble rate; but my chief care
 Is to come fairly off from the great debts
 Wherein my time something too prodigal
 130 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.
- 135 *Ant.* 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.²
- 140 *Bass.* In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
 I shot his³ fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised⁴ watch,
 To find the other fo 'h, and by adventuring both
 I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,⁵
 145 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 self⁶ way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 150 As I will watch the aim, or to find both
 Or bring your latter hazard back again
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.
- Ant.* You know me well, and herein spend but time
 To wind about my love with circumstance⁷;
 155 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
 In making question of my uttermost

¹ **Make moan to be abridged**—Complain because I am curtailed;
i.e., Antonio had not asked Bassanio to pay arrears.

² **Occasions**—Pronounce oc-cás-i-óns.

³ **His**—Its. In Shakespeare's day, "its" was just beginning to be used.

⁴ **Advised**—Careful, attentive.

⁵ **Childhood proof**—Experiment of my childhood.

⁶ **Self**—Occurs frequently for selfsame.

⁷ **Circumstance**—Circumlocution.

Scene I] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

7

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 prest¹ unto it: therefore, speak.

160

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes² from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued³
To Cato's daughter,⁴ 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!

165

170

175

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity⁵
To raise a present⁶ 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.⁷

180

[*Exeunt.* 185

¹ Prest—Ready.

² Sometimes—Some time formerly.

³ Nothing undervalued—In no way inferior in merit.

⁴ Cato's daughter—See Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. Portia was as courageous and as virtuous as her renowned husband, Brutus.

⁵ Commodity—Marketable goods.

⁶ Present—Immediate.

⁷ Of my trust or for my sake—On my credit as a merchant, or as our from a friend.

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

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. By my troth,¹ Nerissa, my little body is aweary² of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet,
 190 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: superfluity³ comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences⁴ and well pronounced.

195 *Ner.* They would be better, if well followed.

Por. 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
 200 be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood,⁵ but a hot temper⁵ 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 hus-
 205 band. 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?

210 *Ner.* Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery,

¹ Troth—Obsolete for truth.

² Aweary—The prosthetic "a" elongates the sound of the word, and thus accentuates Portia's ennui.

³ Superfluity longer—"Superfluity" and "competency" are personified. Superfluity means overabundance of good things; competency sufficiency of the means of subsistence. Cf. "The excesses of our youth are drafts upon our old age, payable with interest about thirty years after date."

"Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Lie in three words—health, peace and competence."

⁴ Sentences—Maxims.

⁵ Blood, Temper—Passions, natural dispositions.

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 affection²¹⁵ towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at¹ my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

220

Por. Ay, that's a colt² indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation³ to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.⁴

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say "If²²⁵ you will not have me, choose": he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher⁵ 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 me²³⁰ from these two!

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

Por. 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 habit²³⁵ 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 re-²⁴⁰quite him.

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

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands

¹ Level at—Aim at, infer.

² Colt—Skittish boy. The horsemanship of the Neapolitans was the envy of the gondola-loving Venetians.

³ Appropriation—Addition, asset.

⁴ County Palatine—County, or Count Palatine was the ruler of the Palatinate, two states now absorbed in the German empire.

⁵ Weeping philosopher—Heraclitus

245 not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear¹ that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper² man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited³! I think he bought his doublet⁴ in 250 Italy, his round hose⁵ in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour every where.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he 255 would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

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

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and 260 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: an⁶ the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right 265 casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary⁷ casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will 270 choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. 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 275 with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition⁸ depending on the caskets.

¹ Will. . . . swear—Will testify.

² Proper—Handsome.

³ Suited—Dressed.

⁴ Doublet—Quilted coat.

⁵ Round hose—Balloon-shaped trousers.

⁶ An—Obsolete for "if."

⁷ Contrary—Wrong.

⁸ Imposition—Conditions, injunctions, terms.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla,¹ I will die as chaste as Diana,² unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, 280 and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. 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?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so 285 called.

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

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy 290 of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man.

How now! What news?

Serv. 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 295 will be here to-night.

Por. 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 condition³ of a saint and the complexion of a devil,⁴ I had rather he should shrive⁵ me than wive me. 300

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ *Sibylla*—A Shakespearian coinage from Sibyl, a Roman prophetess. To a sibyl of Cumæ, Apollo granted the wish to live as many years as she had grains of sand in her hand.

² *Diana*—The huntress-goddess, the virgin queen of Roman deities.

³ *Condition*—Disposition.

⁴ *Complexion of a devil*—Tawny or black.

⁵ *Shrive*—Absolve from sin.

SCENE III. Venice. A public place.

*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK.**Shy.* Three thousand ducats¹; well.*Bass.* Ay, sir, for three months.³⁰⁵ *Shy.* For three months; well.*Bass.* For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.*Shy.* Antonio shall become bound; well.*Bass.* May you stead me?² will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?³¹⁰ *Shy.* Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.*Bass.* Your answer to that.*Shy.* Antonio is a good³ man.*Bass.* Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?³¹⁵ *Shy.* 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 supposition⁴: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis,⁵ another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto,⁶ he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for Eng-
³²⁰ land, and other ventures he hath, squandered⁷ 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;³²⁵ I think I may take his bond.*Bass.* Be assured you may.*Shy.* I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?*Bass.* If it please you to dine with us.¹ *Ducats*—The Venetian silver ducat was worth one dollar; the golden ducat two dollars.² *May you stead me?*—Can you aid me?³ *Good*—Shylock means commercially sound. Bassanio thinks Shylock means morally good, virtuous.⁴ *In supposition*—Not actual, because risked at sea.⁵ *Tripolis*—A commercial seaport of Syria.⁶ *Rialto*—Venice is built on many islands. The chief island is called Rialto. On it was the exchange, or *bourse*. The bridge spanning the Grand Canal is called Rialto.⁷ *Squandered*—Dispersed recklessly.

Scene III] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

13

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which³³⁰
your prophet the Nazarite¹ conjured the devil into.² 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?

335

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican³ 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 usance⁴ 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!

340

345

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. 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?
Tuba!, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair,⁵ good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

350

355

Ant. 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?

360

¹ *Nazarite*—Confounded with Nazarene.

² *To eat into*—*Matt.* viii., 32.

³ *Publican*—Tax-gatherer or sinner.

⁴ *Usance*—Usury, interest.

⁵ *Rest you fair*—May you remain fortunate; good luck attend
you

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;

³⁰⁵ *Methought* you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

Ant. I do never use it.

Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,

³⁷⁰ The third possessor; ay, he was the third—

Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?

Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.

When Laban and himself were compromised
³⁷⁵ That all the earlings which were streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire,

The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time

³⁸⁰ Fall party-coloured 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.

Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
³⁸⁵ 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?

Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
³⁹⁰ The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.¹

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!
³⁹⁵ *Shy.* Three thousand ducats; 't is a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—

¹ The devil. . . . purpose—*Matt. iv., 4, 6.*

Scene III] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

15

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding¹ to you?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you have rated me

About my money 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,²

And all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then, it now appears you need my help:

Go to,³ 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"?

Ant. 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 metal⁴ of his friend?

But lend it rather to thine enemy,

Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face

Exact the penalty.

Shy.

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,

¹ Beholding—Beholden, obliged.

² Gaberdine—A long, coarse frock worn by Jews.

³ Go to—A common interjection: here, well, indeed.

⁴ Breed for barren metal—Interest.

400

405

410

415

420

425

430

Supply your present wants and take no doit¹
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
 This is kind I offer.

Bass. This were kindness.

Shy. This kindness will I show.

435 Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single² 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
 440 Be nominated for an equal pound
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

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

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

Ant. 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

450 Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. 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

455 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:

460 If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
 Give him direction for this merry bond,

465 And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
 See to my house, left in the fearful³ guard

¹ Doit—A quarter of a cent.

² Single—No security, no indorser.

³ Fearful—Untrustworthy.

Scene I] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

17

Of an unthrifty knave,¹ and presently
I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

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

470

Ant. 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.

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,²
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 Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest,³ his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd⁴ 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.

5

10

Por. 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

15

20

¹ *Knave*—Fellow, servant.

² *Complexion*—Pronounce com-pléx-i-ón.

³ *Blood is reddest*—Red blood was a sign of courage.

⁴ *Fear'd*—Affrighted.

As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the cashiers
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
²⁵ That slew the Sophy¹ and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solymán,²
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,
³⁰ Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules³ and Lichas⁴ play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
³⁵ So is Alcides⁵ beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
⁴⁰ Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

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

Por. First, forward to the temple⁶: after dinner
⁴⁵ Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or curs'd'st among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt.*]

¹ *Sophy*—A common name for a Shah of Persia. The Persians were famous swordsmen.

² *Sultan Solymán*—Solymán the Magnificent, Sultan of Turkey, was defeated by the Persians in 1535.

³ *Hercules*—A Greek hero of enormous strength.

⁴ *Lichas*—A page of Hercules.

⁵ *Alcides*—Grandson of Alcæus; hence, another name for Hercules.

⁶ *Temple*—Chapel, where the Bible was kept. There Morocco would take his oath.

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

Laun. 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,⁵⁰ 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."¹ Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: "Via!"² says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for⁵⁵ the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,³ 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 grow⁶⁰ to,⁴ 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;" "and," say I, "you counsel well:" to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the⁶⁵ mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence,⁵ is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal⁷; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard

¹ *Scorn running with thy heels*—A blending of the two idioms; scorn with the heels, meaning spurn animal-like, and take to one's heels, or show the heels, meaning run away.

² *Via!*—Away! Via was used to urge on horses.

³ *Hanging heart*—As a fond mother embraces her child to prevent his departure, so Launcelot's conscience tries to restrain his wishes.

⁴ *Something smack, something grow to*—"Smack" refers to the noise made by the lips after a person has tasted something too piquant; "grow to" was applied to the taste of burnt milk. Both words suggest that the father had something dishonourable in his character.

⁵ *God bless the mark*—A conventional apology for saying anything offensive to polite ears, here the mention of the devil. Launcelot's auditor is imaginary.

⁶ *Saving your reverence*—If I may say it without offending.

Incarnal—Launcelot means incarnate, embodied in the flesh.

⁷⁰ 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.

Gob. Master¹ young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

⁷⁵ *Laun.* [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind,² knows me not; I will try confusions³ with him.

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

⁸⁰ *Laun.* Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry,⁴ at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties,⁵ 't will be a hard way to hit. Can ⁸⁵ you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

⁹⁰ *Gob.* 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.⁶

Laun. Well, let his father be what a'⁷ will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

⁹⁵ *Gob.* Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

¹ **Master**—A title given to gentlemen, not to servants.

² **High-gravel blind**—Launcelot thinks that "sand-blind" (semi-blind) means as blind as if sand were in the eyes; as old Gobbo is very blind, Launcelot substitutes gravel for sand. High means to the fullest extent.

³ **Confusions**—A blunder for conclusions. "To try conclusions" was a colloquialism for "to try experiments."

⁴ **Marry**—By the Virgin Mary.

⁵ **Sonties**—Saints.

⁶ **Well to live**—Perhaps, well off; perhaps, with many years of good health before him.

⁷ **A'**—Illiterate for he.

The
my

Laun. But I pray you, ergo,¹ old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

way

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father²; for the young gentleman, according to¹⁰⁰ Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three³ and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

ther!
nows

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

s the

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

ning,
very
o the

Gob. 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?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Can
him,

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

Mark
young

Laun. 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;¹¹⁵ a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

ather,
God

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

young

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was,¹²⁰ your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

(semi-
bbo is
ans to

Laun. 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.

sions"

Gob. 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!¹²⁵ thou

¹ Ergo—Latin for therefore.

² Father—A common name for old men.

³ According Sisters Three—The Fates were the Destinies, or Parcae, the Three Sisters, or Greek goddesses that controlled man's birth, life, and death.

⁴ Lord got—Launcelot kneels with his back to old Gobbo, who mistakes Launcelot's back hair for a beard. Such a beard, old Gobbo thinks, is fit for a lord.

hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse¹ has
 130 on his tail.

Laun. 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.

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

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest² 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
 140 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
 145 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.

Bass. 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
 150 come anon to my lodging. *[Exit a Servant.]*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy!³ wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

155 *Laun.* Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify⁴—

Gob. He hath a great infection,⁵ sir, as one would say, to serve,—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew,
 160 and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

¹ Fill-horse—Fill is the shaft of a cart; hence, cart-horse.

² Have set up my rest—An expression borrowed from games of chance, and meaning am determined.

³ Gramercy—A thousand thanks.

⁴ Specify—A Gobboism for certify.

⁵ Infection—Affection.

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins¹—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, ¹⁶⁵ an old man, shall frutify² unto you—

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

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent³ 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. ¹⁷⁰

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect⁴ of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit: Shylock thy master spoke with me this day, ¹⁷⁵ And hath preferr'd⁵ thee, if it be preferment To leave a rich Jew's service, to become The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb⁶ is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, ¹⁸⁰ and he hath enough.

Bass. 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 guarded⁷ than his fellows': see it done. ¹⁸⁵

Laun. 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,⁸ I shall have

¹ **Cater-cousins**—Distant relations, friends.

² **Frutify**—Certify, a variant Gobboism of specify.

³ **Impertinent**—Impertinent formerly meant not belonging to; Launcelot means pertinent.

⁴ **Defect**—Effect.

⁵ **Pferr'd**—Recommended. To prefer meant either to recommend or to promote; hence Bassanio's pun.

⁶ **Proverb**—"He that hath the grace of God hath enough."

⁷ **Guarded**—Ornamented.

⁸ **If any book**—If table is the antecedent of which the meaning is table (palm) which doth not only promise, but swears that I shall have good fortune; if man is the antecedent of which the meaning is any man which on his oath, says he has a fairer table, I should like to see him.

good fortune. Go to, here 's a simple line of life: here 's a
 100 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
 105 gear.¹ Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the
 twinkling of an eye. *[Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.]*

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

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Where is your master?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. *[Exit.]*

Gra. Signior Bassanio!

Bass. Gratiano!

205 *Gra.* I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

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

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
 Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
 210 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.² Pray thee, take pain
 To allay with some cold drops of modesty
 215 Thy skipping spirit,³ lest through thy wild behaviour
 I be misconstrued in the place I go to
 And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
 If I do not put on a sober habit,
 Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
 220 Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,

¹ Gear—See I, I, i 10.

² Liberal—Familiar.

³ Skipping spirit—Lively disposition.

ere's a
eleven
e man:
of my
scapes.
or this
in the
Gobbo.

[Exit.

you to

;

Scene III] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

25

Nay more, while grace is saying, hood¹ mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say "amen,"
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent²
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

225

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. 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.

230

Gra. 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.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a mer y devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at³ 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.

235

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit⁴ my tongue. Most beautiful
pagan, most sweet Jew! But, adieu: these foolish drops do
something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

240

Jes. 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,

250

¹ Hood—Hats were worn at meals.

² Ostent—Appearance.

³ Soon at—About.

⁴ Exhibit—Inhibit.

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.

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

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'T is vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd¹,
260 And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'T is but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*

Friend Launcelot, what 's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up² this,³ it shall seem
to signify.

265 *Lor.* I know the hand: in faith, 't is a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

270 *Laun.* Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Je sup
to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately.

Go.—Gentlemen, [Exit Launcelot.]

275 Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.

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

Salan. And so will I.

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

¹ Order'd—Arranged.

² Break up—Open.

³ This—A tip.

[Exit.

Salar. 'T is good we do so.

[Exeunt Salar. and Salan. 280

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. 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. 285

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 faithless¹ Jew. 290

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.*Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:—What,² Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandise, 295

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

And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—

Why,³ Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!

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

Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do 300
nothing without bidding.*Enter JESSICA.*

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. 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 305

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. 310¹ Faithless—Unbelieving.² What—An exclamation of impatience³ Why—An exclamation of impatience.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.¹

Shy. So do I his.²

Laun. And they have conspired together, I will not say
 315 you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for
 nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday³ last
 at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash
 Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
 320 Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd⁴ 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,
 325 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;
 330 Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window
 for all this;

There will come a Christian by,
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

[Exit]

335 *Shy.* What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?
Jes. His words were "Farewell mistress"; nothing else.
Shy. The patch⁵ is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day

¹ **Reproach**—Launcelot means approach.

² **So do I his**—Shylock expects Bassanio's reproach if the money
 bond be forfeited.

³ **Then . . . Black-Monday**—Owing to the death from cold of
 many of Edward III's soldiers on Easter Monday, April 14, 1360,
 that day was called Black-Monday. Bleeding from the nose was
 considered ominous. Launcelot knows of Jessica's expected rob-
 bery and flight.

⁴ **Wry-neck'd**—The epithet is applicable either to the fife or the
 fifer. The instrument had a bent mouthpiece, and the player
 looked away from his instrument.

⁵ **Patch**—A fool was called a patch from his motley coat.

Scene VI] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

29

More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;
 Therefore I part with him, and part with him
 To one that I 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;

310

A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

345

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

[Exit.

[Exit.

SCENE VI. *The same.**Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued.*

Gra. This is the pent-house¹ under which Lorenzo
 Desired us to make stand.

350

Salar.

His hour is almost past.

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

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons² fly
 To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
 To keep obliged³ faith unforfeited!

375

Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
 With that keen appetite that he sits down?
 Where is the horse that doth untread 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 younker⁴ or a prodigal⁵
 The scarfed⁶ bark puts from her native bay,
 Hugg'd and embraced by the wanton wind!
 How like the prodigal doth she return,
 With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,

360

365

¹ Pent-house—Sloping, projecting roof.

² Venus' pigeons—The chariot of the goddess of love is drawn by doves.

³ Obligated—Pledged.

⁴ Younker—Youngster, young nobleman, gallant.

⁵ Prodigal—*Luke* xv, 11-23.

⁶ Scarfed—Decked with flags.

Lean, rent and beggar'd by the wanton wind!

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience¹ for my long abode;

³⁷⁰ 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.*

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,

³⁷⁵ Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,

For who love I so much? And now who knows

But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

³⁸⁰ *Lor.* Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

I am glad 't is night, you do not look on me,

For I am much ashamed of my exchange:

But love is blind and lovers cannot see

³⁸⁵ The pretty follies that themselves commit;

For if they could, Cupid himself would blush

To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

³⁹⁰ They in themselves, good sooth, are too, too light.

Why, 't is an office of discovery,² love;

And I should be obscured.

Lor.

So are you, sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.

But come at once;

³⁹⁵ For the close³ night doth play the runaway,

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

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself

With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[Exit above.]

¹ Your patience—Beg pardon.

² Office of discovery—A torch-bearer shows the way.

³ Close—Secret, concealing.

Gra. Now, by my hood,¹ a Gentile and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me but² I love her heartily;

400

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.

405

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.

Ant. Who's there?

Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fic, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?

410

'T is nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.

No masque to-night: the wind is come about;³

Bassanio presently will go aboard:

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on 't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

415

[Exeunt.]

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

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

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

Mor. 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,

420

¹ *Hood*—Either the hood of his friar's dress or his manhood. "By my knighthood" was a common adjuration.

² *Beshrew me but*—Woe betide me if I do not.

³ *Is come about*—Has changed in the right direction.

425 "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

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

Mor. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
430 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
435 Do it in hope of fair advantages:

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;¹
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?²

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

440 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:

445 And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling³ 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;

450 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;

455 From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine,⁴ this mortal breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian⁵ deserts and the vasty⁶ wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:

¹ Shows of dross—Appearances of scum thrown off in smelting.

² Virgin hue—Silver light of chaste Diana.

³ Disabling—Disparaging.

⁴ Shrine—Resting-place of a saint's body, or his statue.

⁵ Hyrcanian—Hyrcania was a wilderness south of the Caspian Sea.

⁶ Vasty—Waste, desolate.

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? 'T were damnation
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross
 To rib her cerecloth¹ in the obscure² 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 angel³
 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!
Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*]
Mor. O hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death,⁴ within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
 [Reads] All that glisters⁵ 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 infold.
 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!

¹ Rib her cerecloth—Enclose her shroud.

² Obscure—Pronounce ob'-seure.

³ Angel—A golden coin worth about ten shillings. It was struck by Edward IV, who had in mind Pope Gregory's pun of *angli* and *angeli*. On one side was the figure of Saint Michael, the archangel, piercing the dragon.

⁴ Carrion Death—A skull from which the flesh had rotted.

⁵ Glisters—Glistens.

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.¹

[Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.]

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

⁴⁹⁵ Let all of his complexion choose me so.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE VIII. Venice. A street.

Enter SALARINO AND SALANIO.

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

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised² the duke,
⁵⁰⁰ Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. 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:

⁵⁰⁵ Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Salan. I never heard a passion³ so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:

⁵¹⁰ "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!

⁵¹⁵ 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."

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

⁵²⁰ Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.

¹ Part—Depart.

² Raised—Aroused.

³ Passion—Outburst of passion.

ornets.

Exeunt.

I reason'd¹ 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: 525
 I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
 And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

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

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth. 530

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; 535
 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 conveniently² become you there:" 540
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
 And with affection wondrous sensible³
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him. 545
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out
 And quicken his embraced heaviness
 With some delight or other.

Salar.

Do we so.

[*Exeunt.*

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

Enter NERISSA with a Servitor.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
 The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath, 550
 And comes to his election presently.

¹ Reason'd—Conversed, talked.

² Conveniently—Suitably.

³ Sensible—Sensitive.

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

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:

If you chose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnised:

⁵⁵⁵ But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:

First, never to unfold to any one

Which casket 't was I chose; next, if I fail

⁵⁶⁰ 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.

⁵⁶⁵ *Por.* To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Ar. And so have I address'd¹ me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

⁵⁷⁰ 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,

⁵⁷⁵ Not learning more than the fond² eye doth teach;

Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,

Builds in the weather³ on the outward wall,

Even in the force and road of casualty.

I will not choose what many men desire,

⁵⁸⁰ Because I will not jump⁴ 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:"

⁵⁸⁵ And well said too; for who shall go about

¹ Address'd—Prepared.

² Fond—Foolish.

³ In the weather—Exposed to storms.

⁴ Jump—Agree.

Scene IX] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

37

To cozen¹ 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 purchased² by the merit of the wearer!
 How many then should cover³ 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.

590

595

600

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Ar. 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?

605

Por. To offend,⁴ and judge, are distinct⁵ offices
 And of opposed natures.

610

Ar. 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,⁶

615

¹ Cozen—Flatter.

² Purchased—Acquired.

³ Cover—Wear hats as masters, not stand hatless as servants.

⁴ To offend . . . natures—No man can judge his own case.

⁵ Distinct—Pronounce dis-tinct.

⁶ I wis—I know, certainly.

Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
 I will ever be your head:
 So be gone: you are sped.¹

620

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.

625

Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
 Patiently to bear my wroth.²

[*Exeunt Arragon and traitors*]

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

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

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
 A young Venetian, one that comes before
 635 To signify the approaching of his lord;
 From whom he bringeth sensible greets,³
 To wit, besides commends⁴ and courteous breath,
 Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
 So likely⁵ an ambassador of love:

640 A day in April never came so sweet,
 To show how costly⁶ summer was at hand,
 As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afraid
 Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
 645 Thou spend'st such high-day⁷ wit in praising him.

¹ Sped—Done with.

² Wroth—Misfortune.

³ Sensible greets—Tangible presents.

⁴ Commends—Compliments.

⁵ Likely—Promising.

⁶ Costly—Rich in productiveness.

⁷ High-day—Holiday.

Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post¹ that comes so mannerly.

Ner. Bassanio, lord Love,² if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter SALANIO and SALARINO.

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins,³ I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they⁵ say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped⁴ ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity⁵ or crossing the plain highway of talk,⁶ that the good¹⁰ Antonio, the honest Antonio,—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salar. Come, the full stop.⁷

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship. 15

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say "amen" betimes,⁸ 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?

¹ Post—Postman, messenger.

² Lord Love—Cupid.

³ The Goodwins—The Goodwin Sands off the east coast of Kent.

⁴ Knapped—Nibbled. Ginger was a favourite condiment of old women.

⁵ Slips of prolixity—Mistakes through talking too much.

⁶ Crossing . . . talk—Wandering from the straight story.

⁷ Come, the full stop—Bring your story to an end.

⁸ Betimes—In time.

²⁰ *Shy.* You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of daughter's flight.

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

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to be the dam.

Shy. She is damned for it.

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

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

³⁰ *Salan.* Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years.

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and bone than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish.¹ But tell us, do you

³⁵ hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match²: a bankrupt, prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar that was used to come so smug³ upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him

⁴⁰ look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

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

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will

⁴⁵ 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 the 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,

⁵⁰ 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,

⁵⁵ 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

¹ Rhenish—White.

² Match—Bargain.

³ Smug—Spruce, neat.

a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility¹? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

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

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot⁶⁵ be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[Exeunt Salan., Salar., and Servant.]

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

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

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort²! 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!⁷⁵ would she were hearsed³ 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 ill luck stirring but what lights on⁸⁰ my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

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

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

¹ Humility—What meekness does a Christian show if wronged?

² Frankfort—In Germany. Famous for fairs.

³ Hearsed—Coffined.

⁸⁰ *Shy.* I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news, ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁰⁵ *Tub.* Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. 'Tis true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer to seek him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, or 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.

Por. 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,
¹¹⁵ 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
¹²⁰ Before you venture for me. I could teach you How to choose right, but I am then forsworn²;

¹ Fee me an officer—Engage me an officer to be ready to arrest Antonio.

² Forsworn—Guilty of breaking her promise to her father.

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'd¹ 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 naughty² 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.³
 I speak too long; but 't is to peize⁴ the time,
 To eke it and to draw it out in length,
 To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose;
 For as I am, I live upon the rack.⁵

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

Bass. 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.

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

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

Por. Well then, confess and live.

Bass. "Confess" and "love"¹⁴⁵
 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.

Por. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
 If you do love me, you will find me out.

¹ O'erlooked—Bewitched.

² Naughty—Wicked.

³ Prove it so, . . . not I—If it should turn out by your unlucky choice of casket that I, who am yours by love, am not yours by fortune, fortune ought to suffer for it, but my life will be most wretched without you.

⁴ Peize—Dole out.

⁵ Rack—A wooden frame. A barbarous instrument of torture used to extort the truth from prisoners.

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,
¹⁵⁵ 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
¹⁶⁰ 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.¹ Now he goes,
 With no less presence, but with much more love,
¹⁶⁵ Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
 The virgin tribute paid by howling² Troy
 To the sea monster:³ I stand for sacrifice;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,⁴
 With bleared visages, come forth to view
¹⁷⁰ 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 fancy⁵ bred,
 Or in the heart or in the head?

¹ Such is... marriage—A band of musicians awake the bridegroom and accompany him to the bride's home.

² Howling—Loudly lamenting.

³ Now he... sea monster—When King Laomedon was building Troy, he promised Neptune and Apollo a sum of money for help rendered. On the completion of the city, the king refused to pay. Apollo sent a plague, a flood, and a sea-monster to punish the king. An oracle said that if Laomedon would sacrifice his daughter Hesione to the sea monster, there would be an end put to the flood and the plague. Hesione was fastened to a rock on the shore. Hercules rescued her, not for love, but to win a pair of famous steeds promised by Laomedon.

⁴ Dardanian wives—Trojan women.

⁵ Fancy—Love.

How begot, how nourished? 175

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: 180

I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:

The world is still deceived with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt 185

But, being season'd with a gracious voice,

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,

What damned error, but some sober brow

Will bless it and approve¹ it with a text,

Hiding the grossness with fair ornament? 190

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, 195

Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk

And these assume but valour's excrement²

To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,

And you shall see 't is purchased by the weight;

Which therein works a miracle in nature, 200

Making them lightest that wear most of it:

So are those crisped³ snaky golden locks

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,

Upon supposed fairness, often known

To be the dowry of a second head, 205

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 210

¹ *Approve*—Prove.

² *Excrement*—Beard

³ *Crisped*—Curled.

To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas,¹ I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
 215 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

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

Bass.

What find I here?

[Opening the leaden co

225 Fair Portia's counterfeit²! 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
 230 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,
 235 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,
 240 The continent³ 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.

¹ Midas—The King of the Golden Touch found to his sorrow that even his food turned to gold.

² Counterfeit—Portrait.

³ Continent—Container.

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.

245

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 those peals 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.

250

255

Por. 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 virtues, 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 then in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in 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

260

265

270

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²⁸⁵ And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. 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

²⁹⁰ 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
²⁹⁵ Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Ner. 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!

³⁰⁰ *Gra.* 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,
³⁰⁵ Even at that time I may be married too.

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

Gra. 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;

³¹⁰ You loved, I loved; for intermission¹
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,

³¹⁵ And swearing till 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
Achieved² her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa?

³²⁰ *Ner.* Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

¹ Intermission—Delay. Pronounce in-ter-mis'-si-ón.

² Achieved—Won.

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salanio? 325

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALANIO, a Messenger
from Venice.

Bass. Lorenzo and Salanio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very¹ friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome. 330

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

Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salanio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay, 335
To come with him along.

Salan. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives Bassanio a letter.

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

Salan. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind; 340
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salanio: what 's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio? 345
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

Salan. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lo

Por. There are some shrewd² contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek: 350
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!

Very—True.

² Shrewd—Evil.

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

Bass.

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,
 360 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
 365 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 mere¹ enemy,
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
 370 The paper as the body of my friend,
 And every word in it a gaping wound,
 Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salanio?
 Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?²
 From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
 375 From Lisbon, Barbary³ and India?
 And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

Salan.

Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear, that if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew,
 380 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,
 385 If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
 The duke himself, and the magnificoes⁴

¹ Mere—Thorough.

² Not one hit—Not one succeeded. The expression suggests target practice.

³ Barbary—States in North Africa.

⁴ Magnificoes—Grandeess, nobles.

Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious¹ plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

Jes. 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.

Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bass. 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.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

Por.

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description²
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 cheer³:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried,
my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to

¹ *Envious*—Malicious.

² *Description*—Pronounce de-scr'i-pt-i-6n.

³ *Cheer*—Countenance.

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.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
 430 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.

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

435 *Gaoler,* look to him.

Ani. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. 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:
 440 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.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
 445 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.

450 *Salar.* It¹ is the most impenetrable cur
 That ever kept² with men.

Ant. Let him alone:
 I'll follow him no more with bootless prayer.
 He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
 I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures

¹ It—Expresses contempt.

² Kept—Dwelt.

ossible I
I. If I
se your
let not

Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

455

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

Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity¹ that strangers have
With us in Venice. If it be denied,

460

'T 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 bated² me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.

465

Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*]

Exeunt.

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

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

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit³
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.

470

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.

475

Por. 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,

480

485

¹ *Commodity*—Commercial intercourse.

² *Bated*—Reduced.

³ *Conceit*—Idea.

[*Exit.*]

How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!

490 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,

495 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,¹

Only attended by Nerissa here,

Until her husband and my lord's return:

There is a monastery two miles off;

500 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.

Lor.

Madam, with all my heart;

I shall obey you in all fair commands.

505 *Por.* 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.

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

510 *Jes.* I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

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

Now, Balthasar,

[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo*]

As I have ever found thee honest-true,

515 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,

520 Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined² speed

Unto the traject,³ to the common ferry⁴

¹ Contemplation—Pronounce cón-tem-plá-ti-ón.

² Imagined—As quick as thought.

³ Traject—Ferry.

⁴ Ferry—Ferry-boat.

Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient¹ speed.

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

Ner.

Shall they see us?

Por. 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 withal²; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd 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,³
Which I will practise.

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.

[*Exit.*

525

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[*Exeunt.* 550

SCENE V. *The same. A garden.*

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA.

Laun. 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

¹ *Convenient*—Becoming to a man and suitable to the exigency.

² *I could not do withal*—I could not help it.

³ *Jacks*—A contemptuous name.

agitation¹ of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly
 555 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.

Jes. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that you are not the
 560 Jew's daughter.

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

Laun. Truly then, I fear you are damned both by father
 and mother: thus when I shun Scylla,² your father, I fall into
 565 Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

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

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians
 enow³ before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another.
 570 This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we
 grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rashe
 on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

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

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

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and
 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
 580 member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Chris-
 tians, you raise the price of pork.

Lor. 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
 585 bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

¹ Agitation—Cogitation.

² Scylla—A sea-monster that dwelt in a cave opposite Charybdis
 a whirlpool in the Straits of Messina; hence, out of Scylla into
 Charybdis means out of one difficulty into a worse.

³ Enow—Used of numbers; enough, of quantity

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

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

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

590

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

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion!¹ 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.

595

Laun. 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.

600

Lor. 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 tricky² word
Defy the matter.³ How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

605

Jes. 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,⁴
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.

615

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

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

620

¹ Quarrelling with occasion—Quibbling on every opportunity.

² Tricky—Sportive.

³ Defy the matter—For the sake of making a joke, turn a serious thought to ridicule.

⁴ Mean it—Intend to live an upright life.

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

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.¹

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk,
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
⁶²⁵ I shall digest it.

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.²

[Exeun

ACT IV

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

Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALANIO, and others.

Duke. What,³ is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
⁵ Un capable⁴ of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify⁵
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate⁶
And that no lawful means can carry me
¹⁰ 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.

¹⁵ *Salan.* 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,

Stomach—Appetite for criticism and for food.

Set you forth—Give you your food and your character.

³ **What**—An exclamation calling for attention.

⁴ **Un capable**—Incapable.

⁵ **Qualify**—Moderate, temper.

⁶ **Obdurate**—Pronounce ob-du'-rate.

h.¹

That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 't is thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse¹ more strange

20

[Exeunt.

And where² thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,

25

SANIO,

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety³ of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pit, on his losses,

That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down

30

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.

Shy. I have possess'd⁴ your grace of what I purpose;

35

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.

Ye 'll ask me, why I rather choose to have

40

A weight of carrion flesh than to receive

Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:

But, say, it is my humour⁵: is it answer'd?

What if my house be troubled with a rat

And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats

45

To have it baned⁶? What, are you answer'd yet?

Some men there are love not a gaping⁷ pig,

Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;

And others, at the bagpipe; for affection,

Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood

50

¹ Remorse—Pity.

² Where—Whereas.

³ Moiety—Literally, half; here, a large portion.

⁴ Possess'd—Informed.

⁵ Humour—Disposition, whim, hobby.

⁶ Baned—Given ratsbane, poisoned.

⁷ Gaping—Squalling, or mouth held open with a lemon.

Of what it likes or loathes.¹ Now, for your answer:

As there is no firm reason to be render'd,

Why he cannot abide² a gaping pig;

⁵⁵ Why he, a harmless necessary cat;

Why he, a woollen³ bagpipe;

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,

More than a lodged⁴ hate and a certain loathing

I bear Antonio, that I follow thus

A losing⁵ suit against him. Are you answer'd?

⁶⁰ *Bass.* This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

⁶⁵ *Bass.* Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:⁶

You may as well go stand upon the beach

And bid the main flood bate his usual height;

⁷⁰ 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;

⁷⁵ You may as well do any thing 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

⁸⁰ Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

¹ *Affection*. *loathes*—Affection is the ultimate sympathy or antipathy; passion is the impulsive sympathy or antipathy. Shylock means the heart sways the head both in our likes and dislikes.

² *Abide*—Endure.

³ *Woollen*—Refers to the cloth that covers the wind-bag of the bagpipes.

⁴ *Lodged*—Settled, inveterate.

⁵ *Losing*—Shylock would lose three thousand ducats.

⁶ *I pray*. *Jew*—Remember that you are debating with Shylock.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts¹ and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none? 85

Shy. 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, 90
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 seasoned with such viands? You will answer 95
"The slaves are ours": so do I answer you:

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 't is 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? 100

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.

Salan. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor, 105
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bass. 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. 110

Ant. 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. 115

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

¹ Parts—Employments.

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.
[Presenting a letter]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

¹²⁰ *Gra.* 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?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

¹²⁵ *Gra.* O, be thou damn'd, inexorable¹ dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.²

Thou almost makest me waver in my faith

To hold opinion with Pythagoras,³

That souls of animals infuse themselves

¹³⁰ 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,⁴

And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

¹³⁵ Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail⁵ 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.

¹⁴⁰ *Duke.* This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Ner. 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

¹⁴⁵ Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

¹ *Inexorable*—That cannot be cursed enough.

² *And. . . . accused*—The goddess of justice is guilty of a crime in letting Shylock live.

³ *Pythagoras*—A Greek philosopher that taught the transmigration of souls.

⁴ *Hanged. . . . fleet*—In the Middle Ages animals that injured or killed human beings were formally hanged.

⁵ *Rail*—Scold loudly.

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?

Por. 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?

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

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy.

Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow; Yet in such rule¹ that the Venetian law Cannot impugn² you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por.

Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por.

Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

¹ In such rule—In such a strictly legal way.

² Impugn—Fight against, oppose.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
180 Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
185 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;
190 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons¹ 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;
195 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.
200 *Shy.* My deeds upon my head! I crave the law
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
205 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.² And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
210 To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

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

¹ Seasons—Tempers.

² Malice bears down truth—Shylock's hatred of Antonio stronger than Shylock's honesty regarding the three thousand ducats.

'T will be recorded for a precedent,¹
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be. 215

Shy. A Daniel² come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 't is, most reverend doctor, here it is. 220

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

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim 225
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.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.³
It doth appear you are a worthy judge; 230

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 235
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

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

Por. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife. 240

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,⁴
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'T is very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks! 245

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

¹ *Precedent*—Preceding case whose decision will be quoted as law.

² *Daniel*—*Ezekiel* xxviii, 3, and *Daniel* vi, 3.

³ *Tenour*—Terms.

⁴ *For the penalty*—For the meaning and the scope of the law recognise that the forfeit due should be paid.

Shy.

Ay, his breast:

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

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

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh

²⁵⁰ The flesh?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,¹

To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that?

²⁵⁵ 'T were good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.

Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!

²⁶⁰ 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 use²

To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,

To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow

²⁶⁵ 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;

²⁷⁰ 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,

²⁷⁵ I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

Bass. 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 esteemed above thy life:

²⁸⁰ I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all

Here to this devil, to deliver you.

¹ On your charge—At your expense.

² Still her use—Always her custom.

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

Gra. 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.

Ner. 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. 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, pursue¹ sentence.

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

Shy. Most rightful judge!

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

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare

Por. 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.

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

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shall see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

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

Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

¹ Pursue—Pronounce pur'-sue.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

320 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
Of the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn

325 But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

330 *Shy.* Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniell!

335 I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

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

Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!

340 I'll stay no longer question.

Por. 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

345 He seek the life of any citizen,

The party 'gainst the which he did 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

350 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

355 Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd

The danger formerly by me rehearsed.

Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. 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.

360

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.¹

365

Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shy. 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.

370

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

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

Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one-half of his goods,

375

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,

380

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

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

Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant

385

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.

Por.

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,

390

And I will sign it.

Duke.

Get thee gone, but do it.

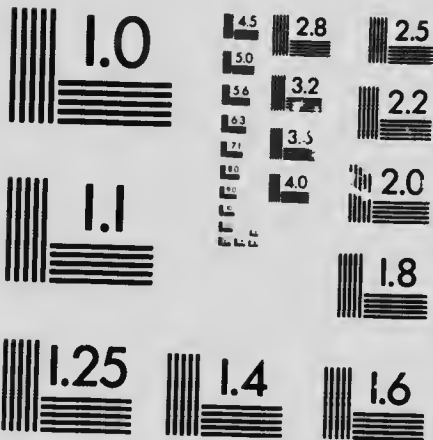
Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,

¹ Which fine—Your humble entreaty may induce me to commute for a fine.



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To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.¹ [Exit Shylock.

395 *Duke.* Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. 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.

400 *Antonio,* gratify² this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[Exeunt Duke and his train.

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,

405 Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope³ your courteous pains withal.

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

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;

410 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.

415 *Bass.* Dear sir, of force I must attempt⁴ 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.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

420 [To *Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[To *Bass.*] 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.

Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!

425 I will not shame myself to give you this.

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

¹ In christening. . . . font—Twelve men would make a jury that would surely condemn Shylock to death. Trial by jury was unknown in Venice.

² Gratify—Pay, recompense.

³ Cope—Requite.

⁴ Attempt—Tempt.

Scene II] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

71

Bass. 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:

430

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. 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.

Bass. 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.

435

Por. 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!

440

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.¹

445

Bass. 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.

450

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The same. A street.*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. 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.

455

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. 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.

¹ *Commandment*—Pronounce com-mánd-e-mént.

Por.

That cannot be:

⁴⁶⁰ His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old¹ Shylock's house.

Gra. That will I do.

Ner.

Sir, I would speak with you.

[*Aside to Por.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,

⁴⁶⁵ Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] 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.

⁴⁷⁰ [*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.

Ner. 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.

Lor. 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
Troilus² methinks mounted the Trojan walls
⁵ And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes.

In such a night

Did Thisbe³ fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

¹ *Old*—An intensive epithet, meaning great or tall in colloquial language. Cf. high old.

² *Troilus*—An admirable Trojan prince son of King Priam. Troilus loved Cressida, but she forsook him for his enemy, Diomedes the Greek. See Shakespeare's play *Troilus and Cressida*.

³ *Thisbe*—This Babylonian lady agreed to meet her lover, Pyramus, by moonlight. She arrived first at the trysting-place, saw a lion's shadow, and ran away. In fleeing, she dropped her mantle. The lion left the impress of his bloody paw on the cloak. Pyramus thought the lion had devoured Thisbe; therefore Pyramus killed himself. Thisbe killed herself a few minutes after. See Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor.

In such a night
Stood Dido¹ with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

10

Jes.

In such a night
Medea² gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

Lor.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal³ from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

15

Jes.

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.

Lor.

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

20

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

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

25

Steph. A friend.

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

Steph. 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.⁴

30

¹ *Dido*—Dido, queen of Carthage, hospitably entertained Æneas after the destruction of Troy. He won her love and then forsook her to found Rome. Shakespeare used the willow wand as an emblem of unrequited affection.

² *Medea*—Medea helped Jason steal the golden fleece from her father, eloped with him, and rejuvenated his father, old Æson.

³ *Steal*—Like Medea, Jessica stole her father's wealth and eloped.

⁴ *She doth hours*—Crosses set up on the highroads invited passers-by to spend a few moments in prayer.

Lor. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

³⁵ *Lor.* 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.

Laun. Sola,¹ sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

⁴⁰ *Lor.* Who calls?

Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?

Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

⁴⁵ *Lor.* Here.

Laun. 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 Launcelot]*

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

⁵⁰ 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!

⁵⁵ 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 patines² of bright gold:

⁶⁰ There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st

But in his motion like an angel sings,³

Still quiring⁴ to the young-eyed cherubims;

Such harmony is in immortal souls;

¹ Sola—Imitates a horn that postmen used to carry.

² Patines—Small golden plates used in the communion service.

³ There'ssings—The reference is to the "music of the spheres." It is a belief that there is music wherever there are order, proportion, and harmony. Only for our "sin-choked ears," we could hear that harmony. See *Job xxxviii, 7*.

⁴ Quiring—Singing in chorus.

Scene I] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

75

But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

85

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana¹ with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music.

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

[*Music.*

70

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive².

For do but note a wild and vanton 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,

75

You shall perceive them make a mutual³ stand,
Their savage⁴ eyes turn'd to a modest⁵ gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet⁶
Did feign that Orpheus⁷ drew trees, stones and floods;

80

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

85

And his affections dark as Erebus⁸:

Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. 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.

90

¹ *Wake Diana*—The huntress does not wish to be waked till dawn.

² *Attentive*—Sensitive.

³ *Mutual*—Common.

⁴ *Savage*—Wild, but not cruel

⁵ *Modest*—Docile.

⁶ *The poet*—Ovid.

⁷ *Orpheus*—Accompanied Jason on the *Argo*. Apollo gave a lyre to Orpheus. So sweet was the music that trees, rocks, and animals followed Orpheus to listen to his playing.

⁸ *Erebus*—A place of darkness. It is between earth and Hades.

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

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king

⁹⁵ Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect.¹

¹⁰⁰ Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended,² and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,

¹⁰⁵ 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 Endymion³

¹¹⁰ And would not be awaked. [Music ceases]

Lor. That is the voice,

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

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

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,

¹¹⁵ Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet;

But there is come a messenger before,

To signify their coming.

Por. Go in, Nerissa;

Give order to my servants that they take

¹ Nothing. . . . respect—Absolutely; that is, without regard to circumstances a thing is not good.

² Attended—Attended to, or listened to attentively.

³ Endymion—A beautiful Greek youth beloved by Juno. Jealous Jupiter cast Endymion into an endless sleep on Mount Latmos. Diana fell in love with him. Another myth says Diana became enamoured of Endymion and cast him into an endless sleep that she might kiss him without his knowing it.

Scene I] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

77

No note at all of our being absent hence; 120
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds.*]

Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet;
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 't is a day, 125
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers.

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

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
And never be Bassanio so for me:

But God sort¹ all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound. 135

Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words, 140
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

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

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring 145
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."

Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you, 150
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 respective² and have kept it.

¹ Sort—Dispose.

² Respective—Considerate.

¹⁵⁵ Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.

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

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth.

¹⁶⁰ A kind of boy, a little scrubbed¹ 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.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
¹⁶⁵ To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And 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;

¹⁷⁰ 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 't were to me, I should be mad at it.

¹⁷⁵ *Bass.* [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gra. 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,
¹⁸⁰ That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

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

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
¹⁸⁵ I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
¹⁹⁰ And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,

¹ Scrubbed—Stunted.

When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue¹ of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 195
Or your own honour to contain² 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 200
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.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,³ 205
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 displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? 210
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, 215
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. 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, 220
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him anything I have.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding. 225

Bass. 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—

¹ Virtue—Power.

² Contain--Retain.

³ Civil doctor—Doctor of civil law.

Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
230 In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there 's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth¹;
235 Which,² 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.³

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

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

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

Por. I had it of him. You are all amaz'd:

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;

245 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
250 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:
255 You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.

Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

For here I read for certain that my ships

260 Are safely come to road.

Por. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

¹ Wealth—Well-being.

² Which—The loan of my life.

³ Advisedly—Deliberately.

Scene I] *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

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Ner. 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.

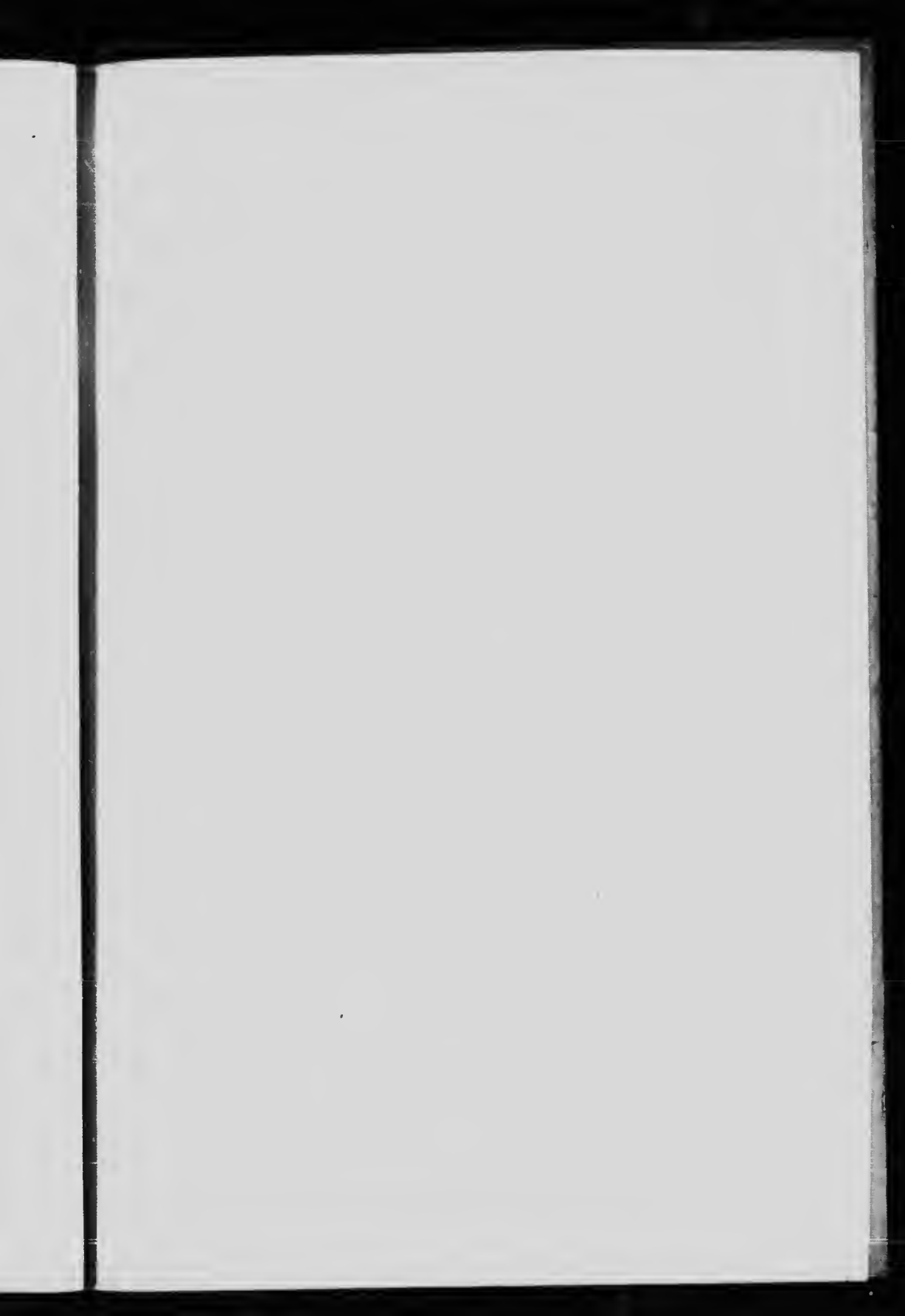
Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
 Of starved people.

Por. 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,¹
 And we will answer all things faithfully

Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
 So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ And charge. . . . inter'gatories—A legal phrase, meaning make us swear to answer faithfully.



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