

Act 1 Scene 1

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO

ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.
It wearies me; you say it wearies you.
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
5 I am to learn.

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

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

15 Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads.

ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO enter.

ANTONIO

To be honest, I don't know why I'm so sad. I'm tired of it, and you say you're tired of it too. But I have no idea how I got so depressed. And if I can't figure out what's making me depressed, I must not understand myself very well.

SALARINO

You're worried about your ships. Your mind is out there getting tossed around on the ocean with them. But they're fine. They're like huge parade floats on the sea. They're so big they look down on the smaller ships, which all have to bow and then get out of the way. Your ships fly like birds past those little boats.

SOLANIO

Yes, believe me, if I had such risky business ventures in other countries, I'd be sad too. I'd worry about it every second. I'd constantly be tossing blades of grass into the air to find out which way the wind was blowing. I'd be peering over maps to

20 And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALARINO

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

ANTONIO

Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it—

figure out the best ports, piers, and waterways. Everything that
made me worry about my ships would make me sad.

SALARINO

I'd get scared every time I blew on my soup to cool it, thinking
of how a strong wind could wipe out my ships. Every time I
glanced at the sand in an hourglass I'd imagine my ships
wrecked on sandbars. I'd think of dangerous rocks every time I
went to church and saw the stones it was made of. If my ship
brushed up against rocks like that, its whole cargo of spices
would be dumped into the sea. All of its silk shipments would
be sent flying into the roaring waters. In one moment I'd go
bankrupt. Who wouldn't get sad thinking about things like
that? It's obvious. Antonio is sad because he's so worried about
his cargo.

ANTONIO

My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place, nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year.

45 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SOLANIO

Why then, you are in love.

ANTONIO

Fie, fie!

SOLANIO

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry—and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry
50 Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time.

Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
55 That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

*Enter **BASSANIO**, **LORENZO**, and **GRATIANO***

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well.

No, that's not it, trust me. Thankfully my financial situation is healthy. I don't have all of my money invested in one ship, or one part of the world. If I don't do well this year, I'll still be okay. So it's not my business that's making me sad.

SOLANIO

Well then, you must be in love.

ANTONIO

Oh, give me a break.

SOLANIO

You're not in love either? Fine, let's just say you're sad because you're not in a good mood. You know, it'd be just as easy for you to laugh and dance around and say you're in a good mood. You could just say you're not sad. Humans are so different.

Some people will laugh at anything, and others are so grouchy they won't even crack a smile when they hear something hysterically funny.

***BASSANIO**, **LORENZO**, and **GRATIANO** enter.*

Here comes your cousin Bassanio. And Gratiano and Lorenzo too. Goodbye, then. We'll leave you to talk to them. They're

We leave you now with better company.

SALARINO

60 I would have stayed till I had made you merry
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

ANTONIO

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

SALARINO

65 (to BASSANIO, LORENZO, GRATIANO)
Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

(to SALARINO and SOLANIO)
Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say, when?
You grow exceeding strange. Must it be so?

SALARINO

70 We'll make our leasures to attend on yours.

Exeunt SALARINO and SOLANIO

LORENZO

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you. But at dinnertime
I pray you have in mind where we must meet.

better company.

SALARINO

I would've stayed to cheer you up, if your nobler friends hadn't
shown up.

ANTONIO

You're both very precious to me. But I understand. You need to
leave to take care of your own business.

SALARINO

(to BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO) Good morning,
gentlemen.

BASSANIO

(to SALARINO and SOLANIO) Hello, friends. When are we
going to have fun together again? Just name the time. We
never see you anymore. Does it have to be that way?

SALARINO

Let us know when you want to get together. We're available.

SALARINO and SOLANIO exit.

LORENZO

Bassanio, we'll say goodbye for now, since you've found
Antonio. But don't forget, we're meeting for dinner tonight.

BASSANIO

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO

75 You look not well, Signor Antonio.
You have too much respect upon the world.
They lose it that do buy it with much care.
Believe me, you are marvelously changed.

ANTONIO

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

GRATIANO

Let me play the fool.
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come.
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
85 Why should a man whose blood is warm within
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster,
Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks—
90 There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a willful stillness entertain

BASSANIO

Don't worry, I'll be there.

GRATIANO

You don't look well, Antonio. You're taking things too seriously.
People with too much invested in the world always get hurt.
I'm telling you, you don't look like yourself.

ANTONIO

For me the world is just the world, Gratiano—a stage where
every person has a part to play. I play a sad one.

GRATIANO

Then I'll play the happy fool and get laugh lines on my face. I'd
rather overload my liver with wine than starve my heart by
denying myself fun. Why should any living man sit still like a
statue? Why should he sleep when he's awake? Why should
he get ulcers from being crabby all the time? I love you, and
I'm telling you this because I care about you, Antonio—there
are men who always look serious. Their faces never move or
show any expression, like stagnant ponds covered with scum.
They're silent and stern, and they think they're wise and deep,
important and respectable. When they talk, they think
everybody else should keep quiet, and that even dogs should
stop barking. I know a lot of men like that, Antonio. The only

With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
95 As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when I am very sure
100 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time.
But fish not with this melancholy bait
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.—
105 Come, good Lorenzo.—Fare ye well awhile.
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO

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

GRATIANO

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

ANTONIO

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

GRATIANO

reason they're considered wise is because they don't say anything. I'm sure if they ever opened their mouths, everyone would see what fools they are. I'll talk to you more about this some other time. In the meantime, cheer up. Don't go around looking so glum. That's my opinion, but what do I know? I'm a fool.—Let's go, Lorenzo.—Goodbye for now. I'll finish my lecture after dinner.

LORENZO

All right, we'll see you at dinnertime. I must be one of these silent so-called wise men Gratiano's talking about, because he never lets me get a word in.

GRATIANO

If you hang around me for two more years, you'll forget the sound of your own voice. I won't ever let you speak.

ANTONIO

Goodbye. After that lecture of yours, I'll start talking a lot.

GRATIANO

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

*Exeunt **GRATIANO** and **LORENZO***

ANTONIO

115 Is that any thing now?

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

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

BASSANIO

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

Thank you. The only tongues that should be silent are ox-tongues on a dinner plate and those that belong to old maids.

***GRATIANO** and **LORENZO** exit.*

ANTONIO

Is he right?

BASSANIO

Gratiano talks more nonsense than any other man in Venice. His point is always like a needle in a haystack—you look for it all day, and when you find it you realize it wasn't worth the trouble.

ANTONIO

So, who's this girl, the one you said you were going to take a special trip for? You promised to tell me.

BASSANIO

Antonio, you know how bad my finances have been lately. I've been living way beyond my means. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining about having to cut back.

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

ANTONIO

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it.
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honor, be assured
140 My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.

BASSANIO

In my school days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight
The selfsame way with more advised watch
145 To find the other forth—and by adventuring both,
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a willful youth,
That which I owe is lost. But if you please
150 To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both

I just want to be honorable and pay off the big debts that piled up when I was living the high life. I'm in debt to many people, and I owe most to you, Antonio—both money and gratitude. And because you care about me, I know you'll let me tell you my plan to clear all my debts.

ANTONIO

Please let me know your plan, Bassanio. As long as it's honorable, you can be sure that I'll let you use all my money and do everything I can to help you.

BASSANIO

Back when I was a schoolboy, if I lost an arrow I would try to find it by shooting another arrow in the same direction, watching the second arrow more carefully than I had the first. By risking the second arrow, I'd often get both of them back. I'm telling you this story for a reason. I owe you a lot, and like a spoiled kid I've lost what I owe you. But if you'd be willing to shoot another arrow the same way you shot the first, I'll watch your arrow more carefully this time. Either we'll get back all the money I owe you, or else we'll get back what you lend me this time, and I'll just owe you what I already owe you.

Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

ANTONIO

155 You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance.
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have.
160 Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am pressed unto it. Therefore speak.

BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair and—fairer than that word—
165 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
170 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.
175 O my Antonio, had I but the means

ANTONIO

You know me better than that. You're wasting your breath. All of this talk means you have doubts about my friendship. That's worse than if you bankrupted me. Just tell me what to do, and I'll do it. Tell me.

BASSANIO

There's a girl in Belmont who's inherited a huge amount of money, and she's beautiful and—even better—she's a good person. I think she likes me. Sometimes the expression on her face tells me she likes me. Her name is Portia. She's as rich as that famous Roman heroine Portia, the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus. Her wealth is world-famous. Famous and important men have come in from all over the world to try to marry her. The hair that hangs down on her forehead is like gold, calling every adventurer to Belmont like a gold rush. Antonio, if I only had enough money to hold my own against those suitors, I know I could win her!

To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift
That I should questionless be fortunate!

ANTONIO

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

Exeunt

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are. And yet for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they

ANTONIO

You know right now all my money's tied up in that cargo that's still at sea. I can't give you the cash you need because I don't have it. But go ahead and charge things to me on credit, as much credit as I can get in Venice. I'll use all my lines of credit to help you get to Belmont, to Portia. Go see who will lend money, and I'll do the same. I'm sure I can get something either as a business loan, or as a personal favor.

They exit.

Act 1 Scene 2

PORTIA and NERISSA enter.

PORTIA

Oh Nerissa, my poor little body is tired of this great big world.

NERISSA

You'd be tired, madam, if you had bad luck rather than wealth and good luck. But as far as I can tell, people with too much suffer as much as people with nothing. The best way to be

that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean. Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

PORTIA

Good sentences, and well pronounced.

NERISSA

10 They would be better if well followed.

PORTIA

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions. I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree. Such a hare is madness the youth—to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word “choose!” I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike—so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

NERISSA

happy is to be in between. When you have too much you get old sooner, but having just enough helps you live longer.

PORTIA

Good point, and well said.

NERISSA

It would be better if you actually applied it to your life.

PORTIA

You think it's that easy? If doing good deeds were as easy as knowing how to do them, then everyone would be better off. Small chapels would be big churches, and poor men's cottages would be princes' palaces. It takes a good priest to practice what he preaches. For me, it's easier to lecture twenty people on how to be good than to be the one person out of twenty who actually does good things. The brain can tell the heart what to do, but what does it matter? Cold rules don't matter when you've got a hot temper. Young people are like frisky young rabbits, and good advice is like a crippled old man trying to catch them. But thinking like this won't help me choose a husband. Oh, the word “choose” is strange! I can't choose who I like, or refuse who I dislike. I'm a living daughter still controlled by the wishes of her dead father. Isn't it a pain that I can't choose or refuse anyone, Nerissa?

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

I pray thee, overname them. And as thou namest them, I will describe them. And according to my description, level at my affection.

NERISSA

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

Then there is the County Palatine.

PORTIA

He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, "An you will not have me, choose." He hears merry tales and smiles not. I

Your father was an extremely moral man, and religious people get odd ideas on their deathbeds. Your father's idea was to have a game with three boxes. The suitor who can figure out whether to pick the gold, silver, or lead box will solve your father's riddle—and that suitor's the man for you. No one will ever choose the right box who doesn't deserve your love. But tell me. Do you like any of the princely suitors who've come?

PORTIA

Run through the list. As you name them I'll describe them for you, and from my descriptions you can guess how I feel toward them.

NERISSA

Well, first there was the prince from Naples.

PORTIA

Ah, yes, that stallion. All he talks about is his horse. He thinks it's a great credit to his character that he can shoe a horse all by himself. I'm afraid his mother may have had an affair with a blacksmith.

NERISSA

Then there's the Count Palatine.

PORTIA

He does nothing but frown, as if he wants to say, "If you don't want me, I don't care." He doesn't even smile when he hears

fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

50 God made him and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he!—why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine. He is every man in no man. If a throstle sing, he falls straight a- capering. He will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness I shall never requite him.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him. He hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor

funny stories. If he's so sad and solemn when he's young, I can only imagine how much he'll cry as an old man. No, I'd rather be married to a skull with a bone in its mouth than to either of those men. God protect me from these two!

NERISSA

What did you think about that French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

PORTIA

We might as well call him a man, since God created him. No, I know it's bad to make fun of people, but still! His horse is better than the Neapolitan's and he frowns more than the Count Palatine. He was trying to outdo everyone so much that you couldn't tell who he was. He started dancing every time a bird sang, and he was so eager to show off his fencing that he'd fight with his own shadow. If I married him, I might as well as marry twenty husbands, because he's like twenty men all rolled into one! I'd understand it if he hated me, since even if he loved me desperately, I'd never be able to love him back.

NERISSA

What about Falconbridge, that young English baron?

PORTIA

I have no opinion about him. We don't talk because we don't understand each other. He doesn't speak Latin, French, or Italian, and you know how little English I speak. He's great-

pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumb show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behavior everywhere.

NERISSA

What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

looking, but how can you talk to someone who doesn't speak your language? He was dressed so oddly too! I think he got his jacket in Italy, his tights in France, his hat in Germany, and his behavior everywhere.

NERISSA

What do you think of his neighbor, the Scottish lord?

PORTIA

I think he's very forgiving, since he let the Englishman slap him on the ear without hitting him back. Rather than defend himself, he just threatened to pay the Englishman back later. Then the Frenchman promised to help the Scot pay the Englishman back, and added a slap of his own.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

He's pretty awful in the morning when he's sobering up, and even worse in the afternoon when he's drunk. At his best he's a little less than a man, and at his worst he's little more than an animal. If we got married and he tragically met his demise, I'm sure I could find a way to go on without him.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

100 Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquess of Montferrat?

If he offers to play the game and chooses the right box, but then you reject him, you'll be disobeying your father's last wishes.

PORTIA

I know. So please put a nice big glass of white wine on the wrong box. I know he'll get tempted and choose that one. I'll do anything rather than marry a drunk, Nerissa.

NERISSA

You don't have to worry about any of these lords, my lady. They've all told me what they want, which is to go back home and give up on you—unless there was some other way to win you than your father's pick-the-box test.

PORTIA

I'll die an old maid unless I can be won according to the rules set by my father's will. I'm glad these suitors are sensible enough to stay away. The only thing I like about them is that they're not there. I wish them all safe trips home.

NERISSA

Do you remember a Venetian scholar and soldier who accompanied the marquess of Montferrat here once when your father was still alive?

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

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

Enter a SERVINGMAN

How now, what news?

SERVINGMAN

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

PORTIA

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. Come,

PORTIA

Yes, yes, that was Bassanio. I think that was his name.

NERISSA

Yes, madam, that's the one. He deserves a beautiful wife more than all the other men I've ever seen.

PORTIA

I remember him well, and my memory tells me that he deserves your praise.

A SERVANT enters.

Hello, do you have any news?

SERVANT

The four suitors are looking for you so they can say goodbye, madam. And there's a messenger representing a fifth one, the prince of Morocco, who says the prince will be here tonight.

PORTIA

If I could say hello to the fifth one as happily as I'll say goodbye to the first four, I'd be very happy he's coming. If he's as good as a saint but is black like a devil, I'd rather he hear my confession than marry me. Let's go, Nerissa.—*(to the SERVANT)*

Nerissa.—(to SERVANT) Sirrah, go before. Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer Another knocks at the door.

Exeunt

Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats, well.

BASSANIO

Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK

For three months, well.

BASSANIO

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

SHYLOCK

5 Antonio shall become bound, well.

BASSANIO

May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK

Go ahead. As soon as we shut the door on one suitor, another one starts knocking.

They exit.

Act 1 Scene 3

BASSANIO and SHYLOCK enter.

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats, hmmm.

BASSANIO

Yes, for three months.

SHYLOCK

For three months, hmmm.

BASSANIO

As I said before, Antonio will guarantee the loan. If I default, he'll pay you.

SHYLOCK

Antonio will guarantee it, hmmm.

BASSANIO

Can you help me? What's your answer?

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO

10 Your answer to that?

SHYLOCK

Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK

Ho, no, no, no, no. My meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition. He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies. I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad.

But ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean pirates—and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is notwithstanding sufficient.

BASSANIO

Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio will guarantee it.

BASSANIO

Your answer?

SHYLOCK

Antonio's a good man.

BASSANIO

Have you heard anything to the contrary?

SHYLOCK

What? No, no, no, no. What I meant in saying he's a good man is that he has enough money to guarantee the loan. But his investments are uncertain right now. He has one ship bound for Tripoli, another heading for the Indies. What's more, people at the [Rialto](#) tell me he has a third ship in Mexico, and a fourth in England, as well as other business ventures throughout the world.

But ships are just fragile boards, and sailors are just men. There are rats and thieves and pirates—not to mention storms, winds, and rocks. Anything could happen. But in spite of all this, the man is still wealthy enough. Three thousand ducats—I think I can let him guarantee your loan.

BASSANIO

Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK

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

BASSANIO

If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK

Yes—to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO

BASSANIO

This is Signor Antonio.

SHYLOCK

(aside) How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
35 But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I assure you he can.

SHYLOCK

I *will* be sure he can, before I make the loan. And I'll think of a way to be sure. Can I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO

If you like, you can dine with us.

Oh yes—to smell **pork** ? I don't think so!. Your prophet Jesus sent the devil into a herd of pigs. I'm not going to eat that. I'll buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so on, but I won't eat with you, drink with you, or pray with you. Any news on the Rialto? Who's that?

ANTONIO enters.

BASSANIO

This is Signor Antonio.

SHYLOCK

(to himself) He looks just like a guy who's robbed me but now comes to beg me for a favor! I hate him because he's a Christian. But more than that, I hate him because he stupidly lends money without interest, which lowers the interest rates here in Venice. If I can just get the upper hand of him once, I'll satisfy my old grudge against him. He hates Jews. Even at the

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
40 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." Cursèd be my tribe
If I forgive him!

BASSANIO

45 Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK

I am debating of my present store,
And by the near guess of my memory
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
50 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! How many months
Do you desire?
(to ANTONIO)
Rest you fair, good signor.
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO

55 Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend,

Rialto he's always complaining about me and my negotiating
and my hard-earned profits, which he calls "interest."

It would an insult to Jews everywhere to forgive that man!

BASSANIO

Shylock, are you listening?

SHYLOCK

I'm thinking about how much cash I have on hand. If I
remember correctly, I can't raise the entire three thousand
ducats immediately. But so what? Tubal, a wealthy Jew I know,
will supply me with the cash. But wait a minute! How many
months do you want? (to ANTONIO) Oh, hello, how are you,
signor? We were just talking about you.

ANTONIO

Shylock, although I never lend or borrow with interest, I'm
willing to break that habit to help a friend in need. (to
BASSANIO) Does he know how much you need?

I'll break a custom.

(to BASSANIO)

Is he yet possessed

60 How much ye would?

SHYLOCK

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO

And for three months.

SHYLOCK

I had forgot—three months.

(to BASSANIO)

You told me so.

65 (to ANTONIO)

Well then, your bond, and let me see—But hear you,

Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow

Upon advantage.

ANTONIO

I do never use it.

SHYLOCK

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—

70 This Jacob from our holy Abram was,

As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,

The third possessor, ay, he was the third—

SHYLOCK

Oh yes, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO

For three months.

SHYLOCK

Yes, I forgot—three months. (to BASSANIO) You told me that. (to ANTONIO) Now then, about your guarantee. Let me see—but listen, Antonio, I thought you said you don't lend or borrow with interest.

ANTONIO

That's right. That's not how I do business.

SHYLOCK

When Jacob took care of his uncle Laban's sheep—Jacob was the heir to his grandfather Abraham's birthright, because his mother cleverly arranged for her husband Isaac to make Jacob his heir—

ANTONIO

And what of him? Did he take interest?

SHYLOCK

No, not take interest—not as you would say

75 Directly interest. Mark what Jacob did:

When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,
In the end of autumn turnèd to the rams.

80 And when the work of generation was

Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skillful shepherd peeled me certain wands.
And in the doing of the deed of kind
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,

85 Who then conceiving did in eaning time

Fall parti-colored lambs—and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blessed.
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANTONIO

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

90 A thing not in his power to bring to pass

But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

ANTONIO

What's your point? Did he charge interest?

SHYLOCK

No, he didn't [charge interest](#) —not in your sense of the word.

But listen to what Jacob did. When he and Laban agreed that all the spotted lambs would be Jacob's pay, it was the end of autumn, when the sheep were starting to mate. Because newborns look like whatever their mother sees during mating, he stuck some spotted branches into the ground right in front of the sheep, who saw them while they mated. The mothers later gave birth to spotted lambs, all of which went to Jacob. That was his way of expanding his business, and it worked. My point is that profit is a blessing, as long as you don't steal to get it.

ANTONIO

That business venture you're referring to happened because God made it happen like that. Jacob didn't have any control over what happened. Are you saying this story proves that charging interest makes sense? That your interest payments are like Jacob's sheep?

SHYLOCK

I cannot tell: I make it breed as fast.

95 But note me, signor—

ANTONIO

Mark you this, Bassanio,

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A goodly apple rotten at the heart.

100 Oh, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats—'tis a good round sum.

Three months from twelve, then. Let me see. The rate—

ANTONIO

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK

Signor Antonio, many a time and oft

105 In the Rialto you have rated me

About my moneys and my usances.

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,

For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog,

110 And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine—

SHYLOCK

I can hardly tell the difference; I make my money multiply as fast as those sheep. But listen to me, signor—

ANTONIO

Watch out, Bassanio. The devil can quote Scripture for his own use. An evil soul using a holy story is like a criminal who smiles

at you. He looks like a good apple but he's rotten at the core.

Oh, liars can look so honest!

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats. That's a nice even sum. Three months from twelve months of the year. Let me see. The interest rate will be—

ANTONIO

Well, Shylock? Are you going to loan us the money?

SHYLOCK

Signor Antonio, you've often insulted my money and my business practices in the Rialto. I have always just shrugged and put up with it because Jews are good at suffering. You called me a heathen, a dirty dog, and you spit on my Jewish clothes. And all because I use my own money to make a profit. And now it looks like you need my help. All right then. You come to me saying, "Shylock, we need money." You say that!—

And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help.
Go to, then! You come to me and you say,
"Shylock, we would have moneys." You say so!—

115 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
120 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 spet on me on Wednesday last;
125 You spurned me such a day; another time
You called me 'dog'—and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?"

ANTONIO

I am as like to call thee so again,
To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too.
130 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends, for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face

even though you spat on my beard and kicked me like you'd
kick a stray mutt out your front door. And now you're asking for
money. What can I tell you? Shouldn't I say, "Does a dog have
money? Is it possible for a mutt to lend three thousand
ducats?" Or should I bend down low, and in a humble and
submissive voice say:

"Sir, last Wednesday you spit on me. You insulted me on this
day, and another time you called me a dog. And out of
gratitude for these favors, I'll be happy to lend you the
money?"

ANTONIO

I'll probably call you those names again and spit on you, and
reject you again too. If you're going to lend us this money, don't
lend it to us as if we were your friends. When did friends
charge interest? Instead, lend it to me as your enemy. If your
enemy goes bankrupt, it's easier for you to take your penalty
from him.

135 Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK

Why, look you how you storm!
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys—and you'll not hear me!

140 This is kind I offer.

BASSANIO

This were kindness.

SHYLOCK

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

ANTONIO

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

SHYLOCK

Look at you getting all riled up! I want to be friends with you,
and forget all the times you've embarrassed and humiliated
me. I want to give you what you need, and not charge a penny
of interest—but you won't listen to me! I'm making a kind offer
—zero percent financing.

BASSANIO

That really would be kind.

SHYLOCK

I'll show you how kind I am. Come with me to a notary and we'll
make it official. And let's add a little clause just for a joke. If you
don't repay me on the day we agree on, in the place we name,
for the sum of money fixed in our contract, your penalty will be
a pound of your pretty flesh, to be cut off and taken out of
whatever part of your body I like.

ANTONIO

It's a deal. I'll agree to those terms and even say that Jews are
nice.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

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

SHYLOCK

O Father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
160 The thoughts of others!—Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
165 As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favor I extend this friendship.
If he will take it, so. If not, adieu.
And for my love I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO

Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK

170 Then meet me forthwith at the notary's.

BASSANIO

No, you can't sign a contract like that for me! I'd rather go
without the money.

ANTONIO

Don't worry about it, man, I won't have to pay any penalty. In
two months—a month before this loan is due—I expect to earn
more than three times that much from my investments.

SHYLOCK

Oh father Abraham, what kind of people are these Christians?
Their own meanness teaches them to suspect other people!—
Please tell me this. If he fails to repay me by the deadline, what
would I get out of such a penalty? A pound of human flesh
taken isn't even as valuable as a pound of mutton or beef. I'm
just offering this as a favor to a friend. If he agrees, great. If not,
goodbye. And I hope you won't think badly of me.

ANTONIO

Yes, Shylock, I'll sign the contract and agree to its terms.

SHYLOCK

Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently

175 I will be with you.

ANTONIO

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

*Exit **SHYLOCK***

The Hebrew will turn Christian. He grows kind.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

Come on. In this there can be no dismay.

180 My ships come home a month before the day.

Exeunt

*Flourish cornets Enter the Prince of **MOROCCO**, a tawny Moor
all in white, and three or four followers accordingly, with
PORTIA, **NERISSA**, and their train*

MOROCCO

Then meet me right away at the notary's. Give him the
instructions for our amusing little contract, and I'll go get the
money for you right away. I need to check in at home first,
because one of my careless servants is in charge right now. I'll
see you soon.

ANTONIO

Hurry up, my Jewish friend.

***SHYLOCK** exits.*

He's so kind you'd think the Jew is turning Christian.

BASSANIO

I don't like it when a villain acts nice.

ANTONIO

Come on, there's no reason to worry. My ships will come home
a month before the money is due.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 1

*Trumpets play. The prince of **MOROCCO**, a brown-skinned man
dressed in all white, enters, followed by three or four servants
dressed in costumes like his. **PORTIA**, **NERISSA**, and their
ATTENDANTS enter.*

MOROCCO

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
5 Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath feared the valiant. By my love I swear
10 The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA

In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes.
15 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,
20 Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.

MOROCCO

Even for that I thank you.

Don't hold my skin color against me. I was born and raised in the sun, which is why I'm dark-skinned. But I'm as red-blooded as any man. Show me the best-looking person born in the freezing north, where the sun barely thaws the icicles. I'll win your love by cutting myself to prove to you I have redder blood than he does. I'm telling you, madam, my skin color has made brave men fear me and Moroccan girls love me. I wouldn't change it except to make you think of me, my darling queen.

PORTIA

Being good-looking isn't the only way to my heart, you know. I have other criteria for choosing a husband. Not that it matters, because the box test takes away my free choice anyway. But if my father hadn't restricted me like this—forcing me to marry whoever wins his test—then you'd have had as good a chance to marry me as any of the suitors I've met so far, prince.

MOROCCO

Therefore I pray you lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
25 That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solymán,
I would o'erstare 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 the lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lychas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
35 So is Alcides beaten by his page,
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain
And die with grieving.

PORTIA

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

MOROCCO

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

Thank you for saying that. Show me the caskets and let me try my luck. I swear by my sword, which killed the Shah of Persia and a Persian prince and defeated the Sultan Suleiman three times, that I would face the meanest-looking warriors on earth. I would act braver than the bravest man on earth. I would grab bear cubs from a ferocious mother bear, or tease a hungry lion—all of this in order to win your love, lady. But this is bad! If the hero Hercules and his servant Lychas rolled the dice, which would win? Not the greater hero. Just the one who happened to be luckier that time. And just as Hercules could be beaten by his servant, blind luck could make me lose this test and make someone worse than me win. If that happened, I'd die of sadness.

PORTIA

You have to take your chances. Either don't choose at all, or swear beforehand that if you choose incorrectly you'll never talk about marriage to any woman again. Think about it carefully.

MOROCCO

Fine, I swear I won't ever get married if I choose incorrectly. Let me take my chances.

PORTIA

First, forward to the temple. After dinner

45 Your hazard shall be made.

MOROCCO

Good fortune then!—

To make me blessed or cursed'st among men.

Cornets

Exeunt

PORTIA

Let's go to the temple first. You can take your chances after dinner.

I'll try my luck then. I'll either be the luckiest or the unluckiest man alive.

Trumpets play.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 2

Enter LAUNCELOT the clown, alone

LAUNCELOT

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew, my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo," "Launcelot Gobbo," "Good Launcelot," or "Good Gobbo," or "Good Launcelot Gobbo" —"use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says, "No. Take heed, honest Launcelot. Take heed, honest Gobbo," or as aforesaid, "Honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run. Scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. "Fia!" says the fiend. "Away!" says the fiend. "For the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very

LAUNCELOT enters alone.

LAUNCELOT

I'm sure I'll feel guilty if I run away from this Jew, my master. The devil's on my shoulder, tempting me. He's saying, "Gobbo," "Launcelot Gobbo," "Good Launcelot," or "Good Gobbo," or "Good Launcelot Gobbo"—"use your legs and run away." But my conscience says, "No, Launcelot, calm down, don't run away." The devil's urging me to leave. "Go away!" he says. "Run away! Be tough," says the devil, "and run!" But then my conscience, hanging around my heart, says very wisely to me, "My good friend Launcelot, you're a good boy, the son of an honest man," really, that should be the son of an honest woman, since my father cheated on my mother. Anyway, my

wisely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son"—or rather an honest woman's son, for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to. He had a kind of taste.—Well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge!" says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well." "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." To be ruled by my conscience I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil. And to run away from the Jew I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation. And in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend. My heels are at your command. I will run.

Enter Old GOBBO with a basket

GOBBO

Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to

30 Master Jew's?

LAUNCELOT

(aside) O heavens, this is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind—high-gravel blind—knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

conscience says, "Stay put." "Go," the devil says. "Don't go," says my conscience. "Conscience," I say, "you give good advice." "Devil," I say, "you give good advice." If I listened to my conscience, I'd stay with the Jew my master, who's a devil. But if I ran away from the Jew, I'd be following the advice of the devil, who's the very devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the devil incarnate, and my conscience is giving me a hard time by telling me to stay with the Jew. The devil's advice is nicer. I'll run, devil. Tell me to run, and I'll run.

GOBBO enters with a basket.

GOBBO

Excuse me, young man, how do I get to the Jew's residence?

LAUNCELOT

(to himself) Good heavens, it's my father. He doesn't recognize me because he's half-blind—or more than half-blind, somewhere between half-blind and totally blind. I'll play a little game with him.

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

Talk you of young Master Launcelot? (*aside*) Mark me now. Now will I raise the waters.—Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

GOBBO

No "master," sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say 't, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

LAUNCELOT

Well, let his father be what he will, we talk of young
50 Master Launcelot.

GOBBO

Young man, excuse me, how do I get to the Jew's?

LAUNCELOT

Turn right at the next turn, but at the following turn, turn left. Oh, and then at the very next turn, don't turn left or right, but turn down and around to the Jew's house.

GOBBO

Good heavens, those are difficult directions. Can you tell me if a man named Launcelot, who lives with him, is still there?

LAUNCELOT

Are you talking about young Master Launcelot? (*speaking so no one else can hear*) Watch out, I'm going to pull a good prank here.—Is that who you're talking about?

GOBBO

He's not a "master," sir, he's just a poor man's son. His father, if I do say so myself, is an honest but very poor man, and, thank God, likely to live a long time.

LAUNCELOT

Well, his father can be whatever he wants to be. We're talking about young Master Launcelot.

GOBBO

Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

Of Launcelot, an 't please your mastership.

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

GOBBO

Please don't call him that, sir. He's just Launcelot.

LAUNCELOT

But excuse me, *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I'm asking you if you're talking about young Master Launcelot.

GOBBO

Yes, I'm talking about Launcelot, sir.

LAUNCELOT

Ergo, Master Launcelot. But please don't talk about Master Launcelot, old man. The young gentleman, submitting to the fates, the three sisters who control destiny, and other branches of learning like that, is deceased. Or, to put it in plain language, he's gone to heaven.

GOBBO

Oh, no. God forbid! The boy was going to support me in my old age!

LAUNCELOT

What am I, a cane? How could I support anyone? Don't you recognize me, father?

GOBBO

Heaven help me, I don't know you, sir. But please tell me, is my boy—God rest his soul—alive or dead?

LAUNCELOT

Do you not know me, Father?

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

Nay, indeed if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light. Murder cannot be hid long—a man's son may, but in the end truth will out.

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

⁷⁵ Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing. I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

GOBBO

I cannot think you are my son.

LAUNCELOT

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

LAUNCELOT

You really don't recognize me, father?

GOBBO

Sir, I'm half-blind. I don't know you.

LAUNCELOT

Even if you had your eyes, you still might not recognize me. It takes a wise father to know his own child. Well, old man, I'll tell you news of your son. Give me your blessing. The truth will come to light, and murder can't be hidden long—a man's son may hide, but truth will always come out.

GOBBO

Please stand up! I'm sure you aren't Launcelot, my boy.

LAUNCELOT

Come on, quit fooling around. Give me your blessing. I'm Launcelot, who was your boy, is your son, and will be your child.

GOBBO

I can't believe you're my son.

LAUNCELOT

I don't know what to say to that, but the fact is I'm Launcelot, the Jew's servant, and Margery, your wife, is my mother.

GOBBO

Her name is Margery, indeed. I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. (*feels the back of LAUNCELOT's head*) Lord worshipped might he be, what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

Well, well, but for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present. Give him a halter. I am famished in his service. You may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come. Give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries.

If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground.—O rare fortune! Here comes the man.—To him, Father, for I am a

GOBBO

Yes, you're right, her name is Margery. If you're Launcelot, then you're my own flesh and blood. (*feels the back of LAUNCELOT's head*) My Lord, what a bushy beard you have! You've got more hair on your chin than Dobbin my horse has in his tail.

LAUNCELOT

Then Dobbin's tail must be growing backward. I'm sure he had more hair on his tail than I have on my face when I last saw him.

GOBBO

Lord, how you've changed! How are you and your master getting along? I've brought him a present. How are you?

LAUNCELOT

I'm all right. But I've decided to run away, and I can't wait to get going. My master's a total Jew. You're giving him a present? Give him a noose to hang himself. He's starving me to death. You can see my ribs so well you can count them. I'm glad you've come, father. Give me your present to give to Master Bassanio. He gives his servants beautiful new uniforms.

If I can't get a job with him, I'll run away to the ends of the earth.—Oh look, this is lucky, here comes Master Bassanio now.

Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.

*Enter **BASSANIO** with **LEONARDO** and another follower or two*

BASSANIO

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

Exit follower

LAUNCELOT

To him, Father.

GOBBO

(to BASSANIO) God bless your worship!

BASSANIO

Gramercy! Wouldst thou aught with me?

GOBBO

90 Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

LAUNCELOT

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

—Let's go talk to him, Father. If I work for the Jew any longer, you can just call me a Jew.

***BASSANIO** enters with **LEONARDO** and an attendant or two.*

BASSANIO

(to an attendant) All right, go ahead. But do everything quickly. Supper must be ready at five at the latest. Make sure these letters get delivered, get the uniforms made, and tell Gratiano to come visit me soon.

The attendant exits.

LAUNCELOT

Go talk to him, father.

GOBBO

(to BASSANIO) God bless you, sir!

BASSANIO

Thank you. What do you want with me?

GOBBO

This is my son, sir. He's a poor boy—

LAUNCELOT

Not a poor boy, but the rich Jew's servant, who wants, as my father will explain—

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

GOBBO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

BASSANIO

One speak for both. What would you?

LAUNCELOT

GOBBO

He wants very much, sir, as one might say, to work for—

LAUNCELOT

To put it briefly, I work for the Jew, and I want, as my father will tell you—

GOBBO

He and his master aren't exactly friends—

LAUNCELOT

To be brief, the truth is that the Jew has done me wrong, and that forces me to—as my father, an old man, will inform you—

GOBBO

I have a present I'd like to give you, sir. And I want to request that—

LAUNCELOT

To make a long story short, the request is about me, as this good old man will tell you. Even though I'm his son and I'm the one saying it, this old man is a poor man—

BASSANIO

One of you do the talking. What do you want?

LAUNCELOT

Serve you, sir.

GOBBO

That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

BASSANIO

I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit.

110 Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferred thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

LAUNCELOT

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

BASSANIO

Thou speak'st it well.—Go, father, with thy son.—
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out.—

120 *(to followers)*

Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows'. See it done.

LAUNCELOT

Father, in. I cannot get a service, no. I have ne'er a tongue in
my head. *(reading his own palm)* Well, if any man in Italy have

To work for you, sir.

GOBBO

That's what we're trying to say, sir.

BASSANIO

I know who you are. You can have what you want. I spoke with
your master Shylock today, and he recommended you to me. If
you want to leave a rich Jew to work for a poor gentleman,
you're welcome to.

LAUNCELOT

Do you know the old proverb "The grace of God is enough," sir?
It could be divided between you and my boss Shylock—you
have "the grace of God," and he has "enough."

BASSANIO

Nicely put.—Go with your son, old man.—Say goodbye to your
old master and find your way to my house. *(to attendants)* Give
him a uniform that's a little nicer than the others. Make sure it
gets done.

LAUNCELOT

Father, go ahead. I can't get a job, can I? I can't talk well, no.
(reading his own palm) If any man in Italy has a palm good

a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life. Here's a small trifle of wives. Alas, fifteen wives is nothing! Eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man. And then to 'scape drowning thrice and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed—here are simple 'scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear.—Father, come. I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.

Exit LAUNCELOT the clown with Old GOBBO

BASSANIO

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this.

These things being bought and orderly bestowed,

¹²⁵ Return in haste, for I do feast tonight

My best esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go.

LEONARDO

My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO

(to LEONARDO) Where is your master?

LEONARDO

Yonder, sir, he walks.

enough to swear on a Bible with, it's me. I've got very good luck! Here's my life line. It shows a few wives—fifteen wives is nothing. Eleven widows and nine maids is a humble beginning for one man. It seems I'll almost drown three times, and my life will be in danger when I'm caught in bed with another man's wife! But these little lines are the escape routes I can take to get out of that one. If luck's a lady, she's good at this business. Father, let's go. I'll leave the Jew behind in the blink of an eye.

LAUNCELOT and GOBBO exit.

BASSANIO

Please, Leonardo, think about this (*he hands him a piece of paper*). These things have been bought and are ready. Hurry back here. I'm having dinner tonight with someone I greatly respect. Go now.

LEONARDO

I'll do my best.

GRATIANO enters.

GRATIANO

(to LEONARDO) Where's your master?

LEONARDO

He's walking over there, sir.

Exit LEONARDO

GRATIANO

Signor Bassanio!

BASSANIO

Gratiano!

GRATIANO

130 I have a suit to you.

BASSANIO

You have obtained it.

GRATIANO

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

BASSANIO

Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano.

Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice—

Parts that become thee happily enough

135 And in such eyes as ours appear not faults.

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

Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain

To allay with some cold drops of modesty

Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior

140 I be misconstr'd in the place I go to,

And lose my hopes.

LEONARDO exits.

GRATIANO

Signor Bassanio!

BASSANIO

Gratiano!

GRATIANO

I have a favor to ask.

BASSANIO

Anything.

GRATIANO

Don't say no. Let me go with you to Belmont.

BASSANIO

Well, if you have to go, you have to go. But listen to me,

Gratiano. Sometimes you get a bit too wild, and you let your

voice get a bit loud and rude. These things look good on you,

of course, and to people like you and me there's nothing

wrong with it. But in places where people don't know you, your

behavior might seem too wild. Please, try to act a little more

serious, or the people in Belmont will get the wrong

impression about me, and your wildness will make me blow

my chance with Portia.

GRATIANO

Signor Bassanio, hear me.
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer books in my pocket, look demurely—
145 Nay more. While grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say, "Amen"—
Use all the observance of civility
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

BASSANIO

150 Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO

Nay, but I bar tonight. You shall not gauge me
By what we do tonight.

BASSANIO

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

GRATIANO

And I must to Lorenzo and the rest.

GRATIANO

Listen, Signor Bassanio, there's nothing to worry about. I'll be solemn-looking, I'll talk with respect, and I'll only swear once in a while. I'll carry prayer books in my pocket and look sweet—even more. While grace is being said, I'll be modest and say "amen"—I'll watch my manners as if I'm trying to please my grandma. If I don't do all this, never trust me again.

BASSANIO

Well, we'll see how you act.

GRATIANO

Okay, but tonight doesn't count. You can't judge me based on what I do tonight.

BASSANIO

No, it'd be a shame for you to act serious tonight. I'd rather see you having fun, because we have friends coming who want to have fun. Anyway, I have to say goodbye to you now. I've got some business to take care of.

GRATIANO

But we will visit you at supper time.

Exeunt severally

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT the clown

JESSICA

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee.

5 And Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
Give him this letter.

(gives LAUNCELOT a letter)

Do it secretly.

And so farewell. I would not have my father

10 See me in talk with thee.

LAUNCELOT

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

JESSICA

I have to join Lorenzo and the others, but we'll visit you at
supper time.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 3

JESSICA and LAUNCELOT enter.

JESSICA

I'm sorry you're leaving my father like this. It's hell in our house,
and you helped cheer it up, like a funny devil. But goodbye.
Here's a ducat for you. You'll soon be meeting Lorenzo at
supper; he'll be a guest of your new master. Give him this letter.
(gives LAUNCELOT a letter) Do it secretly. Goodbye. I don't
want my father to see me talking to you.

LAUNCELOT

Goodbye. My tears show you my feelings, my beautiful pagan,
my sweet Jew! I'm sure some Christian will resort to trickery to
get you. But goodbye. It's not manly to cry. Goodbye.

JESSICA

15 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,
20 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

Exit

Goodbye, Launcelot.

LAUNCELOT exits.

Oh God, what a heinous sinner I am, being ashamed to be my
father's child! But I need to remember I'm related to him by
blood, not behavior. Oh Lorenzo, if you keep your promise to
me, I'll end this agony by becoming a Christian and marrying
you.

She exits.

Act 2 Scene 4

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO

LORENZO

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

GRATIANO

We have not made good preparation.

SALARINO

5 We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

SOLANIO

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered,

GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO enter.

LORENZO

No, we'll sneak away at supper time, disguise ourselves with
masks at my house, and come back in an hour.

GRATIANO

But we haven't made any preparations.

SALARINO

We haven't even talked about who'll be our torchbearers.

SOLANIO

And better in my mind not undertook.

LORENZO

'Tis now but four o'clock. We have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT with a letter

10 Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

LAUNCELOT

(giving LORENZO the letter)

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

LORENZO

I know the hand. In faith, 'tis a fair hand,

And whiter than the paper it writ on

15 Is the fair hand that writ.

GRATIANO

Love news, in faith?

LAUNCELOT

(to LORENZO) By your leave, sir.

LORENZO

Whither goest thou?

The masquerade party might turn out terribly if we don't
manage things carefully. I think it's better to call it off.

LORENZO

It's only four o'clock now. We have two hours to get ready.

LAUNCELOT enters with a letter.

Launcelot, what's going on?

LAUNCELOT

(he gives LORENZO the letter) If you don't mind opening this
letter, you can find out for yourself.

LORENZO

I recognize the handwriting. It's beautiful handwriting. And the
beautiful hand that wrote this letter is whiter than the paper it's
written on.

GRATIANO

I bet it's a love letter!

LAUNCELOT

(to LORENZO) May I be excused, sir?

LORENZO

Where are you going?

LAUNCELOT

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

LORENZO

²⁰ *(giving LAUNCELOT money)*

Hold here, take this. Tell gentle Jessica

I will not fail her. Speak it privately.—

Go, gentlemen,

Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?

²⁵ I am provided of a torchbearer.

Exit LAUNCELOT the clown

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

And so will I.

LORENZO

Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALARINO

'Tis good we do so.

Exeunt SALARINO and SOLANIO

LAUNCELOT

To invite my former boss, the Jew, to dine tonight with my new master, the Christian.

LORENZO

(he gives LAUNCELOT money) Hold on, take this. Tell Jessica I won't fail her. Tell her in private.—Go, gentlemen, get ready for the masquerade tonight. I have someone who can be my torchbearer.

LAUNCELOT exits.

SALARINO

All right, I'll go get things ready.

SOLANIO

Me too.

LORENZO

Meet me and Gratiano at his house in about an hour.

SALARINO

It's good we're doing this.

SALARINO and SOLANIO exit.

GRATIANO

30 Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.

35 If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake.
And never dare Misfortune cross her foot
Unless she do it under this excuse:
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.

40 Come, go with me.
(*gives GRATIANO the letter*)

Peruse this as thou goest.
Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.

Exeunt

*Enter **SHYLOCK** the Jew and his man **LAUNCELOT** that was the clown*

SHYLOCK

Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio.—

GRATIANO

Wasn't that letter from Jessica?

LORENZO

I have to tell you everything. She's told me how I can get her
out of her father's house. She's also told me what gold and
jewels she owns, and she's described the [page's](#) uniform she's
keeping to wear as a disguise. If her father ever goes to
heaven, it'll be because his daughter's so good. She'll never be
punished with bad luck—unless it's because her father is an
unbelieving Jew. Come with me. (*gives GRATIANO the letter*)
You can look this letter over as you go. Beautiful Jessica will be
my torchbearer.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 5

***SHYLOCK** and **LAUNCELOT** enter*

SHYLOCK

Well, you'll see it with your own eyes. You'll see the difference
between working for Shylock and working for Bassanio.—

What, Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandize
As thou hast done with me.—What, Jessica!—
5 And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out—
Why, Jessica, I say!

LAUNCELOT

Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK

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

LAUNCELOT

Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing
without bidding.

Enter JESSICA

JESSICA

10 Call you? What is your will?

SHYLOCK

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys.—But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love. They flatter me.
But yet I'll go in hate to feed upon
15 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,

(calling for his daughter) Jessica!—You won't eat like a pig like
you used to do at my place.—Jessica!—And sleep, and snore,
and wear your clothes out.—Jessica, I'm calling you!

LAUNCELOT

Jessica!

SHYLOCK

Who asked you to call her? I'm not asking you to call her.

LAUNCELOT

You always loved to tell me I couldn't do anything without
being told.

JESSICA enters.

JESSICA

Did you call me? Do you need something?

SHYLOCK

I've been invited to supper, Jessica. Here are my keys.—But
why should I go? I wasn't invited because they like me. They're
just flattering me. But I'll go out of spite, to feed off the
wasteful Christian.—Jessica, my girl, watch the house. I don't
feel like going. Things aren't going my way right now. I know
because I dreamed of money bags last night.

For I did dream of money bags tonight.

LAUNCELOT

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

SHYLOCK

So do I his.

LAUNCELOT

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

SHYLOCK

What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica.
Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
30 Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces.
But stop my house's ears—I mean my casements—
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
35 My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth tonight.

LAUNCELOT

Please go, sir. My new master is expecting your approach.

SHYLOCK

And I'm expecting his reproach.

LAUNCELOT

And they've been plotting things together. I'm not saying you'll get a masquerade party, but if you do, I predicted it. I knew there would be a masquerade when I got that bad omen of a bloody nose last Easter Monday, at six in the morning, four years after I got the same kind of bloody nose on Ash Wednesday, in the afternoon.

SHYLOCK

What, there's going to be a masquerade? Listen to me, Jessica, lock my doors up, and when you hear the drum and the nasty squealing of the flute, don't climb up to the windows. Don't stick your head out into the public street to stare at the Christian fools with painted faces. Block up my house's ears—I mean the windows. Don't let the noise of shallow fools enter my serious house. I swear, I'm in no mood to go out to dinner tonight, but I'll go anyway.—Launcelot, go tell them I'll come.

But I will go.—Go you before me, sirrah.
Say I will come.

LAUNCELOT

I will go before, sir.—
Mistress, look out at window, for all this.
40 There will come a Christian by
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

Exit LAUNCELOT

SHYLOCK

What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

JESSICA

His words were, "Farewell, mistress." Nothing else.

SHYLOCK

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder,
45 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wildcat. Drones hive not with me.
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in.
50 Perhaps I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you. Shut doors after you.
Fast bind, fast find.
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

LAUNCELOT

I'll go ahead of you, sir. *(to JESSICA)* Mistress, be on the lookout
when you're staring out the window. A Christian's coming
who'll be worth a Jewess's glance.

LAUNCELOT exits.

SHYLOCK

What did that gentile fool say to you, hmmm?

JESSICA

He said "Goodbye, madam," and nothing else.

SHYLOCK

The fool's nice enough, but he's such a huge eater, and slow as
a snail when he works. He sleeps all day like a cat. Bees that
don't work can't stay in my hive, so I'm letting him go, handing
him off so he can waste money for his new boss, the man who
borrowed money from me. Anyway, Jessica, go inside. I might
come back soon. Do as I told you. Shut the doors after you. As
the saying goes, lock things up, and you'll get to keep them.

*Exit **SHYLOCK***

JESSICA

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

Exit

*Enter the masquers **GRATIANO** and **SALARINO***

GRATIANO

This is the penthouse under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

SALARINO

His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO

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

SALARINO

5 Oh, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new made than they are wont
To keep obligèd faith unforfeited.

He exits.

JESSICA

Goodbye. If luck's with me, I'll lose a father, and you'll lose a
daughter.

She exits.

Act 2 Scene 6

***RATIANO** and **SALARINO** enter, dressed for the masquerade ball.*

GRATIANO

This is the roof under which Lorenzo said to meet him.

SALARINO

He's late.

GRATIANO

Yes, and that's surprising, because lovers are usually early.

SALARINO

Yes, for new lovers time passes ten times faster than for
couples who've been married forever.

GRATIANO

That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
10 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 enjoyed.
How like a younger or a prodigal
15 The scarfèd bark puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embraèd by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With overweathered ribs and ragged sails
Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!

SALARINO

20 Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO

LORENZO

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

Enter JESSICA above, disguised as a boy

GRATIANO

That's always true. Who gets up from a meal with the same
appetite he had when he sat down? Can any horse retrace his
footsteps with the same energy he had when he walked them
the first time? We chase everything in life more excitedly than
we actually enjoy it when we get it. It's like when a ship sails
out of the harbor with all its flags waving, gently pushed by the
wind. When that ship returns, her timber is all weather-beaten
and her sails are ragged. That same wind makes the ship thin
and poor.

SALARINO

Here comes Lorenzo. We'll talk about this later.

LORENZO enters.

LORENZO

My dear friends, thanks for your patience. I had business that
made me late. When you have to steal your own wives some
day, I'll wait for you just as long. Come over here. My future
father-in-law, the Jew, lives here.—Hey! Who's in there?

JESSICA appears above, disguised as a boy.

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

JESSICA

Here, catch this casket. It is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
35 For I am much ashamed of my exchange.
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit,
For if they could Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

LORENZO

40 Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

JESSICA

Who are you? Tell me so I can be sure, though I swear I
recognize your voice.

LORENZO

I'm Lorenzo, your love.

JESSICA

Lorenzo, that's for sure, and I'm also sure you're my love—who
else do I love so much? And now who but you knows whether
I'm yours?

LORENZO

As God is my witness, you know you're mine.

JESSICA

Here, catch this box. It'll be worth your while. I'm glad it's
nighttime and you can't see me. I'm ashamed of my disguise.
But love is blind, and lovers can't see the silly things they do
around each other. If they could, Cupid himself would be
embarrassed to see me dressed up as a boy.

LORENZO

Come down here. You have to be my torchbearer for the
masquerade.

JESSICA

What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love.
And I should be obscured.

LORENZO

So are you, sweet,
45 Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once,
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA

I will make fast the doors and gild myself
50 With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit JESSICA above

GRATIANO

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

LORENZO

Beshrew me but I love her heartily.
For she is wise, if I can judge of her.
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true.
55 And true she is, as she hath proved herself.
And therefore, like herself—wise, fair and true—

JESSICA

What, I have to hold a candle up so people can see what I'm doing? The truth is, I'm behaving like a loose woman. The torchbearer is supposed to bring light and love, but I should be hidden away in the dark.

LORENZO

You're hidden away, sweetheart, dressed up like a boy. Come on quickly. Time flies at night, and we're late for Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA

I'll lock up the doors, grab some more ducats, and be with you right away.

JESSICA exits from above.

GRATIANO

My God, she can't be a Jew, she's too nice!

LORENZO

God, I'm crazy about her. She's wise, if I'm judging her right. She's beautiful, if my eyes can see. And she's loyal, as she has proven. And as long as she's herself—wise, beautiful, and faithful—she'll always have a place in my heart.

Shall she be placèd in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA

What, art thou come?—On, gentlemen, away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

Exit LORENZO with JESSICA and SALARINO

Enter ANTONIO

ANTONIO

60 Who's there?

GRATIANO

Signor Antonio?

ANTONIO

Fie, fie, Gratiano! Where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock. Our friends all stay for you.
No masque tonight. The wind is come about.
Bassanio presently will go aboard.

65 I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO

I am glad on 't. I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone tonight.

Exeunt

JESSICA enters.

Ah, you're here?—Come on, gentlemen, let's go! Our
masquerade mates are waiting for us.

LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALARINO exit.

ANTONIO enters.

ANTONIO

Who's there?

GRATIANO

Signor Antonio?

ANTONIO

Gratiano, where is everybody? It's nine o'clock! Our friends are
all waiting for you. There's no masquerade tonight. The wind is
blowing right, so Bassanio's going onboard immediately. I've
sent twenty people to look for you.

GRATIANO

I'm glad. I want to head out tonight.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 7

*Flourish cornets Enter **PORTIA** with the Prince of **MOROCCO**, and both their trains*

PORTIA

(to servant) Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.—

A curtain is drawn showing a gold, silver, and lead casket

(to MOROCCO) Now make your choice.

MOROCCO

- 5 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:
10 "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

PORTIA

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

MOROCCO

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see.

*Trumpets play. **PORTIA** enters with the prince of **MOROCCO** and both their entourages.*

PORTIA

(to servant) Go open the curtains and show the different boxes
to the prince.

A curtain is drawn revealing showing three caskets: one gold, one silver, and one lead.

(to MOROCCO) Now make your choice.

MOROCCO

The first one, the gold one, has an inscription that says, "He who chooses me will get what many men want." The second one, the silver one, says, "He who chooses me will get what he deserves." And this third one is made of dull lead. It has a blunt warning that says, "He who chooses me must give and risk all he has." How will I know if I chose the right one?

PORTIA

One of them contains my picture. If you choose that one, I'm yours, along with the picture.

MOROCCO

15 I will survey th' 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
20 Do it in hope of fair advantages.
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
25 "As much as he deserves!"—pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand.
If thou beest rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough, and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady,
30 And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady.
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding.
35 But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed 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.

I wish some god could help me choose! Let me see. I'll look over the inscriptions again. What does the lead box say? "He who chooses me must give and risk all he has." Must give everything—for what? For lead? Risk everything for lead? This box is too threatening. Men who risk everything hope to make profits. A golden mind doesn't bend down to choose something worthless. So I won't give or risk anything for lead. What does the silver one say?

"He who chooses me will get as much as he deserves." As much as he deserves—wait a minute there, Morocco, and consider your own value with a level head. If your reputation is trustworthy, you deserve a lot—though maybe not enough to include this lady. But fearing I don't deserve her is a way of underestimating myself. As much as I deserve—I deserve Portia! By birth I deserve her. In terms of wealth, talents, and upbringing, and especially love, I deserve her. What if I went no further and chose this one? But let's see once more what the gold one says: "He who chooses me will get what many men want." That's Portia! The whole world wants her. They come from the four corners of the earth to kiss this shrine and see this living, breathing saint. Princes travel across deserts and the vast wilderness of Arabia to come see the beautiful Portia. The wide ocean doesn't prevent them from coming to see her—they travel across it as if it were a little stream. One of these

40 From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
45 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.
50 Is 't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought. It were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
55 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon.
But here an angel in a golden bed
60 Lies all within.—Deliver me the key.
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

PORTIA

(giving MOROCCO a key)

There, take it, Prince. And if my form lie there

three boxes contains her lovely picture. Could the lead one contain it? No, it'd be a sin to think such a low thought. Lead's too crass to hold her. Is she enclosed in silver, which is ten times less valuable than gold? Oh, what a sinful thought! Nobody ever set a gem like her in a worse setting than gold. They have a coin in England stamped with the figure of an angel, but that's just engraved on the surface.

Here an angel's lying in a golden bed.—Give me the key. I will choose this one and try my chances.

PORTIA

(she hands him a key) There, take it, prince. And if my picture's in there, then I'm yours.

Then I am yours.

MOROCCO *opens the golden casket*

MOROCCO

65 O hell, what have we here?

A carrion death, within whose empty eye

There is a written scroll. I'll read the writing.

(reads)

"All that glisters is not gold—

70 Often have you heard that told.

Many a man his life hath sold

But my outside to behold.

Gilded tombs do worms enfold.

Had you been as wise as bold,

75 Young in limbs, in judgment old,

Your answer had not been inscrolled.

Fare you well. Your suit is cold—

Cold, indeed, and labor lost."

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!

80 Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart

To take a tedious leave. Thus losers part.

Exit MOROCCO with his train

PORTIA

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

MOROCCO *opens the gold casket.*

MOROCCO

Damn it! What's this? It's a skull with a scroll in its empty eye socket. I'll read it aloud.

(he reads)

"All that glitters is not gold—

You've often heard that said.

Many men have sold their souls

Just to view my shiny surface.

But gilded tombs contain worms.

If you'd been as wise as you were bold,

With an old man's mature judgment,

You wouldn't have had to read this scroll.

So goodbye—you lost your chance."

Lost my chance indeed! So goodbye hope, and hello despair.

Portia, goodbye to you. My heart's too sad for long goodbyes.

Losers always leave quickly.

MOROCCO *exits with his entourage.*

PORTIA

Let all of his complexion choose me so.

Exeunt

Enter SALARINO and SOLANIO

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,

Good riddance!—Close the curtains and leave.—I hope
everyone who looks like him will make the same choice.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 8

SALARINO and SOLANIO enter

SALARINO

I saw Bassanio sail away, and Gratiano went with him. I'm sure
Lorenzo isn't on their ship.

SOLANIO

That wicked Jew got the duke to listen to his complaints. The
duke went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALARINO

He got there too late. The ship was already sailing. But once he
got there, the duke learned that Lorenzo and his lover Jessica
were together in a gondola. In any case, Antonio assured the
duke they weren't with Bassanio on his ship.

SOLANIO

I've never heard such confused emotions as what that Jew dog
was shouting in the streets. "My daughter, oh my ducats, oh my

As the dog Jew did utter in the streets.

- 15 "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 sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
20 And jewels—two stones, two rich and precious stones—
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice, find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."

SALARINO

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, "His stones, his daughter, and his ducats!"

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

- Marry, well remembered.
I reasoned with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
30 A vessel of our country richly fraught.
I thought upon Antonio when he told me,
And wished in silence that it were not his.

SOLANIO

daughter! Ran off with a Christian! Oh my Christian ducats!
Justice, the law, my ducats, and my daughter, a sealed bag,
two sealed bags of ducats, of double ducats, stolen from me
by my daughter, and jewels—two stones, two rich and precious
stones—stolen by my daughter! Justice, find the girl! She has
the stones on her, and the ducats."

SALARINO

I know, all the boys in Venice are following him, yelling, "His
stones, his daughter, and his ducats!"

SOLANIO

I hope Antonio repays his loan on time, or he'll suffer for this.

SALARINO

That's a good point. I spoke with a Frenchman yesterday who
said that a Venetian ship loaded with treasure was wrecked in
the English Channel. I thought about Antonio when he told me.
I silently hoped it wasn't his ship.

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

You should tell Antonio what you hear—but don't do it
suddenly, because it might upset him.

SALARINO

There's no nicer guy in the whole world. I saw Bassanio and
Antonio say goodbye. Bassanio told him he'd try to hurry back.
Antonio answered "Don't rush. Don't do a sloppy job for my
sake, Bassanio. Stay until everything is finished. As for the Jew's
contract, don't let it be a factor in your plans. Be happy and
concentrate your thoughts on love and how to win your love."
Then his eyes started tearing up. He turned his face away.
Then he shook Bassanio's hand affectionately—and they
separated.

SOLANIO

I think he only loves life because of Bassanio. Let's go find him
and cheer him up.

SALARINO

Do we so.

Exeunt

*Enter **NERISSA** and a servitor*

NERISSA

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

*Flourish cornets Enter the Prince of **ARRAGON**, his train, and **PORTIA***

PORTIA

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

ARRAGON

I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
10 First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage; lastly,

Yes, let's do that.

They exit.

Act 2 Scene 9

***NERISSA** and a servant enter.*

NERISSA

Hurry, hurry, close the curtain quick. The prince of Arragon has taken his oath, and he's coming to make his choice now.

*Trumpets play. The Prince of **ARRAGON**, his entourage, and **PORTIA** enter.*

PORTIA

Look, here are the boxes, prince. If you choose the one that contains my picture, we'll be married right away. But if you fail, you have to leave immediately. No pleas will be allowed.

ARRAGON

I swore I'd do three things. First, I can never tell anyone what box I choose. Second, if I choose the wrong box, I'll never propose marriage for the rest of my life. Third, if I pick the wrong box, I'll leave immediately.

If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
15 Immediately to leave you and be gone.

PORTIA

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

ARRAGON

And so have I addressed me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.
20 "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? Ha, let me see.
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

"What many men desire"—that "many" may be meant
25 By the fool multitude that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to th' interior, but like the martlet
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
30 I will not choose what many men desire
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why then, to thee, thou silver treasure house.
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear.
35 "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

PORTIA

Everyone who comes to gamble on winning me has to swear
to these three rules.

ARRAGON

Okay, I'm ready. I hope luck will give me what my heart hopes
for! Gold, silver, and common lead. "He who chooses me must
give and risk all he has." You'd have to be more attractive for
me to give or risk anything for you. What does the golden box
say? Hmm, let me see:

"He who chooses me will get what many men want." What
many men want—that "many" could mean that most people
are fools and choose by whatever is flashy. They don't go
beyond what their eyes see. They don't bother to find out
what's on the inside. Just like those birds called martins who
build their nests on the outside of walls, people pay too much
attention to what's on the outside. So I won't choose what
many men desire, because I won't jump on the bandwagon
and include myself with the whole crude population. So I
guess it's you, you silver treasure house. Tell me once more
what you say. "He who chooses me will get what he deserves."
That's nicely put—because who's going to cheat luck and get

And well said too—for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservèd dignity.

40 Oh, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
45 How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honor! And how much honor
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new varnished! Well, but to my choice.
“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.”
50 I will assume desert.—Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

ARRAGON *opens the silver casket*

PORTIA

Too long a pause for that which you find there.

ARRAGON

What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.—
55 How much unlike art thou to Portia!

more than he deserves? No one should have an honor he doesn't deserve. Oh, wouldn't it be great if property, rank, official positions, and other honors were earned only by merit, not by corruption? There wouldn't be too many important men then. How many people who are humble now would be great then? How many people who give orders now would have to take orders? How many noblemen would be weeded out and would become peasants? And how many common people would suddenly shine with nobility? Well, let me get back to my choice. “He who chooses me will get what he deserves.” I'll assume I deserve the very best.—Give me a key for this one. I'll unlock my fate here in a second.

ARRAGON *opens the silver casket.*

PORTIA

You thought about it too long, considering what you found there.

ARRAGON

What's this? A picture of an idiot holding a scroll up for me to read! I'll read it.—It looks so unlike Portia! This outcome isn't what I hoped for, or what I deserve. “The one who chooses me

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves!"
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

PORTIA

60 To offend and judge are distinct offices
And of opposèd natures.

ARRAGON

What is here?

(reads)

"The fire seven times tried this,
Seven times tried that judgment is,
65 That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss.
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive, iwis,
Silvered o'er—and so was this.
70 Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head.
So be gone. You are sped.
Still more fool I shall appear"
By the time I linger here.
75 With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.—
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath

will get what he deserves"! Didn't I deserve anything more than
a fool's head? Is this my prize? Don't I deserve more than this?

PORTIA

Judging what you deserve is one thing. Offending you is
something very different, so I'll keep my mouth shut.

ARRAGON

What does this say?

(he reads)

"This box was tested in the fire seven times.
The person who never makes a wrong choice
Has wisdom that will stand the test.
Some people kiss shadows.
They only feel the shadow of joy.
There are fools out there
With silver hair and silver coins.
This choice was as foolish as they are.
Take whatever wife you want to bed with you,
You'll have a fool's head forever.
So go away. You're done here."
The longer I stay, the more foolish I look. I came here with a
fool's head on my shoulders and now I'm leaving with two.—
Goodbye, sweet lady. I'll keep my oath and patiently suffer
through my anger.

Patiently to bear my wroth."

*Exeunt **ARRAGON** and his train*

PORTIA

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

80 O these deliberate fools! When they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter **MESSENGER***

messenger

85 Where is my lady?

PORTIA

Here. What would my lord?

MESSENGER

Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify th' approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,

He exits with his train.

PORTIA

These men are like moths, drawn to these boxes as if they
were flames. This is how the candle burned the moth. Oh,
these fools! When they choose, they only know how to lose.

NERISSA

You know what they say. Destiny chooses when you'll die and
who you'll marry.

PORTIA

Come on, close the curtain, Nerissa.

*A **MESSENGER** enters.*

MESSENGER

Where's lady Portia?

PORTIA

Here. How can I help you, sir?

MESSENGER

Madam, a young Venetian man has arrived to tell us his master
is about to arrive. This lord has sent gifts. Besides his nice
polite greetings, his gifts are expensive. I haven't seen such a
promising candidate for your love. This servant has arrived

90 To wit—besides commends and courteous breath—
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
A day in April never came so sweet
To show how costly summer was at hand,
95 As this forespurrer comes before his lord.

PORTIA

No more, I pray thee. I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.—
Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see
100 Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

NERISSA

Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!

Exeunt

Enter SOLANIO and SALARINO

SOLANIO

Now, what news on the Rialto?

SALARINO

Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of
rich lading wracked on the narrow seas. The Goodwins I think

before his master the way a sweet spring day hints about a
lush summer. But there's never been an April day as promising
as this.

PORTIA

Please don't tell me any more. I'm almost afraid you're going to
tell me he's a relative of yours, because you're going so crazy
praising him. Come on, Nerissa, I want to go see this man who's
come so courteously.

NERISSA

I hope it's Bassanio coming to win Portia!

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 1

SOLANIO and SALARINO enter

SOLANIO

So, what's the news on the Rialto?

SALARINO

Well, there's a rumor that Antonio had a ship carrying
expensive cargo that shipwrecked in the English Channel on

they call the place—a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word.

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

Come, the full stop.

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO

I would it might prove the end of his losses.

SOLANIO

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

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?

the Goodwin Sands, a very dangerous sandbar. Many ships have sunk there, according to rumors.

SOLANIO

I hope this new rumor is a lie, like the gossiping widow’s claim that she was sorry her third husband died! But it’s true—I don’t want to get all mushy and go on and on, but the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—oh, if I only had a title good enough to match his!—

SALARINO

Come on, get to the point.

SOLANIO

What are you saying? Well, the point is, he’s lost a ship.

SALARINO

I hope that’s all he loses.

SOLANIO

Let me say “amen” quickly, before the devil comes in and stops my prayer—because here comes the devil, disguised as a Jew.

SHYLOCK enters.

How’s it going, Shylock? What’s the news among the

SHYLOCK

20 You knew—none so well, none so well as you—of my daughter's flight.

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

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

SHYLOCK

She is damned for it.

SOLANIO

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

SHYLOCK

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

SOLANIO

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

SHYLOCK

30 I say my daughter is my flesh and blood.

merchants?

SHYLOCK

You knew—no one knew, no one knew as well as you did—about my daughter's plans to run away.

SALARINO

That's true. I even knew the tailor who made the disguise she wore when she ran off.

SOLANIO

And Shylock knew his daughter was ready to run away. It's natural for children to leave their parents.

SHYLOCK

She'll be damned for it.

SALARINO

That's true—if the devil's judging her.

SHYLOCK

My own flesh and blood turned against me! A rebel!

SOLANIO

No! Your [flesh still rebels](#) at your age?

SHYLOCK

I mean my daughter is my flesh and blood.

SALARINO

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

SHYLOCK

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

SALARINO

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

SHYLOCK

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

SALARINO

You two are totally different. Your flesh is more different from hers than coal is from ivory. There's more difference between your bloods than between red wine and white. But tell us, did you hear anything about Antonio's loss at sea?

SHYLOCK

That's another bad deal I've made!—a bankrupt, a spendthrift, who now has to hide his head on the Rialto, a beggar who used to look so smug in front of the other merchants. Let him think about his own debt. He liked to call me a loan shark; let him think about his debt to me. He used to lend money as a favor between Christians; but now, let him think about his own debt.

SALARINO

But you won't take his flesh if he can't pay. What's that good for?

SHYLOCK

I'll use it for fish bait. You can't eat human flesh, but if it feeds nothing else, it'll feed my revenge. He's insulted me and cost me half a million ducats. He's laughed at my losses, made fun of my earnings, humiliated my race, thwarted my deals, turned my friends against me, riled up my enemies—and why? Because I'm a Jew. Doesn't a Jew have eyes? Doesn't a Jew have hands, bodily organs, a human shape, five senses,

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

*Enter a **MAN** from **ANTONIO***

MAN

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

SALARINO

⁶⁵ We have been up and down to seek him.

*Enter **TUBAL***

SOLANIO

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

feelings, and passions? Doesn't a Jew eat the same food, get hurt with the same weapons, get sick with the same diseases, get healed by the same medicine, and warm up in summer and cool off in winter just like a Christian? If you prick us with a pin, don't we bleed? If you tickle us, don't we laugh? If you poison us, don't we die? And if you treat us badly, won't we try to get revenge? If we're like you in everything else, we'll resemble you in that respect. If a Jew offends a Christian, what's the Christian's kind and gentle reaction? Revenge. If a Christian offends a Jew, what punishment will he come up with if he follows the Christian example? Of course, the same thing—revenge! I'll treat you as badly as you Christians taught me to—and you'll be lucky if I don't outdo my teachers.

*One of **ANTONIO**'s **SERVANTS** enters.*

SERVANT

(to SOLANIO and SALARINO) My master Antonio is at his house and would like to speak to you both.

SALARINO

We've been looking for him everywhere.

***TUBAL** enters.*

SOLANIO

Here comes another Jew. You couldn't find a third like these two unless the devil himself turned into a Jew.

Exeunt SOLANIO, SALARINO, and MAN

SHYLOCK

How now, Tubal? What news from Genoa? Hast thou found my daughter?

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt—the curse never fell upon our nation till now! I never felt it till now—Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so. And I know not what's spent in the search. Why thou, loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief—and no satisfaction, no revenge. Nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders, no sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but o' my shedding.

TUBAL

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

SOLANIO, SALARINO, and ANTONIO's SERVANT exit.

SHYLOCK

Hello, Tubal. Any news from Genoa? Did you find my daughter?

TUBAL

I went to many places where I heard news about her, but I couldn't find her.

SHYLOCK

Oh, oh, oh! One of the stolen diamonds cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt! I never felt the curse of the Jews until now. I never felt it until now—two thousand ducats in that diamond, and other precious, precious jewels! I wish my daughter were dead at my feet wearing those jewels! I wish she were in her coffin here, with the ducats in her coffin! You couldn't find out anything about them? Why? I don't even know how much I'm spending to find them. Loss upon loss! The thief left with so much, and I'm spending so much to hunt down the thief—and still I'm not satisfied! I haven't gotten my revenge. The only luck I have is bad luck. Nobody suffers but me. Nobody's crying except me.

TUBAL

Well, other men have bad luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

SHYLOCK

85 What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

TUBAL

Hath an argosy cast away coming from Tripolis.

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha, heard in Genoa.

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

SHYLOCK

What, what, what? Bad luck, bad luck?

TUBAL

He's had a ship wrecked coming from Tripolis.

SHYLOCK

Thank God, thank God! Is it true, is it true?

TUBAL

I spoke with some of the sailors who survived the wreck.

SHYLOCK

Thank you, Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha, heard in
Genoa.

TUBAL

I also heard that your daughter spent eighty ducats in Genoa
one night.

SHYLOCK

Oh, you're sticking a dagger in me! I'll never see my gold again.
Eighty ducats in one shot! Eighty ducats!

TUBAL

I came to Venice with a number of Antonio's creditors who say
he won't be able to avoid going bankrupt.

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

But Antonio is certainly undone.

SHYLOCK

¹⁰⁵ Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer. Bespeak him a fortnight before.—I will have the heart of him if he forfeit, for were he out of Venice I can make what merchandise I will.—Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal. At our synagogue, Tubal.

Exeunt severally

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and all their trains, including a SINGER

I'm very glad about that. I'll hound him. I'll torture him. I'm very glad.

TUBAL

One creditor showed me a ring he got from your daughter in exchange for a monkey.

SHYLOCK

Damn her! You're torturing me, Tubal. That was my turquoise ring! Leah gave it to me before we were married. I wouldn't have given it away for a whole jungle of monkeys.

TUBAL

But Antonio's certainly ruined.

SHYLOCK

That's true, that's very true. Tubal, go find me a police officer to arrest Antonio. Get him ready two weeks ahead of time.—I'll take Antonio's heart if he can't pay. With him out of Venice, I can make whatever bargains I want when I lend money.—Go, Tubal. Meet me at the synagogue.

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 2

BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, and NERISSA enter with all their attendants, including a SINGER.

PORTIA

(to BASSANIO) 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—
5 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
10 Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn.
So will I never be. So may you miss me.
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
15 They have o'erlooked 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. Oh, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
20 And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so.
Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

PORTIA

(to BASSANIO) Please wait a day or two before making your choice. If you choose wrong, I'll lose your company. So wait a while. Something tells me—not love, but something—that I don't want to lose you, and you know that if I hated you I wouldn't think that. But let me put it more clearly in case you don't understand—though I know girls aren't supposed to express their thoughts—I'm just saying I'd like you to stay here for a month or two before you undergo the test for me. I could tell you how to choose correctly, but then I'd be disregarding the oath I took. So I'll never tell. But you might lose me by making the wrong choice. If you do choose wrong, you'll make me wish for something very bad. I'd wish I had ignored my oath and told you everything. God, your eyes have bewitched me. They've divided me in two. One half of me is yours, and the other half—my own half, I'd call it—belongs to you too. If it's mine, then it's yours, and so I'm all yours. But in this awful day and age people don't even have the right to their own property! So though I'm yours, I'm not yours. If there's no chance for me to be yours, then it's just bad luck. I know I'm talking too much, but I do that just to make the time last longer, and to postpone your test.

BASSANIO

Let me choose,

25 For as I am, I live upon the rack.

PORTIA

Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess

What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASSANIO

None but that ugly treason of mistrust

Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love.

30 There may as well be amity and life

'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

PORTIA

Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack

Where men enforced do speak anything.

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA

35 Well then, confess and live.

BASSANIO

"Confess and love"

Had been the very sum of my confession.

O happy torment, when my torturer

BASSANIO

Let me choose now. I feel tortured by all this talking.

PORTIA

Tortured, Bassanio ? Then confess to your crime. Tell us about the treason you've mixed in with your love.

BASSANIO

The only treason I'm guilty of is worrying that I'm never going to get to enjoy you. Treason has nothing at all to do with my love. They're as opposite as hot and cold.

PORTIA

Hmmm, I'm not sure I believe what you're saying. Men under torture will confess anything.

BASSANIO

Promise me you'll let me live, and I'll confess the truth.

PORTIA

All right then, confess and live.

BASSANIO

"Confess and love" is more like it. Oh, torture's fun when my torturer tells me what I have to say to go free! But let me try my luck on the boxes.

Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA

40 Away, then. I am locked in one of them.
If you do love me you will find me out.—
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice.
Then if he lose he makes a swanlike end,
45 Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery deathbed for him. He may win,
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
50 To a new-crownèd monarch. Such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage.

Now he goes

With no less presence but with much more love
55 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea monster. I stand for sacrifice.
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With blearèd visages come forth to view
60 The issue of th' exploit.—Go, Hercules!

PORTIA

Go ahead, then. I'm locked in one of them. If you really love me, you'll find me.—Nerissa and the rest of you, get away from him. Play some music while he chooses. Then if he loses, it'll be his swan song, music before the end. And since swans need water to swim in, I'll cry him a river when he loses. But on the other hand, he may win. What music should we play then? If he wins, the music should be like the majestic trumpets that blare when subjects bow to a newly crowned monarch. It's the sweet sounds at daybreak that the dreaming bridegroom hears on his wedding morning, calling him to the church.

Bassanio's walking to the boxes now. He looks as dignified as Hercules did when he saved the princess Hesione from the sea monster. But he loves me more than Hercules loved the princess. I'll play Hesione, and everyone else will be the bystanders watching with tear-streaked faces. We've all come out to see what will happen.—Go, Hercules! If you survive, I'll live. I'm more anxious watching you fight than you are in the fight itself.

Live thou, I live. With much, much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

*A song, the whilst **BASSANIO** comments on the caskets to himself*

SINGER

(sings)

Tell me where is fancy bred.

65 *Or in the heart or in the head?*

How begot, how nourishèd?

ALL

Reply, reply.

SINGER

(sings)

It is engendered in the eyes,

70 *With gazing fed, and fancy dies*

In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell

I'll begin it.—Ding, dong, bell.

ALL

Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO

75 So may the outward shows be least themselves.

*A song plays while **BASSANIO** mulls over the boxes.*

SINGER

(singing)

Tell me where do our desires start,

In the heart or in the head?

How are they created, how sustained?

ALL

Answer me, answer me.

SINGER

(singing)

Desires start in the eyes,

Sustained by gazing, and desires die

Very young.

Let's all mourn our dead desires.

I'll begin—Ding, dong, bell.

ALL

Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO

The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
80 What damnèd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
85 How many cowards whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk,
And these assume but valor's excrement
90 To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.
So are those crispèd snaky golden locks
95 Which maketh such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposèd fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulcher.
Thus ornament is but the guilèd shore
100 To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty—in a word,

You can't always judge a book by its cover. People are often tricked by false appearances. In court, someone can deliver a false plea but hide its wickedness with a pretty voice. In religion, don't serious men defend sins with Scripture, covering up evil with a show of good. Every sin in the world manages to make itself look good somehow. How many people are cowards at heart but wear beards like Hercules or Mars, the god of war? Take another example: beauty. It can be bought by the ounce in makeup, which works miracles. Women who wear it the most are respected the least. It's the same thing with hair. Curly golden hair moves so nicely in the wind and makes a woman beautiful. But you can buy that kind of hair as a wig, and wigs are made from dead people's hair. Decoration's nothing but a danger, meant to trick and trap the viewer. A lovely, cunning shore can distract a man from the perils of a stormy sea, just as a pretty scarf can hide a dangerous dark-skinned beauty. Nowadays, everyone's fooled by appearances. So I'll have nothing to do with that gaudy gold box—it's like the gold that Midas couldn't eat. And I'll have nothing to do with the pale silver either, the metal that common coins are made of. But this humble lead one, though it looks too threatening to promise me anything good, moves me more than I can say. So this is the one I choose. I hope I'm happy with my choice!

The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore then, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee.

105 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

PORTIA

110 *(aside)* How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate. Allay thy ecstasy.
In measure rein thy joy. Scant this excess.
115 I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

BASSANIO

(opening the lead casket)

What find I here?
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demigod
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
120 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips,
Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs,

PORTIA

(to herself) All my other emotions are vanishing into thin air, as all my doubts and desperation and fears and jealousy are all flying away! Oh, I need to calm down, make my love and my joy less intense. I'm feeling this too strongly. Please make my love less, or I'm going to overindulge, making myself sick.

BASSANIO

(opening the lead box) What do we have here? A picture of beautiful Portia! What artist captured her likeness so well? Are these eyes moving? Or do they just seem to move as my eyes move? Her sweet breath forces her lips open, a lovely divider of lovely lips. And look at her hair, looking like a golden mesh to trap the hearts of men, like little flies in a cobweb. The painter was like a spider in creating it so delicately. But her eyes—how could he keep looking at them long enough to

The painter plays the spider and hath woven
125 A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
How could he see to do them? Having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnished. Yet look how far
130 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.
(reads)
135 "You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true.
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
140 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss."

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave,
I come by note to give and to receive.
145 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

paint them? I would've expected that when he finished one of them, it would have enraptured him and kept him from painting the other. But I'm giving only faint praise of the picture, just as the picture, as good as it is, is only a faint imitation of the real woman herself. Here's the scroll that sums up my fate:
(he reads)

"You who don't judge by looks alone,
Have better luck, and make the right choice.
Since this prize is yours,
Be happy with it, and don't look for a new one.
If you're happy with what you've won
And accept this prize as your blissful destiny,
Then turn to where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss."

A nice message. My lady, with your permission, this note authorizes me to give myself to you with a kiss. But I'm in a daze, like someone who's just won a contest and thinks that all the applause and cheering is for him, but isn't sure yet. And so, beautiful lady, I'm standing here just like that, wondering whether all this can be true until you tell me it is.

Whether these pearls of praise be his or no—

150 So, thrice fair lady, stand I even so,
As doubtful whether what I see be true
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

PORTIA

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand
Such as I am. Though for myself alone
155 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
160 I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends
Exceed account. But the full sum of me
Is sum of something which, to term in gross,
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpracticèd;
Happy in this—she is not yet so old
165 But she may learn. Happier than this—
She is not bred so dull but she can learn.
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
170 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,

PORTIA

You see me standing here, Lord Bassanio. What you see is
what you get. Though I wouldn't wish to be better for my own
sake, for your sake I wish I were twenty times more than myself
—a thousand times more beautiful and ten thousand times
richer—just so you might value me more, so my good qualities,
beauty, possessions, and friends would be more than you
could calculate. What you're getting is an innocent and
inexperienced girl. I'm happy that at least I'm not too old to
learn new things. I'm even happier that I'm not stupid, and I can
learn. I'm happiest of all that I'm yours now, my lord, my king,
and you can guide me as you wish. Everything I am and
everything I have now belongs to you. Just a minute ago I was
the owner of this beautiful mansion, master of these servants,
and queen over myself. But as of right this second all these
things are yours. With this ring I give them all to you.

Queen o'er myself. And even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself
175 Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love

And be my vantage to exclaim on you.
(gives BASSANIO a ring)

BASSANIO

180 Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins.
And there is such confusion in my powers
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovèd prince there doth appear
185 Among the buzzing pleasèd multitude,
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Expressed and not expressed. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.
190 O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

NERISSA

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

If you ever give away this ring or lose it, it means our love's
doomed, and I'll have a right to be angry with you.
(she gives BASSANIO the ring)

BASSANIO

Madam, you've left me speechless, but my feelings are
responding to your words. I'm as confused as a crowd of
people going wild after hearing their prince give a speech. But
the day I take this ring off will be the day I die. If you see me
without it, you can be confident I'm dead.

NERISSA

My lord and lady, it's now our turn, who have been watching as
our dreams came true. Now we can shout, "Congratulations,
congratulations, my lord and lady!"

GRATIANO

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

BASSANIO

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

GRATIANO

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours.
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
You loved, I loved. For intermission
205 No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls.
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
210 With oaths of love, at last—if promise last—
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

PORTIA**GRATIANO**

My Lord Bassanio, and my dear lady, I wish you all the joy I can
wish for. And when you get married, I hope I can be married at
the same time.

BASSANIO

Absolutely, if you can find a wife by then.

GRATIANO

I think I've found one already, thanks to you, my lord. I can fall
in love just as quickly as you can, and I loved Nerissa as soon
as I laid eyes on her. You fell in love with Portia, and I fell in love
with Nerissa, because I'm not in the habit of delaying any more
than you are, my lord. Your fate depended on those boxes, and
it turns out that mine did too. I couldn't help but chase her. I
started making love vows to her till my mouth was dry. Then
finally she said she loved me and would marry me if you two
got married as well.

PORTIA

Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA

Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

BASSANIO

215 And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO

Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO

Our feast shall be much honored in your marriage.

GRATIANO

(to NERISSA) We'll play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats.

NERISSA

220 What, and stake down?

GRATIANO

No, we shall ne'er win at that sport and stake down. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

*Enter **LORENZO**, **JESSICA**, and **SALERIO**, a messenger from Venice*

Is that true, Nerissa?

NERISSA

Yes, madam, it is, if it's all right with you.

BASSANIO

And do you mean what you're saying, Gratiano?

GRATIANO

Yes, my lord.

BASSANIO

Then we'd be honored to have you join us in our wedding ceremony.

GRATIANO

(to NERISSA) Let's bet them a thousand ducats that we will have a son first.

NERISSA

You want to stake the money down now?

GRATIANO

Hey, if I lay down my " [stake](#) ," I'll never be able to have a son. But who's this coming? Lorenzo and his pagan girlfriend? What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

***LORENZO** and **JESSICA** enter with **SALERIO**, a messenger from Venice.*

BASSANIO

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither,
225 If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome.
(to PORTIA)

By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

PORTIA

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

LORENZO

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

SALERIO

I did, my lord.
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you.
(gives BASSANIO letter)

BASSANIO

BASSANIO

Welcome, Lorenzo and Salerio. I hope my position in this new
house is firm enough to allow me the right to welcome my
friends.
(to PORTIA) With your permission, Portia, I welcome my good
friends and countrymen.

PORTIA

I do too, my lord. They're entirely welcome.

LORENZO

(to BASSANIO) Thank you, sir. I didn't intend to come see you.
But I ran into Salerio on the way, and he begged me to come
along with him until I couldn't say no.

SALERIO

That's true, and with good reason. This letter is for you from
Signor Antonio. (he gives BASSANIO a letter)

BASSANIO

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

SALERIO

240 Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind,
Nor well, unless in mind. His letter there
Will show you his estate.

***BASSANIO** opens the letter and reads it*

GRATIANO

(indicating JESSICA)

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

SALERIO

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

PORTIA

250 There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper
That steals the color from Bassanio's cheek.
Some dear friend dead, else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse?—
255 With leave, Bassanio, I am half yourself,

Before I open this letter, please tell me how my good friend is doing.

SALERIO

He's not sick, my lord, but he's very upset, and his problems are serious. His letter will tell you how he's doing.

***BASSANIO** opens the letter and reads it.*

GRATIANO

(pointing at JESSICA) Nerissa, welcome this stranger. —Salerio, welcome. Any news from Venice? How's the great merchant Antonio doing? I know he'll be happy to hear of our success. We're like the ancient hero Jason, we went looking for the Golden Fleece and we won it!

SALERIO

I wish you'd won the [fleece](#) he lost.

PORTIA

Something bad in that letter is making Bassanio turn pale. Some good friend of his must have died, because nothing else in the world could change a man so much. What, does the news only get worse?—Please, Bassanio, I'm half of you, so let me bear half the burden this letter brings you.

And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO

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

BASSANIO

Oh Portia, these are some of the worst words that ever stained
a piece of paper. My darling, when I gave my love to you, I told
you that all the wealth I had ran within my veins—that I have
noble blood, but no money. When I said that, I told you the
truth. But my dear, when I said I was worth nothing, I was
actually bragging—I should've said that I was worse than
nothing. I've borrowed money from a dear friend who in turn
borrowed money from his mortal enemy for my sake. Here's a
letter, my dear. The paper's like my friend's body, and every
word in it is a bleeding wound on that body.—But is it true,
Salerio? Have all his business ventures failed? Not even one
success? He had ships to Tripolis, Mexico, England, Lisbon,
North Africa, and India, and not one of these ships avoided the
rocks?

Of merchant-marring rocks?

SALERIO

Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear that if he had

280 The present money to discharge the Jew,

He would not take it. Never did I know

A creature that did bear the shape of man

So keen and greedy to confound a man.

He plies the duke at morning and at night,

285 And doth impeach the freedom of the state

If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,

The duke himself, and the magnificoes

Of greatest port have all persuaded with him.

But none can drive him from the envious plea

290 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

JESSICA

When I was with him I have heard him swear

To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,

That he would rather have Antonio's flesh

Than twenty times the value of the sum

295 That he did owe him. And I know, my lord,

If law, authority, and power deny not,

It will go hard with poor Antonio.

PORTIA

SALERIO

Not one, my lord. Anyway, even if he had the money now, the Jew probably wouldn't take it. I've never seen a creature with a human shape who was so eager to destroy a man. He's at the duke's morning and night, accusing the state of harming free trade if they deny him justice. Twenty merchants, the duke himself, and the highest-ranking Venetian nobles have all tried to persuade him to forget his contract, but nobody can do it. He's determined to get the penalty specified in his contract with Antonio.

JESSICA

When I was still living with him I heard him swear to Tubal and Cush, his countrymen, that he'd rather have Antonio's flesh than twenty times the sum Antonio owed. And I know that unless the law intervenes, it'll be bad news for poor Antonio.

PORTIA

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
300 The best conditioned and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honor more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA

What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO

305 For me, three thousand ducats.

PORTIA

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand and deface the bond!
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
310 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.
315 When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime

Is this your good friend who's in so much trouble?

BASSANIO

Yes, he's my best friend, the kindest man and most courteous
to others. He's more honorable than anyone else in Italy.

PORTIA

How much does he owe the Jew?

BASSANIO

Three thousand ducats.

PORTIA

What, that's all? Pay him six thousand and cancel the debt. I'd
pay twelve thousand before I'd let a friend like that suffer in the
slightest because of you. First come with me to church to get
married. Then you can leave for Venice to see your friend. You
have to go, because you'll never sleep next to me peacefully
without settling this. I'll give you enough gold to pay back your
debt twenty times over. When it's paid, bring your friend back.
Until you get back, Nerissa and I will live like virgins and
widows. Come on, let's go, because you're going to leave me
the same day we get married. Put on a happy face, and
welcome your friends. Since it's costing me a lot to marry you,

Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer.

320 Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASSANIO

(reads)

"Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried. My creditors grow cruel. My estate is very low. My bond to the Jew is forfeit. And since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

PORTIA

O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

BASSANIO

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

Exeunt

I'll think of you as even more precious. But let me hear the letter from your friend.

BASSANIO

(he reads)

"Dear Bassanio, my ships have all been wrecked. My creditors are getting mean. My money's almost run out. I couldn't pay my debt to the Jew on the due date. Since I'll certainly die when he takes his collateral out of my flesh, all debts are cleared between you and me if I can just see you again before I die. In any case, do what you want. If your affection for me doesn't convince you to come, don't let my letter do so."

PORTIA

Oh, my darling, make your arrangements and go!

BASSANIO

Since you're letting me leave, I'll hurry. But I won't sleep till I get back.

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 3

Enter **SHYLOCK, SOLANIO, ANTONIO**, and the jailer

SHYLOCK

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

ANTONIO

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK

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

ANTONIO

I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHYLOCK

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

SHYLOCK, SOLANIO, ANTONIO, and the jailer enter.

SHYLOCK

Jailer, watch out for this one. Don't try to convince me to feel sorry for him. This is the fool who lent out money without charging interest. Jailer, keep an eye on him.

ANTONIO

Listen to me, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK

I'm going to get my **bond** . Don't try to say anything against my taking my bond. I've sworn an oath that I will have my bond. You called me a dog before you had any reason to. But since I'm a dog, beware my fangs. The duke will give me justice.—I do wonder, jailer, how you can be so foolish as to let this prisoner out of his cell.

ANTONIO

Please, listen to me.

SHYLOCK

I want my bond. I won't listen to you. I want my bond, so stop talking. I won't be taken for a fool who sighs and gives in to Christian meddlers. Don't follow me. I'm not talking with you. I want my bond.

I'll have no speaking. I will have my bond.

Exit SHYLOCK

SOLANIO

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

ANTONIO

Let him alone.

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

SOLANIO

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

ANTONIO

The duke cannot deny the course of law.
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state,
30 Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go.
These griefs and losses have so bated me,

He exits.

SOLANIO

He's the most stubborn dog that ever lived among humans.

ANTONIO

Leave him alone. I won't follow him around with useless pleas anymore. He wants me dead. I know the real reason. I've often given money to people who were unable to pay back their loans to him. That's why he hates me.

SOLANIO

I'm sure the duke will never allow this contract to be enforced.

ANTONIO

The duke can't deny the law, because that would threaten the security of all foreign merchants in Venice, and that's how the city makes its money. If the government disregards the law, it will be discredited. So go. I've lost so much weight worrying about my losses have that I'll hardly have a pound of flesh to spare for my bloody creditor tomorrow.—Well, jailer, let's go.—I

That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.—

35 Well, jailer, on.—Pray God Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not.

Exeunt

hope to God that Bassanio comes to see me pay his debt. After
that, I don't care what happens.

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 4

*Enter **PORTIA**, **NERISSA**, **LORENZO**, **JESSICA**, and **BALTHAZAR**,
a man of **PORTIA**'s*

LORENZO

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of godlike amity, which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.

5 But if you knew to whom you show this honor,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

PORTIA

10 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,

***PORTIA**, **NERISSA**, **LORENZO**, and **JESSICA** enter with
BALTHAZAR, a servant of **PORTIA**'s.*

LORENZO

Madam, I hope you don't mind my saying that I admire your
noble respect for friendship, which you show in letting your
husband go off to help his friend like this. If you only knew the
man you're helping out, and what a faithful gentleman he is
and how much he loves your husband, I know you'd be even
prouder of your kindness than you normally might be.

PORTIA

I've never regretted doing good, and I don't now. Friends who
spend a lot of time together and really care equally for each
other must have many traits in common. Since Antonio's my
husband's best friend, they must be very similar men. In that

There must be needs a like proportion
15 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit,
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
20 In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty!
This comes too near the praising of myself.
Therefore no more of it. Hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
25 The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return.

For mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here
30 Until her husband and my lord's return.
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
35 Now lays upon you.

LORENZO

Madam, with all my heart.

case, the money I've sent is a small price to pay to rescue someone who resembles my Bassanio, who's like my own soul.—Anyway, let's change the subject, since I feel like I'm starting to flatter myself. I have a favor to ask of you. Lorenzo, please take charge of the management of my house until my husband comes back.

I've sworn to God that I'll live a life of prayer and contemplation until my husband returns. Only Nerissa will keep me company. There's a monastery two miles away where we can stay. Please say you'll agree, because I really need you to do this.

LORENZO

Madam, with all my heart. I'll do anything you ask.

I shall obey you in all fair commands.

PORTIA

My people do already know my mind
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.

40 So fare you well till we shall meet again.

LORENZO

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

JESSICA

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA

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

Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO

45 Now, Balthazar,

As I have ever found thee honest true,
So let me find thee still.

(gives BALTHAZAR a letter)

Take this same letter,

And use thou all th' endeavour of a man

50 In speed to Padua. See thou render this
Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario.

PORTIA

I've already spoken to my staff about this. They'll consider you
and Jessica masters of this house in place of Lord Bassanio
and myself. So goodbye until we meet again.

LORENZO

I hope you can relax and enjoy yourself!

JESSICA

I hope you find peace and happiness, my lady.

PORTIA

Thank you. I wish you the same. Goodbye, Jessica.

JESSICA and LORENZO exit.

Now, Balthazar, you've always been honest and faithful to me,
and I trust you still are. *(she gives BALTHAZAR a letter)* Take this
letter to Padua as fast as you can. Make sure you put it into the
hands of my cousin Bellario, the Doctor of Laws.

And look what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the traject, to the common ferry
55 Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

BALTHAZAR

Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

Exit BALTHAZAR

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

Shall they see us?

PORTIA

They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
65 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

And as quickly as possible, take whatever letters and clothes
he gives you to the public ferry that goes back and forth to
Venice. Don't waste time talking now. Just go. I'll meet you at
the ferry.

BALTHAZAR

I'll go as fast as I can, madam.

He exits.

PORTIA

Come on, Nerissa, I have many things to do that you don't even
know about yet. We'll see our husbands before they even have
a chance to miss us.

NERISSA

Will they see us?

PORTIA

They will, Nerissa, but we'll be disguised as men. I'll bet you
anything that I'll be handsomer than you when we're both
dressed up. I'll wear my sword more gracefully, and speak like
a teenage boy, and walk with a manly stride rather than my
ladylike steps. I'll talk about fights like a bragging youth, and I'll
tell cute lies about honorable ladies who fell in love with me
and got sick and died when I rejected them. They just died,
what could I do! Then I'll start feeling sorry for them, wishing I

Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
70 Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honorable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died—
I could not do withal!—Then I'll repent
And wish for all that, that I had not killed them.
75 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging jacks
Which I will practice.

NERISSA

80 Why, shall we turn to men?

PORTIA

Fie, what a question's that
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
85 At the park gate. And therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles today.

Exeunt

Enter LAUNCELOT the clown and JESSICA

hadn't killed them. I'll tell twenty lies like that, so men will think
I graduated from school at least a year ago. I know a thousand
immature tricks like that, and I'll use them all.

NERISSA

Why, are we turning to men?

PORTIA

What kind of question is that! If I had a dirty mind, I'd think you
meant turning to men for sex. Here, I'll tell you my whole plan
in my carriage, which is waiting for us at the gate. So hurry up,
because we have twenty miles to cover today.

They exit.

Act 3 Scene 5

LAUNCELOT and JESSICA enter.

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 o' 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

Yes, look, it's true that children are punished for the sins of their fathers. That's why I'm worried about you. I've always been straightforward with you, so now I'm telling you what I think. Cheer up, because I think you're going to hell. There's only one hope for you, and even that's a kind of illegitimate hope.

JESSICA

What hope is that, may I ask?

LAUNCELOT

You can hope your father isn't your real father. Maybe your mother fooled around, and you aren't the Jew's daughter.

JESSICA

That really is an illegitimate hope. Then I'd be punished for the sins of my mother.

LAUNCELOT

In that case I'm afraid you're damned by both your father and your mother. When you avoid one trap, you fall into another. You're in trouble either way.

JESSICA

My husband will save me. He's made me a Christian.

LAUNCELOT

Truly, the more to blame he. We were Christians eno' 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

²⁵ 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

He was wrong to do that. There were enough Christians before—as many of them as could stand to live near each other. All these new Christians will make the price of hogs go up. If we're all pork-eaters, we won't be able to get our hands on a slice of bacon, even if we've got the money for it.

LORENZO enters.

JESSICA

I'll tell my husband what you've said, Launcelot. Here he comes.

LORENZO

You're going to make me jealous, Launcelot, if you keep taking my wife into dark corners like this!

JESSICA

No, you don't need to worry about us, Lorenzo. Launcelot and I can't agree on anything. He says I won't get into heaven because I'm a Jew's daughter, and he says you're irresponsible because by converting Jews to Christianity you're raising the price of pork.

LORENZO

I can justify that better than you can justify sleeping with Portia's African servant. The Moor is pregnant with your child, Launcelot.

LAUNCELOT

35 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

45 Will you cover then, sir?

LAUNCELOT

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

LAUNCELOT

It's too bad there's more of the Moor than there ought to be. Well, even if she's a less than honest woman, she's still a lot *more* respectable than I thought at first.

LORENZO

Any fool can make puns! I think the best sign of intelligence will soon be silence, and talking will only be a good thing for parrots to do. Go in and tell the servants to get ready for dinner.

LAUNCELOT

That's already been done, sir. They're all ready to eat dinner.

LORENZO

Good Lord, what a clown you are! Tell them to *make* the dinner.

LAUNCELOT

That's also been done, sir. The word you're looking for is "[cover](#)."

LORENZO

Will you cover, then?

LAUNCELOT

No, sir—I know my duty.
[Launcelot](#)

LORENZO

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

LAUNCELOT

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

Exit LAUNCELOT

LORENZO

O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
50 The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words, and I do know
A many fools that stand in better place,
Garnished like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter. How cheerest thou, Jessica?
55 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,

LORENZO

You keep finding ways to mock me! Are you planning on showing me all your wit at once? Please understand my simple message: go tell the servants to set the table and bring in the food, and we'll come in to dinner.

LAUNCELOT

About the table, sir, dinner will be served on it. As for the food, it will be served in covered dishes. As for your coming in to dinner, just do what you feel is right.

LAUNCELOT exits.

LORENZO

Oh, he's good at bending words around! The fool has memorized a whole army full of fancy words. I know jesters in better positions, with the same talents he has. They also like to digress from the topic at hand by playing with language. Anyway, how are you, Jessica? And how do you like Lord Bassanio's wife?

JESSICA

I like her more than I can say. Bassanio should live an upstanding life because having a wife like Portia is a blessing. It's as if he found heaven here on earth. And if he doesn't

60 He finds the joys of heaven here on earth.
And if on earth he do not merit it,
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,
65 And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawned 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

70 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 howsome'er thou speak'st 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

deserve this joy on earth, he'll never deserve it in heaven.
Imagine what would happen if two gods in heaven made a bet.
If one of them used Portia as his stake, the other god would
have a hard time coming up with a human woman to match
her value. The poor rude world doesn't have her equal.

LORENZO

As good a wife as she is, that's how good a husband I am to
you.

JESSICA

I'll be the judge of that!

LORENZO

I'll give you a chance to judge later. First let's go to dinner.

JESSICA

No, let me say some good things about you while I'm in the
mood.

LORENZO

No, please, save it for dinner conversation. That way, no matter
what you say, I'll digest it with everything else.

JESSICA

Well, I'll set you forth.

Exeunt

JESSICA

In that case I'll serve you up like a dish of food.

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 1

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

DUKE

What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO

Ready, so please your grace.

DUKE

I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

5 Uncapable of pity, void and empty

From any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO

I have heard

Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify

His rigorous course. But since he stands obdurate

And that no lawful means can carry me

10 Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose

My patience to his fury, and am armed

*The **DUKE**, the magnificoes, **ANTONIO**, **BASSANIO**, **GRATIANO**, **SALERIO**, and attendants all enter.*

DUKE

Is Antonio here?

ANTONIO

Yes, sir, I'm here.

DUKE

I feel sorry for you. You've come to face a ruthless enemy, an inhuman wretch incapable of pity, without any feelings of mercy.

ANTONIO

They tell me you've done everything you can to talk him out of what he's doing. But since he remains stubborn, and there's no legal way to protect me from his malice, I'll just have to take what he'll give me. I'm ready to suffer peacefully whatever he does to me in his cruelty and anger.

To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage of his.

DUKE

Go, one, and call the Jew into the court.

SALERIO

15 He is ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

DUKE

Make room, and let him stand before our face.—
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act, and then 'tis thought
20 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty,
And where thou now exacts the penalty—
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh—
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture
25 But—touched with human gentleness and love,—
Forgive a moiety of the principal,
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses
That have of late so huddled on his back
Eno' to press a royal merchant down
30 And pluck commiseration of his state

DUKE

One of you go call the Jew into court here.

SALERIO

He's standing ready outside the door. Here he comes, my lord.

SHYLOCK enters.

DUKE

Make room so he can stand in front of me. Shylock, everyone
thinks—and I agree—that you're just pretending to be cruel.
They think that at the last second you're going to show mercy
and pity, which will be more surprising than the bizarre cruelty
that you seem to be showing now. And even though you're
here to collect the penalty—a pound of this poor merchant's
flesh—they think you'll not only let it go, but out of humanity
and love you'll forgive some portion of the principal he owes
you too. In doing so you'll be taking pity on him for his many
recent losses, which have been large enough to send even the
greatest merchant out of business, and make even the most
hard-hearted Turk or Tartar feel sorry for him. What do you
say? We all expect a nice answer from you, Jew.

From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK

35 I have possessed your grace of what I purpose,
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
40 You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that
But say it is my humour. Is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
45 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?

Some men there are love not a gaping pig,
Some that are mad if they behold a cat,
And others, when the bagpipe sings i' th' nose,
50 Cannot contain their urine. For affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rendered
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;

SHYLOCK

I've told you what I intend to do, and I've sworn by the holy
Sabbath to seek the penalty that is due according to our
contract. If you refuse to allow me to do so, your city's charter
and its freedom are endangered. You're going to ask me why
I'd rather have a pound of decaying flesh than three thousand
ducats. I won't answer that. Let's just say it's because I feel like
it. Is that enough of an answer? What if I had a rat in my house,
and I felt like paying ten thousand ducats to have it
exterminated? Do you have your answer yet?

Some men don't like roast pig, others go crazy if they see a cat,
and others can't help urinating when they hear bagpipes.
There's no sense trying to explain people's likes and dislikes.
So, to answer your question. Just as there's no clear reason
why one man doesn't want a roast pig, or why another man
can't stand a harmless and useful cat, or another can't tolerate
bagpipes, so I can't give a reason, and I won't give a reason
(other than the simple hate and loathing I feel for Antonio) why

55 Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a woollen bagpipe, but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended—
So can I give no reason, nor I will not
60 (More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio), that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

BASSANIO

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

SHYLOCK

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

BASSANIO

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO

Every offense is not a hate at first.

SHYLOCK

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

ANTONIO

I'm pursuing this unprofitable case against him. Does that
answer your question?

BASSANIO

That's no answer, you heartless man. It doesn't excuse your
cruel behavior.

SHYLOCK

I don't have to give you answers that you like.

BASSANIO

Does everyone kill what they don't love?

SHYLOCK

Does anyone hate something and not want to kill it?

BASSANIO

Disliking something isn't the same thing as hating it.

SHYLOCK

What, would you let a snake bite you twice?

ANTONIO

70 (to BASSANIO)

I pray you, think you question with the Jew?
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height.
You may as well use question with the wolf

75 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb.

You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven.
You may as well do anything most hard,

80 As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?—
His Jewish heart. Therefore I do beseech you
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO

85 (to SHYLOCK) For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK

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

DUKE

(to BASSANIO) Please don't bother arguing with the Jew. You might as well go stand on the beach and ask the ocean to get smaller. You might as well ask a wolf why he killed the lamb and made its mother cry.

You might as well tell the pine trees on the mountain to stop waving their treetops when the storms blow through them. You might as well do the impossible rather than try to soften his Jewish heart. It's the hardest thing imaginable. Therefore I'm begging you, don't make any more offers, don't look for other ways to stop him. Just let me receive my punishment, and let the Jew take his penalty.

BASSANIO

(to SHYLOCK) Instead of your three thousand ducats, here are six thousand.

SHYLOCK

If you offered me six times that, I wouldn't accept it. I would choose to take my penalty.

DUKE

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

SHYLOCK

- 90 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,
95 "Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!
Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be seasoned with such viands"? You will answer,
"The slaves are ours." So do I answer you.
100 The pound of flesh which I demand of him
Is dearly bought. 'Tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law—
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment. Answer, shall I have it?

DUKE

- 105 Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here today.

SALERIO

How can you ever hope for mercy for yourself, when you don't give any now?

SHYLOCK

Why should I be afraid of your judgment when I haven't done anything wrong? Many of you own slaves, which—like your donkeys and dogs and mules—you use to perform awful jobs just because you bought them. Should I say to you, "Set them free! Let them marry your children! Why are you making them work so hard? Let their beds be as soft as yours, and let them eat the same food as you"? No, you'd answer, "The slaves are ours." And that's just how I'm answering you. The pound of flesh that I want from him was very expensive. It's mine and I'm going to get it. If you refuse me, the laws of Venice have no validity. I await justice. So answer me. Will I get it?

DUKE

I have the authority to dismiss this court, unless Bellario comes today. He's a legal expert I sent for to act as judge and help settle this matter.

SALERIO

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

DUKE

Bring us the letter. Call the messenger.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

115 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 employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

*Enter **NERISSA**, disguised as a clerk*

DUKE

120 Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.
(gives DUKE a letter)

My lord, a messenger is waiting outside with letters from
Bellario. He's just come from Padua.

DUKE

Bring us the letters. Call the messenger in.

BASSANIO

Cheer up, Antonio! Keep up your courage, man! I'll give the
Jew my flesh, blood, bones, and everything before you lose
one drop of blood for me.

ANTONIO

I'm like the one sick sheep in the flock, the one who deserves
to die. The weakest fruit drops to the ground first, so let me
drop. Bassanio, the best thing you can do is to keep living and
write an epitaph for my gravestone.

***NERISSA** enters, disguised as a lawyer's clerk.*

DUKE

Have you come from Bellario's office in Padua?

NERISSA

Yes, my lord. Bellario sends his greetings.
(she gives the DUKE a letter)

SHYLOCK *sharpens a knife on the bottom of his shoe*

BASSANIO

(to SHYLOCK) Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

GRATIANO

125 Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen. But no metal can—
No, not the hangman's axe—bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO

130 O, be thou damned, inexecrable dog,
And for thy life let justice be accused!
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras
That souls of animals infuse themselves
135 Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit
Governed a wolf who, hanged for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And whilst thou layest in thy unhallowed dam
Infused itself in thee, for thy desires

SHYLOCK *sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe.*

BASSANIO

(to SHYLOCK) Why are you sharpening your knife so eagerly?

SHYLOCK

To cut my penalty from that bankrupt man over there.

GRATIANO

You're sharpening that knife not on your sole but on your soul, you cruel Jew. No metal—not even the executioner's axe—could ever be half as sharp as your hatred. Can't any prayers reach your heart?

SHYLOCK

No, none that you're smart enough to make.

GRATIANO

Oh, you're going to hell, you disgusting dog. Killing you would be justice. You almost make me forget that I'm a Christian. You make me want to agree with the philosopher Pythagoras that animal souls are reincarnated in human bodies. Your vicious dog soul used to belong to a wolf that was killed for slaughtering humans. When he died, his cruel soul passed out of his body and went into yours while you were lying in your unholy mother's womb. That's why your desires are wolfish, bloody, and ravenous.

140 Are wolvisb, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

SHYLOCK

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE

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

NERISSA

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

DUKE

With all my heart.—Some three or four of you
150 Go give him courteous conduct to this place.—
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.
(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 Balthazar. 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

SHYLOCK

Unless your taunts can undo the signature on my contract,
you're just wearing out your lungs by speaking so loud. Be
quiet, boy, or you'll lose your mind. I stand here with the law on
my side.

DUKE

This letter from Bellario introduces us to a young and well-
educated legal expert. Where is he?

NERISSA

He's waiting nearby to find out if you'll invite him in.

DUKE

With all my heart.—Three or four of you go welcome him.—In
the meantime, I'll read Bellario's letter out loud.
(he reads)
“I've received your letter but I'm very sick at the moment. As it
happened, when your messenger came, a young lawyer from
Rome was visiting me. His name is Balthazar. I told him about
the case of the Jew and Antonio the merchant, and we
consulted many books together. He knows my legal opinions
about this matter, and he has his own expert opinions as well.

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."

*Enter **PORTIA** for Balthazar, disguised as a doctor of law*

You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes.
And here I take it is the doctor come.—
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA

I did, my lord.

DUKE

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

PORTIA

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

DUKE

I'm sending him in my place to answer your request for someone to act as judge in this matter. Please don't underestimate him because he's so young. I never knew such a young man with such a mature head. I leave him to you. When you put him to the test, you'll see how wonderful he really is. You hear what the wise and educated Bellario writes."

***PORTIA** enters disguised as Balthazar, a lawyer.*

And this is the legal professor, I take it.—Let me shake your hand. Did old Bellario send you here?

PORTIA

Yes, my lord.

DUKE

Welcome. Please have a seat. Are you familiar with the case currently before the court?

PORTIA

Yes, thoroughly. Which one is the merchant? And which one is the Jew?

DUKE

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA

165 Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK

Shylock is my name.

PORTIA

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

ANTONIO

170 Ay, so he says.

PORTIA

Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO

I do.

PORTIA

Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

Antonio and Shylock, both of you come forward.

PORTIA

Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK

Shylock is my name.

PORTIA

Your case is most unusual, though the Venetian law can't stop
you from proceeding.—(to ANTONIO) He has a claim on you,
correct?

ANTONIO

Yes, so he says.

PORTIA

Do you acknowledge the contract?

ANTONIO

Yes, I do.

PORTIA

Then the Jew must show you mercy.

SHYLOCK

Why do I have to do that? Tell me.

PORTIA

The quality of mercy is not strained.

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

175 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes

The thronèd monarch better than his crown.

His scepter shows the force of temporal power,

180 The attribute to awe and majesty

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,

But mercy is above this sceptered sway.

It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings.

It is an attribute to God himself.

185 And earthly power doth then show likest God's

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this—

That in the course of justice none of us

Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,

190 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea,

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice

Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

SHYLOCK

195 My deeds upon my head. I crave the law,

PORTIA

No one shows mercy because he has to. It just happens, the

way gentle rain drops on the ground. Mercy is a double

blessing. It blesses the one who gives it and the one who

receives it. It's strongest in the strongest people. It looks better

in a king than his own crown looks on him. The king's scepter

represents his earthly power, the symbol of majesty, the focus

of royal authority. But mercy is higher than the scepter. It's

enthroned in the hearts of kings, a quality of God himself.

Kingly power seems most like God's power when the king

mixes mercy with justice. So although justice is your plea, Jew,

consider this.

Justice won't save our souls. We pray for mercy, and this same

prayer teaches us to show mercy to others as well. I've told

you this to make you give up this case. If you pursue it, this

strict court of Venice will need to carry out the sentence

against the merchant there.

SHYLOCK

The penalty, and forfeit of my bond.

PORTIA

Is he not able to discharge the money?

BASSANIO

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court—

Yea, twice the sum. If that will not suffice,

200 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.—

(to DUKE)

And I beseech you,

205 Wrest once the law to your authority.

To do a great right, do a little wrong,

And curb this cruel devil of his will.

PORTIA

It must not be. There is no power in Venice

Can alter a decree established.

210 'Twill be recorded for a precedent,

And many an error by the same example

Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

SHYLOCK

I take all responsibility for my decisions. I want the law, the penalty, and the fulfillment of my contract.

PORTIA

Can't he pay back the money?

BASSANIO

Yes. I'm offering to pay it back right this moment—even twice the sum. If that's not enough, I'll sign a contract to pay ten times that much, and I'll give you my hands, my head, and my heart as security. If that's not enough, then you're just evil and malicious.—(to the DUKE) I beg you, just this once, use your authority to bend the law. Do a great right by doing a little wrong. Don't let this devil have his way.

PORTIA

That can't happen. There's no power in Venice that can change an established decree. The change will be recorded as a precedent, and many bad legal decisions will result. That can't happen.

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

215 I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK

(giving PORTIA a document)

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

PORTIA

Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

SHYLOCK

An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven.

220 Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

No, not for Venice.

PORTIA

Why, this bond is forfeit!

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim

A pound of flesh to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart.—Be merciful.

225 Take thrice thy money. Bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK

When it is paid according to the tenor.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge.

A [Daniel](#) has come to judgment, yes, a Daniel!—Oh, wise young judge, I honor you!

PORTIA

Please, let me review the contract.

SHYLOCK

(he hands PORTIA a paper) Here it is, judge, here it is.

PORTIA

Shylock, they're offering you three times the money you lent.

SHYLOCK

But I made an oath, an oath, an oath in heaven. Should I perjure my soul by disobeying it? No, not for all of Venice.

PORTIA

The money wasn't paid back! And so the Jew may lawfully claim a pound of flesh nearest the merchant's heart, to be cut off by him.—But please have mercy. Take three times your money. Tell me to tear up this contract.

SHYLOCK

I'll tear it up when it's paid. You seem like a good judge. You know the law. Your explanation has made sense. I urge you to

You know the law. Your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
230 Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO

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

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

deliver your verdict. I swear that nothing anyone can say will
change my mind. I'm sticking to the contract.

ANTONIO

I beg the court to deliver the verdict.

PORTIA

Well, then, here it is: you must prepare yourself for his knife.

SHYLOCK

Oh, good judge! Oh, you excellent young man!

PORTIA

The law fully authorizes the penalty, which you have to pay
according to the contract.

SHYLOCK

Very true. Oh wise judge! You're so much older than you look!

PORTIA

(to ANTONIO) Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK

Ay, his breast.

So says the bond. Doth it not, noble judge?

245 "Nearest his heart"—those are the very words.

PORTIA

It is so. Are there balance here to weigh

The flesh?

SHYLOCK

I have them ready.

PORTIA

Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,

To stop his wounds lest he do bleed to death.

SHYLOCK

250 Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA

It is not so expressed, but what of that?

'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK

I cannot find it. 'Tis not in the bond.

PORTIA

(to ANTONIO) So bare your chest.

SHYLOCK

Yes, his chest! That's what the contract says, doesn't it, judge?

"Nearest his heart."—Those are the very words.

PORTIA

Yes. Is there a scale here to weigh the flesh?

SHYLOCK

I have it ready.

PORTIA

Pay a surgeon to stand by and bind his wounds, Shylock, so he

doesn't bleed to death.

SHYLOCK

Is that called for in the contract?

PORTIA

Not explicitly, but so what? It wouldn't hurt you to be charitable.

SHYLOCK

I can't find it. It's not in the contract.

PORTIA

(to ANTONIO) You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

ANTONIO

255 But little. I am armed and well prepared.—
Give me your hand, Bassanio. Fare you well.

Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. It is still her use
260 To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty—from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honorable wife.
265 Tell her the process of Antonio's end.
Say how I loved you. Speak me fair in death.
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
270 And he repents not that he pays your debt.
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

BASSANIO

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself.
275 But life itself, my wife, and all the world

(to ANTONIO) You, merchant, do you have anything to say?

ANTONIO

Not much. I'm ready and waiting.—Give me your hand,
Bassanio. Goodbye.

Don't be sad that this happened because of you, because Lady
Luck's been nicer to me than usual. Usually she makes the
unhappy man live on after he loses his wealth, to spend his old
age in poverty. But in my case she's letting me avoid that
misery. Send your honorable wife my greetings, and tell her
how I died and how I loved you. Speak well of me after I'm
dead, and when the tale's done, ask her to judge whether
Bassanio had a friend. Be sad only at the fact that you'll lose
your friend—your friend doesn't regret that he paid your debt.
If the Jew cuts deep enough, I'll pay it instantly with all my
heart.

BASSANIO

Antonio, I married a woman as dear to me as life itself. But life
itself, my wife, and the whole world aren't more valuable to me

Are not with me esteemed above thy life.
I would lose all—ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil—to deliver you.

PORTIA

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

GRATIANO

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

NERISSA

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

SHYLOCK

These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter.
Would any of the stock of Barabbas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!—
We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

than your life is. I'd give it all up—yes, I'd sacrifice them all to
this devil here—to save you.

PORTIA

Your wife wouldn't like it if she were here to hear you make
that offer.

GRATIANO

I have a wife I love. I wish she were in heaven so she could
appeal to some power to make this dog Jew change his mind.

NERISSA

It's nice you're offering to sacrifice her behind her back. That
wish of yours could start quite an argument back at home.

SHYLOCK

That's what you get for marrying Christian husbands. I have a
daughter. I wish she'd married any one of [Barabbas's](#)
descendants instead of a Christian!—We're wasting time.
Please, deliver the sentence.

PORTIA

A pound of this merchant's flesh is yours. The court awards it
and the law authorizes it.

SHYLOCK

Most rightful judge!

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

295 Most learned judge, a sentence! Come, prepare.

PORTIA

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

GRATIANO

O upright judge!—Mark, Jew.—O learned judge!

SHYLOCK

305 Is that the law?

PORTIA

Thyself shalt see the act.

What a righteous judge!

PORTIA

And you have to cut this flesh from his chest. The law allows it,
and the court awards it.

SHYLOCK

What a wise judge! Come on, get ready.

PORTIA

But wait a moment. There's something else. This contract
doesn't give you any blood at all. The words expressly specify
"a pound of flesh." So take your penalty of a pound of flesh, but
if you shed one drop of Christian blood when you cut it, the
state of Venice will confiscate your land and property under
Venetian law.

GRATIANO

Oh, what an upright judge!—Pay attention, Jew.—Oh, what a
smart judge!

SHYLOCK

Is that the law?

PORTIA

For as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desirest.

GRATIANO

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

SHYLOCK

310 I take this offer then: pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

BASSANIO

Here is the money.

PORTIA

Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO

315 O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh. If thou takest more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
320 As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part

You can see for yourself. You asked for justice, so rest assured
you'll get more justice than you bargained for.

GRATIANO

Oh, what a wise judge!—Pay attention, Jew. A wise judge!

SHYLOCK

In that case I'll take their offer. Pay me three times the amount
of the loan and let the Christian go.

BASSANIO

Here is the money.

PORTIA

Wait! The Jew will have justice. Wait, don't rush! He's not
getting anything except the penalty.

GRATIANO

Oh, Jew, what an upright judge this is! What a wise judge!

PORTIA

So get ready to cut off the flesh. Don't shed any blood, or cut
less or more than exactly a pound of flesh. If you take more or
less than exactly a pound, even if it's just the tiniest fraction of
an ounce—if the scale changes by even so much as a hair, you
die, and all your property will be confiscated.

Of one poor scruple—nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO

325 A second Daniel!—A Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

PORTIA

Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

SHYLOCK

Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASSANIO

I have it ready for thee. Here it is.

PORTIA

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

GRATIANO

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

SHYLOCK

Shall I not have barely my principal?

PORTIA

GRATIANO

A second Daniel!—A Daniel, Jew! I've got you now, pagan.

PORTIA

Why is the Jew waiting? Take your penalty.

SHYLOCK

Give me my money and let me go.

BASSANIO

I have it ready for you. Here it is.

PORTIA

No, he refused it publicly, in open court. He will have only
justice and his penalty.

GRATIANO

A Daniel, I keep saying it! A second Daniel!—Thank you, Jew,
for teaching me that word.

SHYLOCK

I won't even get the original three thousand ducats back?

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

Tarry, Jew.

The law hath yet another hold on you.

340 It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
345 Shall seize one half his goods. The other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state,
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament I say thou stand'st,
350 For it appears by manifest proceeding
That indirectly—and directly too—
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
355 Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

You can't have anything but the penalty, to be taken at your
peril, Jew.

SHYLOCK

Well, then, I hope he chokes on it! I'm not staying here to argue
anymore.

PORTIA

Wait a minute, Jew. The law has another hold on you. The laws
of Venice state that if a foreign resident directly or indirectly
attempts to kill any citizen, the person he tried to kill will
receive one half of the foreigner's goods. The other half goes
to the state. Whether the offending person lives or dies is up to
the duke—there's no one else to appeal to. In your
predicament you've earned that punishment, because you've
clearly contrived indirectly—and directly too—to take the life of
the defendant. So get down on your knees and beg mercy
from the duke.

GRATIANO

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself,
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord.
Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge.

DUKE

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

PORTIA

365 Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

370 What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO

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

GRATIANO

Beg to be allowed to hang yourself! But if you've handed over all your wealth to the state, you don't even have enough money left to buy a rope. So you'll be hanged at the state's expense.

DUKE

I want you to see the difference between us, so I pardon you even before you ask for a pardon. Half of your wealth goes to Antonio. The other half goes to the state. However, if you show a proper humility, I may reduce this penalty to a fine.

PORTIA

Yes, the state's half can be reduced, but not Antonio's.

SHYLOCK

No, go ahead and take my life. Don't pardon that. You take my house away when you take the money I need for upkeep. You take my life when you take away my means of making a living.

PORTIA

What mercy can you show him, Antonio?

GRATIANO

A hangman's rope free of charge. Nothing else, for God's sake!

ANTONIO

So please my lord the duke and all the court,
To quit the fine for one half of his goods
I am content, so he will let me have

375 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 favor
He presently become a Christian;
380 The other, that he do record a gift
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

DUKE

He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronouncèd here.

PORTIA

385 Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK

I am content.

PORTIA

(to NERISSA)

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK**ANTONIO**

If the duke and his court agree to set aside the fine for one half of his property, I'm happy, as long as he lets me have the other half in trust, to give it to the gentleman who recently stole his daughter. I only ask two more things. First, Shylock must immediately become a Christian. Second, he must make a will here in this court that leaves all his property to his son-in-law Lorenzo and his daughter when he dies.

DUKE

He must do this, or I'll recant the pardon I just delivered.

PORTIA

Are you satisfied, Jew? What do you say?

SHYLOCK

I'm satisfied.

PORTIA

(to NERISSA) Clerk, draw up a document to make his gift official.

SHYLOCK

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.

GRATIANO

(to SHYLOCK)

In christening shalt thou have two godfathers.

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more—

To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font.

Exit SHYLOCK

DUKE

395 (to PORTIA) Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

PORTIA

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.—

400 Antonio, gratify this gentleman,

For in my mind you are much bound to him.

Please let me go. I'm not well. Send the deed after me and I'll sign it.

DUKE

Go, but sign the deed.

GRATIANO

(to SHYLOCK) When you're baptized a Christian, you'll have two godfathers. If I'd been the judge, you would've had ten more—twelve jurors to sentence you to death rather than baptism.

SHYLOCK exits.

DUKE

(to PORTIA) Sir, please come home with me to dinner.

PORTIA

I'm very sorry, sir, but I have to go to Padua tonight. I should really leave right away.

DUKE

I'm sorry you don't have time.—Antonio, give this gentleman a reward. In my opinion, you owe him a lot.

*Exit **DUKE** and his train*

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) 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 cope your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO

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

PORTIA

He is well paid that is well satisfied.

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.

BASSANIO

415 Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.
Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as a fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

PORTIA

*The **DUKE** and his entourage exit.*

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) Sir, thanks to you my friend and I have been freed
from paying some awful penalties today. Instead of giving the
Jew the three thousand ducats he's owed, we give it to you in
gratitude for your kind efforts.

ANTONIO

And even then we're still indebted to you. We owe you love
and service forever.

PORTIA

Being satisfied with a job well done is payment enough. In
saving you I consider myself well paid. My thoughts were
never on money. I hope you'll recognize me when we meet
again. I wish you well. Now, I've got to go.

BASSANIO

Sir, I really feel the need to give you something. Take some
memento from us as a token of our gratitude, not as a fee.
Please do two favors for me. First, don't refuse me, and
second, excuse me for insisting.

PORTIA

You press me far and therefore I will yield.

420 *(to ANTONIO)*

Give me your gloves. I'll wear them for your sake.

(to BASSANIO)

And for your love, I'll take this ring from you.

Do not draw back your hand. I'll take no more,

425 And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO

This ring, good sir—alas, it is a trifle.

I will not shame myself to give you this.

PORTIA

I will have nothing else but only this.

And now methinks I have a mind to it.

BASSANIO

430 There's more depends on this than on the value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

And find it out by proclamation.

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

PORTIA

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.

435 You taught me first to beg, and now methinks

You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

BASSANIO

Since you keep insisting, I'll do as you say. *(to ANTONIO)* Give

me your gloves. I'll wear them for your sake. *(to BASSANIO)*

And as a souvenir of your appreciation, I'll take this ring from

you. Don't pull your hand back. I won't take anything more than

this, and you can't refuse me this.

BASSANIO

This ring, sir—oh no, it's nothing. I'd be ashamed to give you this.

PORTIA

I don't want anything but that. Now that I think about it, I really want it.

BASSANIO

There's more to this ring than its cash value. I'll give you the

most expensive ring in Venice, and I'll make a public

announcement to help me find it. But as for this ring, please

excuse me.

PORTIA

I see you like to make big offers, sir. First you taught me how to

beg, and now I think you're teaching me how a beggar should

be answered.

BASSANIO

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife.
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

PORTIA

440 That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a madwoman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy forever
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.

*Exeunt **PORTIA** and **NERISSA***

ANTONIO

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

BASSANIO

(giving GRATIANO the ring)

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him.
450 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

Good sir, this ring was given to me by my wife. When she put it
on my finger, she made me swear never to sell it, give it away,
or lose it.

PORTIA

Many men use that excuse to avoid giving gifts. If your wife's
not a madwoman, and you tell her how much I deserve this
ring, she won't stay angry at you forever if you give it to me.
Well, anyway, goodbye.

***PORTIA** and **NERISSA** exit.*

ANTONIO

Bassanio, let him have the ring. Consider how much he
deserves it, and weigh that, along with my friendship, against
your wife's order.

BASSANIO

(he gives GRATIANO the ring) Go, Gratiano, run and catch up
with him. Give him the ring, and take him to Antonio's house if
you can. Go quickly.

***GRATIANO** exits.*

Come on, you and I will go soon. Early in the morning we'll
both rush to Belmont. Come on, Antonio.

Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4 Scene 2

*Enter **PORTIA** and **NERISSA**, both disguised*

PORTIA

Inquire the Jew's house out. Give him this deed,
And let him sign it. We'll away tonight,
And be a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

*Enter **GRATIANO***

GRATIANO

5 *(giving PORTIA BASSANIO's ring)*

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

PORTIA

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

***PORTIA** and **NERISSA** enter, both still in disguise.*

PORTIA

Find out where the Jew's house is. Give him this deed and have
him sign it. We'll leave tonight and be home a day before our
husbands get back. Lorenzo will be happy with what we've
done.

***GRATIANO** enters.*

GRATIANO

(he gives PORTIA BASSANIO's ring) Sir, you're lucky I caught up
with you. Bassanio thought about it some more and sent this
ring to you. He would like to invite you to dinner.

PORTIA

I can't have dinner with him. Please tell him I accept his ring
with thanks. And could you please take my servant to old
Shylock's house?

GRATIANO

That will I do.

NERISSA

(to PORTIA)

Sir, I would speak with you.

15 (aside to PORTIA)

I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA

(aside to NERISSA)

Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing

20 That they did give the rings away to men.

But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.—

Away, make haste. Thou know'st where I will tarry.

Exit **PORTIA**

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO)

Come, good sir. Will you show me to this house?

Exeunt

Enter **LORENZO** and **JESSICA**

GRATIANO

I'll do that.

NERISSA

(to PORTIA) Sir, may I speak with you? (*speaking so that only PORTIA can hear*) I'll see if I can get my husband's ring, which I made him swear to keep forever.

PORTIA

(to NERISSA) I bet you'll be able to. They'll swear they gave the rings to men. But we'll deny it and outswear them too.—

Go, hurry. You know where I'll be waiting.

She exits.

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO) Sir, will you show me to Shylock's house now?

They exit.

LORENZO and JESSICA enter.

Act 5 Scene 1

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

LORENZO

In such a night
15 Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,

LORENZO

The moon's bright tonight. I think that on a night like this, when
the wind blew the trees so gently that they didn't make a
sound, Troilus climbed up onto the walls of Troy and sighed for
Cressida in the Greek camp.

JESSICA

On a night like this, Thisbe saw the lion's shadow and ran away
in fear.

LORENZO

On a night like this, Dido stood holding a willow branch on the
seashore, begging her lover to come back to her in Carthage.

JESSICA

On a night like this, Medea gathered magic herbs to rejuvenate
old Aeson.

LORENZO

On a night like this, Jessica ran away from the wealthy Jew and
stole his money. She ran away from Venice all the way to

And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

I would outnight you, did nobody come.
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

*Enter **STEPHANO**, a messenger*

LORENZO

25 Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO

A friend.

LORENZO

A friend? What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?

Belmont with her spendthrift lover.

JESSICA

On a night like this, young Lorenzo swore he loved her very
much, stealing her heart with vows of love, but not one vow
was true.

LORENZO

On a night like this, pretty Jessica, in a bad mood, said
outrageously wrong things about her lover, and he forgave her.

JESSICA

I'd get the better of you in this storytelling game, but
somebody's coming. I hear his footsteps.

***STEPHANO**, a messenger, enters.*

LORENZO

Who are you, coming so fast in this quiet night?

STEPHANO

A friend.

LORENZO

A friend? What friend? What's your name, please, friend?

STEPHANO

Stephano is my name, and I bring word

My mistress will before the break of day

30 Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays

For happy wedlock hours.

LORENZO

Who comes with her?

STEPHANO

None but a holy hermit and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet returned?

LORENZO

35 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 the clown

LAUNCELOT

Sola, sola! Wo, ha, ho! Sola, sola!

LORENZO

40 Who calls?

LAUNCELOT

STEPHANO

My name's Stephano, and I've come to tell you my mistress will

arrive here at Belmont before sunrise. She's still at the

monastery, kneeling and praying for a happy marriage.

LORENZO

Who's coming with her?

STEPHANO

No one except her maid and a holy hermit. Has my master

returned yet?

LORENZO

No, he hasn't, and we haven't heard from him.—But let's go in,

Jessica. We'll get ready to welcome the mistress of the house

back home.

LAUNCELOT enters.

LAUNCELOT

Hey, hey! Hey! Yoo-hoo!

LORENZO

Who's shouting?

LAUNCELOT

Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

LORENZO

Leave holloaing, man. Here.

LAUNCELOT

Sola! Where, where?

LORENZO

Here.

LAUNCELOT

45 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

LORENZO

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

And yet no matter. Why should we go in?—

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,

50 Within the house, your mistress is at hand.

And bring your music forth into the air.

Exit STEPHANO

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music

Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night

Hey! Have you seen Master Lorenzo! Master Lorenzo, hey! Hey!

LORENZO

Stop hollering, man! I'm here.

LAUNCELOT

Hey! Where, where?

LORENZO

Here.

LAUNCELOT

Tell him a messenger has arrived from my master with good
news. My master will be here in the morning.

LAUNCELOT exits.

LORENZO

My dear, let's go inside and wait for them to arrive. But I guess
it doesn't matter. Why should we go in?—Stephano, tell the
household staff that your mistress is about to arrive, and bring
some musicians outside here.

STEPHANO exits.

How beautiful the moonlight's shining on this bank! Let's sit

here and let the music fill our ears. Stillness and nighttime are

perfect for beautiful music. Sit down, Jessica. Look at the stars,

55 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
60 Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins.
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter musicians

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

Play music

JESSICA

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO

The reason is your spirits are attentive.
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
70 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,

see how the floor of heaven is inlaid with small disks of bright gold. Stars and planets move in such perfect harmony that some believe you can hear music in their movement. If you believe this, even the smallest star sings like an angel in its motion. Souls have that same kind of harmony. But because we're here on earth in our earthly bodies, we can't hear it.

Musicians enter.

Wake up the moon goddess with a hymn! Get her attention and draw her home with music.

Music plays.

JESSICA

I'm never in the mood to laugh when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO

That's because your soul is paying attention to the music. Take a wild herd of animals, or young untrained colts, leaping around like crazy, roaring and neighing loudly, which they have to do because it's in their blood—but if they happen to hear a trumpet, or any kind of music, they all stand still. Sweet music

Or any air of music touch their ears,
75 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music.

Therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods
Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
80 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 Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

*Enter **PORTIA** and **NERISSA***

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

So doth the greater glory dim the less.

makes their wild eyes peaceful. That's why the poet Ovid
wrote that the great musician Orpheus could make

trees, stones, and rivers come to him by playing music. There's
nothing in the world that can resist music. The man who can't
be moved by the harmonious melodies is fit only for treason,
violence, and pillage. His soul is as dull as night and dark as
the underworld. Nobody like that should be trusted. Pay
attention to the music.

***PORTIA** and **NERISSA** enter.*

PORTIA

That light we see is coming from my hall. Look how far that
little candle sends its light! That's the way a good deed shines
in a naughty world.

NERISSA

While the moon was shining we didn't even notice the candle.

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

It is your music, madam, of the house.

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

PORTIA

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

Music ceases

Well, brighter lights always dim the smaller ones. A governor
shines as brightly as a king until a king is near by, and the
governor suddenly looks like a nobody. Music, listen!

NERISSA

It's your music, madam, from your house.

PORTIA

Now I see that you can't call anything good except in right
context. I think that music sounds much better at night than it
does during the day.

NERISSA

The night's silence makes it sound better.

PORTIA

The crow sings as well as the lark when no one's listening. If
the nightingale sang during the day, when every goose is
honking, nobody would think it sang any better than a wren.
How many things in life seem good to us because of when
they happen! Quiet now! Look how the moon seems to be
sleeping with its lover and can't be awoken!

Music ceases.

LORENZO

That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

PORTIA

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

LORENZO

Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA

We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
115 Are they returned?

LORENZO

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

PORTIA

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

A tucket sounds

LORENZO

If I'm not mistaken, that's Portia's voice.

PORTIA

He recognizes me like a blind man recognizes a cuckoo—by its
bad voice.

LORENZO

Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA

We've been praying for our husbands' welfare. We hope
they're better off because of our prayers. Have they come
back?

LORENZO

No, ma'am, they haven't. But a messenger came ahead to tell
us they were on their way.

PORTIA

Go inside, Nerissa. Tell my servants not to mention that we
were gone. You must not, either, Lorenzo—or you, Jessica.

A trumpet sounds.

LORENZO

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

PORTIA

This night methinks is but the daylight sick.
It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day

¹²⁵ Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

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

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA

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

¹³⁰ And never be Bassanio so for me.

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

BASSANIO

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

LORENZO

Your husband's near. I hear his trumpet. We're not tattle-tales,
madam, don't worry.

PORTIA

I think this night is just like sick daylight. It only looks a little
paler. It looks like a day when the sun is hidden.

***GRATIANO** and **NERISSA** move aside and talk **BASSANIO**,
ANTONIO, **GRATIANO**, and their followers enter. **GRATIANO** and
NERISSA move aside and talk.*

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) If you walked outside at night, it would be daylight
here at the same time as on the other side of the world.

PORTIA

I'll give light to men, but I'll never be light or unchaste. An
unfaithful wife makes a husband worry, and I'll never let
Bassanio worry if I can help it. I hope God figures it all out!
Welcome home, my husband.

BASSANIO

Thank you, darling. I'd like to introduce you to my friend. This is
Antonio, my dearest friend. We are closely tied.

PORTIA

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

ANTONIO

No more than I am well acquitted of.

PORTIA

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

GRATIANO

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

PORTIA

145 A quarrel, ho, already? What's the matter?

GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me and leave me not."

NERISSA

PORTIA

You should be tied to him, since he tied himself up so much for you.

ANTONIO

But I've been paid back well.

PORTIA

Sir, welcome to our house. But action speaks louder than words, so I'll cut short these polite words.

GRATIANO

(to NERISSA) I swear by that moon over there that you're doing me wrong! I'm telling the truth! I gave it to the judge's clerk. I wish the guy I gave it to had been castrated, since you're getting so upset about it.

PORTIA

What, an argument already? What's the matter?

GRATIANO

We're arguing about a hoop of gold, a cheap little ring she gave me, that had a little inscription on it, nothing more than a knife-maker's attempt at poetry. It said, "Love me and don't leave me."

NERISSA

150 What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me when I did give it you
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
155 You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge.
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.

GRATIANO

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

NERISSA

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

GRATIANO

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

PORTIA

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

How can you talk about the quality of the poem or the value of the ring? You swore to me when I gave it to you that you would wear it till you died, and that it would be buried with you. If you didn't want to take care of it for my sake, you should have just because you made so many vows that you'd take care of it. And now you claim you gave it to a judge's clerk! No, I swear to God that clerk will never grow a beard on his face.

GRATIANO

He will if he lives long enough to become a man.

NERISSA

Yes, if a woman grows up to be a man.

GRATIANO

I swear I gave it to a youth, a kind of boy, a little stunted boy, no taller than yourself. He was the judge's clerk, a chatty boy who wanted it as a fee. I didn't have the heart to say no to him.

PORTIA

I have to be honest with you. You were wrong to give away your wife's first gift so thoughtlessly, a thing you swore to keep on your finger and bound faithfully to your body.

I gave my love a ring and made him swear
170 Never to part with it. And here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger for the wealth
That the world masters. Now in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
175 An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO

(aside) Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

GRATIANO

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

PORTIA

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

BASSANIO

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

I gave my lover a ring and made him swear never to lose it or
give it away. And here he is. I'd swear he wouldn't leave it
behind, or even take it off his finger, for all the money in the
world. To tell the truth, Gratiano, you're giving your wife a valid
reason to get upset. If it were me, I'd be very upset too.

BASSANIO

(to himself) Maybe I should cut off my left hand and swear I lost
the ring defending it.

GRATIANO

Bassanio gave his ring to the judge who asked for it, and
deserved it too. And then his clerk, who went to a lot of trouble
with the writing, begged for mine. Neither of them would take
anything but the two rings.

PORTIA

Which ring did you give away, my lord? Not the one I gave you,
I hope.

BASSANIO

If I could make things better by lying, I'd deny it. But you see
my finger doesn't have the ring on it. It's gone.

PORTIA

Even so void is your false heart of truth.

By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed

190 Until I see the ring.

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO)

Nor I in yours

Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO

Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the ring,

195 And would conceive for what I gave the ring,

And how unwillingly I left the ring

When naught would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA

If you had known the virtue of the ring,

200 Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honor to contain the ring,

You would not then have parted with the ring.

What man is there so much unreasonable,

If you had pleased to have defended it

205 With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty

PORTIA

Just as there's no ring on your finger, there's no truth in your heart. I swear I'll never get into your bed until I see the ring again!

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO) Me neither, until I see mine again!

BASSANIO

My dear Portia, if you knew who I gave the ring to, for whose sake I gave the ring to him, why I gave it to him, and how unwilling I was to leave it when he wouldn't accept anything but the ring, you wouldn't be so angry.

PORTIA

If you'd known how much that ring meant, how much the woman who gave it to you is worth, or how much your honor depended on your keeping the ring, you wouldn't have let it go. Who would be so unreasonable as to insist on taking the ring if you'd defended it with any kind of zeal? Who would have had so little self-restraint that they'd insist on getting a

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe.
I'll die for 't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house!
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
225 And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you.
I'll not deny him anything I have,
No, not my body, nor my husband's bed.

ring with ceremonial value? Nerissa's got the right idea. I'll bet
my life you gave some woman the ring!

BASSANIO

No, I swear, madam. No woman got it from me, but an expert in
civil law who refused three thousand ducats but asked instead
for the ring, which I denied him. I watched him leave looking
discontented, even though he had saved the life of my good
friend. What could I say, my dear? I had to send it to him. I was
ashamed and wanted to show my good manners. I just
couldn't dishonor myself by acting ungrateful to him. Please
forgive me, good lady. If you'd been there, I think you would
have begged me to give him the ring.

PORTIA

Don't let that lawyer ever come near my house! Since he has
the jewel I loved, which you swore you'd keep forever, I'll be as
generous as you were to him. I won't deny him anything of
mine, including my own body and my husband's bed. I'll
recognize him all right, I'm sure of it. So don't spend one night

Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.

230 Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus.

If you do not, if I be left alone,

Now, by mine honor—which is yet mine own—

I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO) And I his clerk. Therefore be well advised

235 How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO

Well, do you so, let not me take him then.

For if I do I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO

I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA

Sir, grieve not you. You are welcome notwithstanding.

BASSANIO

240 Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong,

And in the hearing of these many friends

I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes

Wherein I see myself—

PORTIA

away from this house. Watch me like a hawk. If you don't, if I'm left alone, I swear I'll have that legal expert as my bedfellow.

NERISSA

(to GRATIANO) And I'll have his clerk as mine. So be careful when you leave me to my own devices.

GRATIANO

Well, go ahead. But don't let me catch him, because if I do I'll break that clerk's pen.

ANTONIO

All these quarrels are about me.

PORTIA

Don't be upset. You're welcome in our home in spite of everything that's going on.

BASSANIO

Portia, forgive me for this mistake that I had to make. All these friends are my witnesses, so I swear to you, I swear by your beautiful eyes, in which I see myself reflected—

PORTIA

Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself—

245 In each eye, one. Swear by your double self,

And there's an oath of credit!

BASSANIO

Nay, but hear me.

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear

I never more will break an oath with thee.

ANTONIO

I once did lend my body for his wealth,

250 Which but for him that had your husband's ring

Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord

Will never more break faith advisedly.

PORTIA

(giving ANTONIO a ring)

255 Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,

And bid him keep it better than the other.

ANTONIO

(giving BASSANIO PORTIA's ring)

Here, Lord Bassanio. Swear to keep this ring.

BASSANIO

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

Did you hear that! He sees himself in my two eyes, so there's two of him. He should swear by his two-faced self, and that's an oath I'll believe!

BASSANIO

No, just listen to me. If you forgive my mistake, I swear I'll never break an oath with you again.

ANTONIO

I lent my body once to make him rich. If it hadn't been for the gentleman who now owns your husband's ring, my body would've been lost. I'd be the guarantee again, promising my soul this time as penalty, if your husband ever breaks a vow again knowingly.

PORTIA

(she gives ANTONIO a ring) Then you'll be my guarantee. Give him this. And tell him to hold on to it better than the other one.

ANTONIO

(he gives BASSANIO PORTIA's ring) Here, Bassanio, swear that you'll keep this ring.

BASSANIO

My God, it's the same one I gave the judge!

PORTIA

260 I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio,
For by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

NERISSA

(taking out a ring)

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

GRATIANO

Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer where the ways are fair enough!
What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

PORTIA

Speak not so grossly.—You are all amazed.
270 *(takes out a letter)*
Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure.
It comes from Padua, from Bellario.
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
275 Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now returned. I have not yet
Entered my house.—Antonio, you are welcome.
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect.

PORTIA

I got it from him. I'm sorry, Bassanio, but the legal expert slept
with me in exchange for this ring.

NERISSA

(she takes out a ring) And I'm sorry too, Gratiano, but that
stunted lawyer's clerk slept with me last night in exchange for
this ring.

gratiano

This is like fixing roads in the summer when they don't need to
be fixed! What, did you cheat on us before we deserved it?

PORTIA

Don't be crass.—You all look confused. *(she takes out a letter)*
Here's a letter. Read it at your leisure. It comes from Padua,
from Bellario. You'll find out that Portia was the lawyer, and
Nerissa was her clerk. Lorenzo here will testify that I left the
house right when you did, and just returned. I haven't yet
entered my house.—Antonio, welcome. I have better news than
you expect in store for you. *(she gives ANTONIO another letter)*
Open this letter. You'll find out that three of your ships have
suddenly arrived in the harbor loaded with a great deal of
wealth. You'll never guess what a strange coincidence it was
that I came across this letter.

280 *(gives ANTONIO another letter)*

Unseal this letter soon.

There you shall find three of your argosies

Are richly come to harbor suddenly.

You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced on this letter.

ANTONIO

285 I am dumb.

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

GRATIANO

(to NERISSA) Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it

290 Unless he live until he be a man.

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow.

When I am absent then lie with my wife.

ANTONIO

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living.

ANTONIO

I'm speechless.

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) You were the doctor, and I didn't even recognize you?

GRATIANO

(to NERISSA) Were you the clerk with whom my wife's going to cheat on me?

NERISSA

Yes, but the clerk will never do it, unless he grows up to be a man.

BASSANIO

(to PORTIA) My sweet lawyer, you'll be my bedfellow. When I'm not there, you can sleep with my wife.

ANTONIO

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

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
(gives LORENZO a document)
300 There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death of all he dies possessed of.

LORENZO

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

PORTIA

It is almost morning,
305 And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in,
And charge us there upon interr'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO

Let it be so. The first interr'gatory
310 That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is

Madam, you've given me life and given me a living too. I've
read in this letter that my ships have safely come to harbor.

PORTIA

How are you, Lorenzo? My clerk has some comforting news for
you, too.

NERISSA

Yes, and I'll give it to him for free. *(she gives LORENZO a document)* This is from the rich Jew, for you and Jessica. It's a
special testament. After he dies, you'll inherit everything he
owns.

LORENZO

Ladies, you're dropping bread from the heavens to starving
people.

PORTIA

It's almost morning, but I'm sure you're not fully satisfied about
what happened. Let's go inside and we'll answer all your
questions truthfully.

GRATIANO

All right, then. My first question for Nerissa is whether she'd
rather wait till tomorrow night or go to bed now, since there are

Whether till the next night she had rather stay,
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.

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

Exeunt

only two more hours till morning. When the day comes, I'll
wish it were nighttime, so I could sleep with the legal expert's
clerk. In any case, I won't worry about anything for the rest of
my life more than keeping Nerissa's ring safe.

They exit.