***Act III***

***SCENE V.***

***The same. A garden.***

***Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA***

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***JESSICA***

And what hope is that, I pray thee?

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***JESSICA***

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

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***JESSICA***

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

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***Enter LORENZO***

***JESSICA***

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

***LORENZO***

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

***JESSICA***

Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I  
are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for  
me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he  
says, you are no good member of the commonwealth,  
for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the  
price of pork.

***LORENZO***

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

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***LORENZO***

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

***LAUNCELOT***

That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

***LORENZO***

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

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***LORENZO***

Will you cover then, sir?

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***LORENZO***

Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show  
the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray  
tree, understand a plain man in his plain meaning:  
go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve  
in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

***LAUNCELOT***

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

***Exit***

***LORENZO***

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

***JESSICA***

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

***LORENZO***

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

***JESSICA***

Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

***LORENZO***

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

***JESSICA***

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

***LORENZO***

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

***JESSICA***

Well, I'll set you forth.

***Exeunt***