Cast – the Merchant of Venice

Antonio

Gratiano

Bassanio

Portia

Nerissa

Balthazar

Shylock

Jessica

Launcelot

Lorenzo

Salarino

Morocco

Solanio

Arragon

Tubal

Duke

The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/Shakespeare) | [Merchant of Venice](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/merchant/) | Entire play

# ACT I

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

*Enter ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and BASSANIO*

## ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:

But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,

I am to learn;

## GRATIANO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;

There, where your argosies with portly sail, Like signiors and rich burghers on the ﬂood, Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,

Do overpeer the petty trafﬁckers,

That curtsy to them, do them reverence,

As they ﬂy by them with their woven wings.

## ANTONIO

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

## GRATIANO

Let me play the fool:

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come.

Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio--

I love thee, and it is my love that speaks-- There are a sort of men whose visages

Do cream and mantle like a standing pond, And do a wilful stillness entertain,

With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit, As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!' O my Antonio, I do know of these

That therefore only are reputed wise

For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,

If they should speak, would almost damn those ears, Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.

## ANTONIO

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

## BASSANIO

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

## ANTONIO

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

## BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left;

And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,

Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes I did receive fair speechless messages:

Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth, For the four winds blow in from every coast Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks Hang on her temples like a golden ﬂeece;

O my Antonio, had I but the means

To hold a rival place with one of them, I have a mind presages me such thrift,

That I should questionless be fortunate!

## ANTONIO

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea; Neither have I money nor commodity

To raise a present sum: therefore go forth; Try what my credit can in Venice do:

That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost, To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia. Go, presently inquire, and so will I,

Where money is, and I no question make To have it of my trust or for my sake.

*Exeunt*

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

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are.

## PORTIA

Well pronounced.

## NERISSA

And 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: But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

## NERISSA

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

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

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.

## 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

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

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

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

## PORTIA

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

*Enter a Serving-man*

How now! what news?

## BALTHAZAR

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

## PORTIA

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates

upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

*Exeunt*

# SCENE III. Venice. A public place.

*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK*

## SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

## BASSANIO

Your answer to that?

## SHYLOCK

Antonio is a good man.

## BASSANIO

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

## SHYLOCK

Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is

sufﬁcient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and

other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufﬁcient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may

take his bond.

## BASSANIO

Be assured you may.

## SHYLOCK

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

## BASSANIO

If it please you to dine with us.

## SHYLOCK

Yes, to smell pork; 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. Who is he comes here?

*Enter ANTONIO*

## BASSANIO

This is Signior Antonio.

## SHYLOCK

[Aside] How like a fawning publican he looks! I hate him for he is a Christian,

He hates our sacred nation, and he rails

On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,

Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe, If I forgive him!

*To ANTONIO*

Rest you fair, good signior;

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

## ANTONIO

Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow By taking nor by giving of excess,

Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend, I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd How much ye would?

## SHYLOCK

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

## ANTONIO

And for three months.

## SHYLOCK

I had forgot; three months; you told me so.

Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you; Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow Upon advantage.

## ANTONIO

I do never use it.

## SHYLOCK

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep-- This Jacob from our holy Abram was…

## ANTONIO

And what of him? did he take interest?

## SHYLOCK

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

When Laban and himself were compromised

That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied Should fall as Jacob's hire. The skilful shepherd

stuck certain rams before the fulsome ewes, Who then conceiving did in eaning time

Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's. This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:

And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

## ANTONIO

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

But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven. Was this inserted to make interest good?

Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

## SHYLOCK

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

## ANTONIO

Mark you this, Bassanio,

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek, A goodly apple rotten at the heart:

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

## SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.

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

## ANTONIO

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

## SHYLOCK

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft In the Rialto you have rated me About my moneys and my usances:

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug, For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe. You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that which is mine own. Well then, it now appears you need my help:

What should I say to you? Should I not say 'Hath a dog money? is it possible

A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,

With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Say this; 'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;

You spurn'd me such a day; another time You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

## ANTONIO

I am as like to call thee so again,

To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too. If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not

As to thy friends; But to thine enemy,

Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face Exact the penalty.

## SHYLOCK

Why, look you, how you storm!

I would be friends with you and have your love, Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with.

This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there Your single bond; and, in a merry sport, If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit Be nominated for an equal pound

Of your fair ﬂesh, to be cut off and taken In what part of your body pleaseth me.

## ANTONIO

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

## BASSANIO

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

## ANTONIO

Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:

Within these two months, that's a month before This bond expires, I do expect return

Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

## SHYLOCK

If he should break his day, what should I gain By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's ﬂesh taken from a man Is not so estimable, proﬁtable neither,

As ﬂesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say, To buy his favour, I extend this friendship: If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

## ANTONIO

Yes Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

## SHYLOCK

Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;

Give him direction for this merry bond.

*Exit Shylock*

## ANTONIO

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

## BASSANIO

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

## ANTONIO

Come on: in this there can be no dismay;

My ships come home a month before the day.

*Exeunt*

# ACT II

**SCENE I. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house. [CUT]**

# SCENE II. Venice. A street.

## GRATIANO

Signior Bassanio!

## BASSANIO

Gratiano!

## GRATIANO

I have a suit to you.

## BASSANIO

You have obtain'd it.

## GRATIANO

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

## BASSANIO

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

Allay with some cold drops of modesty

Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior I be misconstrued in the place I go to,

And lose my hopes.

## GRATIANO

Signior Bassanio, hear me:

If I do not put on a sober habit,

Talk with respect and swear but now and then, Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely, Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen,'

Use all the observance of civility, Like one well studied in a sad ostent

To please his grandam, never trust me more.

## BASSANIO

Well, we shall see your bearing.

*Exeunt*

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

*Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT*

## JESSICA

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

And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:

Give him this letter; do it secretly;

And so farewell: I would not have my father See me in talk with thee.

## LAUNCELOT

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

## JESSICA

Farewell, good Launcelot.

*Exit Launcelot*

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me

To be ashamed to be my father's child! But though I am a daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,

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

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

*Exit*

# SCENE IV. The same. A street.

*Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

## LORENZO

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

## GRATIANO

We have not made good preparation.

## LORENZO

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

*Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

## LAUNCELOT

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

## LORENZO

I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand; And whiter than the paper it writ on

Is the fair hand that writ.

## GRATIANO

Love-news, in faith.

## LORENZO

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

## GRATIANO

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

## LORENZO

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

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven, It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:

Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest: Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

*Exeunt*

# SCENE V. The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house [CUT]

# SCENE VI. The same.

*Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued*

## GRATIANO

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

## SALARINO

His hour is almost past.

## GRATIANO

And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,

For lovers ever run before the clock.

## SALARINO

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons ﬂy

To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

## SALARINO

Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter. *[Exit]*

*Enter LORENZO*

## LORENZO

Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode; Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives, I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;

Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

*Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes*

## JESSICA

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

## LORENZO

Lorenzo, and thy love.

## JESSICA

Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,

For who love I so much? And now who knows

But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

## LORENZO

Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

## JESSICA

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains. I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me, For I am much ashamed of my exchange: But love is blind and lovers cannot see

The pretty follies that themselves commit; For if they could, Cupid himself would blush To see me thus transformed to a boy.

## LORENZO

Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

## JESSICA

What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

They in themselves, good-sooth, are too too light. Why, 'tis an ofﬁce of discovery, love;

And I should be obscured.

## LORENZO

So are you, sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish of a boy. But come at once;

For the close night doth play the runaway, And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

## JESSICA

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself

With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

*Exit above*

## GRATIANO

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

## LORENZO

Beshrew me but I love her heartily; For she is wise, if I can judge of her,

And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true, And true she is, as she hath proved herself,

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

Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

*Enter JESSICA, below*

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

*Exeunt*

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

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

## PORTIA

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

## MOROCCO

The ﬁrst, of gold, who this inscription bears,

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;' The second, silver, which this promise carries,

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;' This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,

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

How shall I know if I do choose the right?

## PORTIA

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

## MOROCCO

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;

One of these three contains her heavenly picture. Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation To think so base a thought: it were too gross

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave. Or shall I think in silver she's immured, Being ten times undervalued to tried gold? O sinful thought!

But here an angel in a golden bed

Lies all within. Deliver me the key: Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

## PORTIA

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

*He unlocks the golden casket*

## MOROCCO

O hell! what have we here?

A carrion Death, within whose empty eye There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

*Reads*

All that glitters is not gold; Often have you heard that told: Many a man his life hath sold But my outside to behold: Gilded tombs do worms enfold.

Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Cold, indeed; and labour lost:

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost! Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets*

## PORTIA

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

*Exeunt*

# SCENE VIII. Venice. A street.

*Enter SALARINO and SALANIO*

## SALARINO

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:

With him is Gratiano gone along;

## SALANIO

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

## SALARINO

He came too late, the ship was under sail: But there the duke was given to understand That in a gondola were seen together Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:

## SALANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,

So strange, outrageous, and so variable, As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:

'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats! Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter!

And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, Stolen by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl;

She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

## SALARINO

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,

Crying: “his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.”

## SALANIO

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

*Exeunt*

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

## NERISSA

Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight: The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,

And comes to his election presently.

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

## PORTIA

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

You must be gone from hence immediately.

## ARRAGON

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things: First, never to unfold to any one

Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail Of the right casket, never in my life

To woo a maid in way of marriage: Lastly, If I do fail in fortune of my choice, Immediately to leave you and be gone.

## PORTIA

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

## ARRAGON

And so have I address'd me. Fortune now

To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead. 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.' You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.

Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house; Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:

'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:' And well said too; for who shall go about

To cozen fortune and be honourable

Without the stamp of merit? Well, but to my choice: 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this, And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*He opens the silver casket*

## PORTIA

Too long a pause for that which you ﬁnd there.

## ARRAGON

What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot, Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.' Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

## PORTIA

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

## ARRAGON

What is here?

*Reads*

Take what wife you will to bed, I will ever be your head:

So be gone: you are sped. Still more fool I shall appear By the time I linger here

With one fool's head I came to woo, But I go away with two.

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

*Exeunt Arragon and train*

## PORTIA

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

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

## NERISSA

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

## PORTIA

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter Balthazar*

## BALTHASAR

Where is my lady?

## PORTIA

Here: what would my lord?

## BALTHASAR

Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before To signify the approaching of his lord; From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,

To wit, besides commends and courteous breath, Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen

So likely an ambassador of love:

A day in April never came so sweet!

## 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

Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

## NERISSA

Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

*Exeunt*

# ACT III

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

*Enter SALANIO and SALARINO*

## SALANIO

Now, what news on the Rialto?

## SALARINO

Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas;

## SALANIO

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

## SALARINO

I would it might prove the end of his losses.

## SALANIO

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

*Enter SHYLOCK*

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

## SHYLOCK

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

## SALARINO

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

## SHYLOCK

My own ﬂesh and blood to rebel!

## SALARINO

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

## SHYLOCK

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

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

## SALARINO

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

## SHYLOCK

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

it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine

enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means,

warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?

if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison

us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian

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

*Enter TUBAL*

## SALANIO

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

*Exeunt SALANIO, SALARINO, and Servant*

## SHYLOCK

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

## TUBAL

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

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! No satisfaction, no revenge; nor no in luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

## TUBAL

Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,--

## SHYLOCK

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

## TUBAL

Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

## SHYLOCK

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

## TUBAL

There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my

## company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

## SHYLOCK

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

## TUBAL

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

## SHYLOCK

Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor:

I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

## TUBAL

But Antonio is certainly undone.

## SHYLOCK

Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an ofﬁcer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit.

*Exeunt*

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

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

## PORTIA

I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,

I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile. There's something tells me, but it is not love,

I would not lose you; and you know yourself, Hate counsels not in such a quality.

But lest you should not understand me well,-- And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,-- I would detain you here some month or two Before you venture for me. I could teach you How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;

## BASSANIO

Let me choose

For as I am, I live upon the rack.

## PORTIA

Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess

What treason there is mingled with your love.

## BASSANIO

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

## PORTIA

Well then, confess and live.

## BASSANIO

'Confess' and 'love'

Had been the very sum of my confession: O happy torment, when my torturer

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

## PORTIA

Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them: If you do love me, you will ﬁnd me out. Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.

Let music sound while he doth make his choice; Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end, Fading in music: that the comparison

May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream And watery death-bed for him. He may win;

And what is music then? Then music is Even as the ﬂourish when true subjects bow To a new-crown’d monarch: Go, Hercules!

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

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

## BASSANIO

So may the outward shows be least themselves: The world is still deceived with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt, But, being seasoned with a gracious voice, Obscures the show of evil? In religion, What damned error, but some sober brow

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

The seeming truth which cunning times put on

To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold, Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;

Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead, Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught, Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence; And here choose I; joy be the consequence!

## PORTIA

[Aside] How all the other passions ﬂeet to air,

As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,

And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! O love, Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy,

In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess. I feel too much thy blessing: make it less, For fear I surfeit.

## BASSANIO

What ﬁnd I here?

*Opening the leaden casket*

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god

Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes? Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,

Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips, Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar

Should sunder such sweet friends. Here's the scroll, The continent and summary of my fortune.

*Reads*

You that choose not by the view, Chance as fair and choose as true! Since this fortune falls to you,

Be content and seek no new,

If you be well pleased with this

And hold your fortune for your bliss, Turn you where your lady is

And claim her with a loving kiss.

## PORTIA

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, Such as I am: though for myself alone

I would not be ambitious in my wish,

To wish myself much better; yet, for you I would be trebled twenty times myself;

A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;

This house, these servants and this same myself Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring; Which when you part from, lose, or give away, Let it presage the ruin of your love

And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

## BASSANIO

Madam, you have bereft me of all words, Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;

Where every something, being blent together, Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy, Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring

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

## NERISSA

My lord and lady, it is now our time,

That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper, To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

## GRATIANO

My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,

I wish you all the joy that you can wish; For I am sure you can wish none from me:

And when your honours mean to solemnize The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you, Even at that time I may be married too.

## BASSANIO

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

## GRATIANO

I thank your lordship, you have got me one. My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours: You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;

You loved, I loved for intermission.

I got a promise of this fair one here

To have her love, provided that your fortune Achieved her mistress.

## PORTIA

Is this true, Nerissa?

## NERISSA

Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

## BASSANIO

And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

## GRATIANO

Yes, faith, my lord.

## BASSANIO

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

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

## BASSANIO

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;

If that the youth of my new interest here

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave, I bid my very friends and countrymen,

Sweet Portia, welcome.

## PORTIA

So do I, my lord:

They are entirely welcome.

## LORENZO

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord, My purpose was not to have seen you here; But meeting with Salerio by the way,

He did entreat me, past all saying nay, To come with him along.

## SALERIO

I did, my lord;

And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio Commends him to you.

*Gives Bassanio a letter*

## BASSANIO

Ere I ope his letter,

I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

## SALERIO

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

## GRATIANO

Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome. Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice? How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?

I know he will be glad of our success;

We are the Jasons, we have won the ﬂeece.

## SALERIO

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

## PORTIA

There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper, That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:

Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world Could turn so much the constitution

Of any constant man. What, worse and worse! With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,

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

## BASSANIO

O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words That ever blotted paper! When I told you

My state was nothing, I should then have told you That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,

I have engaged myself to a dear friend, Engaged my friend to his mere enemy, To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady; The paper as the body of my friend,

And every word in it a gaping wound, Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?

Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit? From Tripolis, from Mexico and England, From Lisbon, Barbary and India?

And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch Of merchant-marring rocks?

## SALERIO

Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear, that if he had The present money to discharge the Jew, He would not take it.

But none can drive him from the envious plea Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

## JESSICA

When I was with him I have heard him swear To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,

That he would rather have Antonio's ﬂesh Than twenty times the value of the sum That he did owe him: and I know, my lord, If law, authority and power deny not,

It will go hard with poor Antonio.

## PORTIA

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

## BASSANIO

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man, The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit In doing courtesies, and one in whom

The ancient Roman honour more appears Than any that draws breath in Italy.

## PORTIA

What sum owes he the Jew?

## BASSANIO

For me three thousand ducats.

## PORTIA

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond; Double six thousand, and then treble that, Before a friend of this description

Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault. First go with me to church and call me wife, And then away to Venice to your friend;

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!

*Exeunt*

# SCENE III. Venice. A street. [CUT]

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

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, AND BALTHASAR*

## PORTIA

Now, Balthasar,

As I have ever found thee honest-true,

So let me ﬁnd thee still. Take this same letter, And use thou all the endeavour of a man

In speed to Padua: see thou render this Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;

And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee, Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed

Unto the tranect, to the common ferry

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

## BALTHASAR

Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

*Exit*

## PORTIA

Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand

That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands Before they think of us.

## NERISSA

Shall they see us?

## PORTIA

They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit, That they shall think we are accomplished With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,

When we are both accoutred like young men, I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,

And wear my dagger with the braver grace,

## NERISSA

Why, shall we turn to men?

## PORTIA

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

*Exeunt*

# SCENE V. The same. A garden. [CUT]

# ACT IV

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

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

## DUKE

What, is Antonio here?

## ANTONIO

Ready, so please your grace.

## DUKE

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

## SALERIO

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

*Enter SHYLOCK*

## DUKE

Make room, and let him stand before our face. Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too, That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;

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

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love, Forgive a moiety of the principal;

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

## SHYLOCK

I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose; And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn

To have the due and forfeit of my bond: If you deny it, let the danger light

Upon your charter and your city's freedom.

## BASSANIO

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

## SHYLOCK

I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

## BASSANIO

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

## SHYLOCK

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

## BASSANIO

Every offence is not a hate at ﬁrst.

## SHYLOCK

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

## ANTONIO

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

You may as well do anything most hard,

As seek to soften that--than which what's harder?-- His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you, Make no more offers, use no farther means,

But with all brief and plain conveniency Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

## BASSANIO

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

## SHYLOCK

What judgment shall I dread, doing Were in six parts and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

## DUKE

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

## SHYLOCK

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong? You have among you many a purchased slave, Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules, You use in abject and in slavish parts,

Because you bought them: shall I say to you, Let them be free, marry them to your heirs? Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds Be made as soft as yours and let their palates Be season'd with such viands? You will answer 'The slaves are ours:' so do I answer you:

The pound of ﬂesh, which I demand of him, Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it. If you deny me, ﬁe upon your law!

There is no force in the decrees of Venice.

I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

## DUKE

Upon my power I may dismiss this court,

Unless Bellario, a learned doctor, Whom I have sent for to determine this, Come here to-day.

## SALERIO

My lord, here stays without

A messenger with letters from the doctor, New come from Padua.

## DUKE

Bring us the letter; call the messenger.

## BASSANIO

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

## ANTONIO

I am a tainted wether of the ﬂock,

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

*Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk*

## DUKE

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

## NERISSA

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

*Presenting a letter*

## DUKE

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

## NERISSA

He attendeth here hard by,

To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

## DUKE

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

## NERISSA

*[Reads]*

Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with

me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between

the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to ﬁll up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious

acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

## DUKE

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes: And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

*Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

## PORTIA

I did, my lord.

## DUKE

You are welcome: take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference

That holds this present question in the court?

## PORTIA

I am informed thoroughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

## DUKE

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

## PORTIA

Is your name Shylock?

## SHYLOCK

Shylock is my name.

## PORTIA

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

You stand within his danger, do you not?

## ANTONIO

Ay, so he says.

## PORTIA

Do you confess the bond?

## ANTONIO

I do.

## PORTIA

Then must the Jew be merciful.

## SHYLOCK

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

## PORTIA

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes: 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes The throned monarch better than his crown;

His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings; But mercy is above this sceptred sway;

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings, It is an attribute to God himself;

And earthly power doth then show likest God's When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew, Though justice be thy plea, consider this,

That, in the course of justice, none of us Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea;

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice

Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

## SHYLOCK

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

## PORTIA

Is he not able to discharge the money?

## BASSANIO

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court; Yea, twice the sum: if that will not sufﬁce, I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart: If this will not sufﬁce, it must appear

That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you, Wrest once the law to your authority:

To do a great right, do a little wrong, And curb this cruel devil of his will.

## PORTIA

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

'Twill be recorded for a precedent,

And many an error by the same example Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

## SHYLOCK

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

## PORTIA

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

## SHYLOCK

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

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

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

No, not for Venice.

## PORTIA

Why, this bond is forfeit;

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim A pound of ﬂesh, to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:

Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

## SHYLOCK

When it is paid according to the tenor.

There is no power in the tongue of man To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

## ANTONIO

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

## PORTIA

Why then, thus it is:

You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

## SHYLOCK

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

## PORTIA

For the intent and purpose of the law Hath full relation to the penalty,

Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

## SHYLOCK

'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!

How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

## PORTIA

Therefore lay bare your bosom.

## SHYLOCK

Ay, his breast:

So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge? 'Nearest his heart:' those are the very words.

## PORTIA

It is so. Are there balance here to weigh The ﬂesh?

## SHYLOCK

I have them ready.

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

Is it so nominated in the bond?

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

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

## PORTIA

You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

## ANTONIO

But little: I am arm'd and well prepared. Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well! Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you; For herein Fortune shows herself more kind Than is her custom: it is still her use

To let the wretched man outlive his wealth, To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow

An age of poverty; from which lingering penance Of such misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife.

## BASSANIO

Antonio, I am married to a wife Which is as dear to me as life itself;

But life itself, my wife, and all the world,

Are not with me esteem'd above thy life: I would lose all, ay, sacriﬁce them all Here to this devil, to deliver you.

## PORTIA

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

## GRATIANO

I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:

I would she were in heaven, so she could Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

## NERISSA

'Tis well you offer it behind her back;

The wish would make else an unquiet house.

## SHYLOCK

*[Aside]*

These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter; Would any of the stock of Barrabas

Had been her husband rather than a Christian!

*Aloud*

We triﬂe time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

Most rightful judge!

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

## PORTIA

Tarry a little; there is something else.

This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood; The words expressly are 'a pound of ﬂesh:'

Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of ﬂesh; But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed

One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods Are, by the laws of Venice, conﬁscate

Unto the state of Venice.

## GRATIANO

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

## SHYLOCK

Is that the law?

## PORTIA

Thyself shalt see the act:

For, as thou urgest justice, be assured

Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

## GRATIANO

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

## SHYLOCK

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

## BASSANIO

Here is the money.

## PORTIA

Soft!

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

## GRATIANO

O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

## PORTIA

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the ﬂesh. Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more But just a pound of ﬂesh: if thou cut'st more

Or less than a just pound, be it but so much As makes it light or heavy in the substance, Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn But in the estimation of a hair,

Thou diest and all thy goods are conﬁscate.

## GRATIANO

A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

## PORTIA

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

## SHYLOCK

Give me my principal, and let me go.

## BASSANIO

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

## PORTIA

He hath refused it in the open court:

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

## SHYLOCK

Shall I not have barely my principal?

## PORTIA

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

## SHYLOCK

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

## PORTIA

Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you. It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

If it be proved against an alien That by direct or indirect attempts He seek the life of any citizen,

The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive Shall seize one half his goods; the other half

Comes to the privy coffer of the state; And the offender's life lies in the mercy Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.

In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st; For it appears, by manifest proceeding, That indirectly and directly too

Thou hast contrived against the very life Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd The danger formerly by me rehearsed.

Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

## DUKE

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits, I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:

For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;

The other half comes to the general state, Which humbleness may drive unto a ﬁne.

## SHYLOCK

Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:

You take my house when you do take the prop That doth sustain my house; you take my life When you do take the means whereby I live.

## PORTIA

What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

## ANTONIO

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

Two things provided more, that, for this favour, He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd, Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

## DUKE

He shall do this, or else I do recant

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

## PORTIA

Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

## SHYLOCK

I am content. *[Antonio takes yarmulke, hangs cross on Shylock]*

## PORTIA

I will draw a deed of gift.

## SHYLOCK

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

And I will sign it.

## DUKE

Get thee gone, but do it.

*Exit SHYLOCK*

## DUKE

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

## PORTIA

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon: I must away this night toward Padua, And it is meet I presently set forth.

## DUKE

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not. Antonio, gratify this gentleman,

For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

*Exeunt Duke and his train*

## BASSANIO

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

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

## PORTIA

He is well paid that is well satisﬁed; And I, delivering you, am satisﬁed

And therein do account myself well paid: My mind was never yet more mercenary.

I pray you, know me when we meet again: I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

## BASSANIO

Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further: Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute, Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you, Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

## PORTIA

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

*To BASSANIO*

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

## BASSANIO

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

I will not shame myself to give you this.

## PORTIA

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

## BASSANIO

There's more depends on this than on the value. The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

And ﬁnd it out by proclamation: Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

## PORTIA

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers

You taught me ﬁrst to beg; and now methinks You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

## BASSANIO

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife; And when she put it on, she made me vow That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

## PORTIA

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts. An if your wife be not a mad-woman,

And know how well I have deserved the ring, She would not hold out enemy for ever,

For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa*

## ANTONIO

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring: Let his deservings and my love withal

Be valued against your wife's commandment.

## BASSANIO

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;

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

*Exit Gratiano*

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

*Exeunt*

# SCENE II. The same. A street.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

## PORTIA

Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed And let him sign it: we'll away to-night

And be a day before our husbands home: This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

*Enter GRATIANO*

## GRATIANO

Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en

My Lord Bassanio upon more advice

Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat Your company at dinner.

## PORTIA

That cannot be:

His ring I do accept most thankfully:

And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,

I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

## GRATIANO

That will I do.

## NERISSA

Sir, I would speak with you.

*Aside to PORTIA*

I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

## PORTIA

[Aside to NERISSA] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing

That they did give the rings away to men;

But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.

*Aloud*

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

## NERISSA

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

*Exeunt*

# ACT V

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

*Enter LORENZO and JESSICA*

## LORENZO

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

## JESSICA

In such a night

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

## LORENZO

In such a night

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew

And with an unthrift love did run from Venice As far as Belmont.

## JESSICA

I would out-night you, did nobody come;

*Music plays*

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

## LORENZO

By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet

Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and ﬂoods; Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,

But music for the time doth change his nature. The man that hath no music in himself,

Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is ﬁt for treasons, stratagems and spoils;

The motions of his spirit are dull as night And his affections dark as Erebus:

Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

## LORENZO

Dear lady, welcome home.

## PORTIA

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

## LORENZO

Madam, they are not yet;

But there is come a messenger before, To signify their coming.

## PORTIA

Go in, Nerissa;

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

*A tucket sounds*

## LORENZO

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

## PORTIA

This night methinks is but the daylight sick; It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,

Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

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

## BASSANIO

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

## PORTIA

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

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

## BASSANIO

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend. This is the man, this is Antonio,

To whom I am so inﬁnitely bound.

## PORTIA

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

## ANTONIO

No more than I am well acquitted of.

## PORTIA

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

## GRATIANO

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

Would he were gelt that had it, for my part, Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

## PORTIA

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

## GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring That she did give me, whose posy was For all the world like cutler's poetry

Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'

## NERISSA

What talk you of the posy or the value? You swore to me, when I did give it you,

That you would wear it till your hour of death And that it should lie with you in your grave: Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths, You should have been respective and have kept it. Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,

The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

## GRATIANO

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

## NERISSA

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

## GRATIANO

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth, A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,

No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk, A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:

I could not for my heart deny it him.

## PORTIA

You were to blame, I must be plain with you, To part so slightly with your wife's ﬁrst gift: A thing stuck on with oaths upon your ﬁnger And so riveted with faith unto your ﬂesh.

I gave my love a ring and made him swear Never to part with it; and here he stands;

I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it Nor pluck it from his ﬁnger, for the wealth

That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano, You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief: An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

## BASSANIO

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

## GRATIANO

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed

Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,

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

## PORTIA

What ring gave you my lord?

Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

## BASSANIO

If I could add a lie unto a fault,

I would deny it; but you see my ﬁnger Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

Nor I in yours

Till I again see mine.

## BASSANIO

Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the ring And would conceive for what I gave the ring And how unwillingly I left the ring,

When nought would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

## PORTIA

If you had known the virtue of the ring, Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, Or your own honour to contain the ring,

You would not then have parted with the ring. What man is there so much unreasonable,

If you had pleased to have defended it

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe:

I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

## BASSANIO

No, by my honour, madam, by my soul, No woman had it, but a civil doctor,

Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him And suffer'd him to go displeased away;

Even he that did uphold the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? I was enforced to send it after him;

I was beset with shame and courtesy; My honour would not let ingratitude

So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady; For, by these blessed candles of the night,

Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

## PORTIA

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house: Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,

And that which you did swear to keep for me, I will become as liberal as you;

I'll not deny him any thing I have,

No, not my body nor my husband's bed: Know him I shall, I am well sure of it:

Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus: If you do not, if I be left alone,

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

## NERISSA

And I his clerk; therefore be well advised

How you do leave me to mine own protection.

## BASSANIO

Nay, but hear me:

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear I never more will break an oath with thee.

## ANTONIO

I once did lend my body for his wealth;

Which, but for him that had your husband's ring, Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord Will never more break faith advisedly.

## PORTIA

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this

*[gives same ring to Antonio]*

And bid him keep it better than the other.

## ANTONIO

Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

## BASSANIO

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

## PORTIA

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

## NERISSA

And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano;

For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk, In lieu of this last night did lie with me.

## GRATIANO

What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

## PORTIA

Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed: Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;

It comes from Padua, from Bellario:

There you shall ﬁnd that Portia was the doctor, Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you And even but now return'd; I have not yet

Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome; And I have better news in store for you

Than you expect: unseal this letter soon; There you shall ﬁnd three of your argosies Are richly come to harbour suddenly:

You shall not know by what strange accident I chanced on this letter.

## ANTONIO

I am dumb.

## BASSANIO

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

## GRATIANO

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

## NERISSA

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

Unless he live until he be a man.

## BASSANIO

Sweet doctor, you shall be my bed-fellow: When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

## ANTONIO

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living; For here I read for certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.

## PORTIA

How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

## NERISSA

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift, After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

## LORENZO

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

## PORTIA

It is almost morning,

And yet I am sure you are not satisﬁed Of these events at full. Let us go in; And charge us there upon inter'gatories,

And we will answer all things faithfully.

## GRATIANO

Let it be so: the ﬁrst inter'gatory

That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is, Whether till the next night she had rather stay, Or go to bed now, being two hours to day:

But were the day come, I should wish it dark, That I were couching with the doctor's clerk. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing

So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

*Exit all; Antonio tosses yarmulke to Jessica who drops it on the ground; she looks at her father’s yarmulke*