

The Merchant of Venice

William Shakespeare

Contents

Dramatis Personae	3
Act 1	4
Scene 1	4
Scene 2	9
Scene 3	13
Act 2	19
Scene 1	19
Scene 2	20
Scene 3	26
Scene 4	27
Scene 5	28
Scene 6	30
Scene 7	33
Scene 8	35
Scene 9	37
Act 3	41
Scene 1	41
Scene 2	44
Scene 3	54
Scene 4	55
Scene 5	57
Act 4	61
Scene 1	61
Scene 2	76
Act 5	78
Scene 1	78

Dramatis Personae

PORTIA *an heiress of Belmont*

NERISSA *her waiting-gentlewoman*

Servants to Portia:

BALTHAZAR

STEPHANO

Suitors to Portia:

Prince of MOROCCO

Prince of ARRAGON

ANTONIO *a merchant of Venice*

BASSANIO *a Venetian gentleman, suitor to Portia*

Companions of Antonio and Bassanio:

SOLANIO

SALARINO

GRATIANO

LORENZO

LEONARDO *servant to Bassanio*

SHYLOCK *a Jewish moneylender in Venice*

JESSICA *his daughter*

TUBAL *another Jewish moneylender*

LANCELET GOBBO *servant to Shylock and later to Bassanio*

OLD GOBBO *Lancelet's father*

SALERIO *a messenger from Venice*

Jailer

Duke of Venice

Magnificoes of Venice

Servants

Attendants and followers

Messenger

Musicians

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

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

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,
Piring in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALARINO My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
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
And see the holy edifice of stone
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this

And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO
Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

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
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
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 you well.
We leave you now with better company.

SALARINO
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
Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say,
when?

You grow exceeding strange. Must it be so?

SALARINO

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[Salarino and Solanio exit.]

LORENZO

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

BASSANIO

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO

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

ANTONIO

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

GRATIANO Let me play the fool.
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man whose blood is warm within
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes? And creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio
(I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks):
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond
And do a willful stillness entertain
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark."
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,

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

I'll tell thee more of this another time.

But fish not with this melancholy bait

For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.—

Come, good Lorenzo.—Fare you well a while.

I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO

Well, we will leave you then till dinner time.

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,

For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRATIANO

Well, keep me company but two years more,

Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own
tongue.

ANTONIO

Fare you well. I'll grow a talker for this gear.

GRATIANO

Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable

In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

[Gratiano and Lorenzo exit.]

ANTONIO Is that anything 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,

How much I have disabled mine estate

By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance.

Nor do I now make moan to be abridged

From such a noble rate. But my chief care

Is to come fairly off from the great debts

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

ANTONIO

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honor, be assured
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
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
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

ANTONIO

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

BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast

Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strond,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift
That I should questionless be fortunate!

ANTONIO

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth:
Try what my credit can in Venice do;
That shall be racked 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.

[They exit.]

Scene 2

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

PORTIA Good sentences, and well pronounced.

NERISSA They would be better if well followed.

PORTIA If to do were as easy as to know what were
good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor
men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine
that follows his own instructions. I can easier teach
twenty what were good to be done than to 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 who I would nor refuse who 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 you 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 is there 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 fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

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

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

the Count Palatine. He is every man in no man. If a throstle sing, he falls straight a-cap'ring. He will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands! If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

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

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

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

PORTIA 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. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

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

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

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

PORTIA If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of 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 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?

PORTIA Yes, yes, it was Bassanio—as I think so was he 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 heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. *[To Servingman.]* Sirrah, go before.—Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

[They exit.]

Scene 3

[Enter Bassanio with Shylock the Jew.]

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats, well.

BASSANIO Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK For three months, well.

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

SHYLOCK Antonio shall become bound, well.

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

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats for three months,
and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO Your answer to that?

SHYLOCK Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO Have you heard any imputation to the
contrary?

SHYLOCK 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. Three thousand ducats.
I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK I will be assured I may. And that I may be
assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with
Antonio?

BASSANIO If it please you to dine with us.

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

[Enter Antonio.]

BASSANIO This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK *[aside]*
How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls “interest.” Cursed be my tribe
If I forgive him!

BASSANIO Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK
I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft, how many months
Do you desire? *[To Antonio.]* Rest you fair, good
signior!
Your Worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO
Shylock, albeit 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. *[To Bassanio.]* Is he yet
possessed

How much you would?

SHYLOCK Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO And for three months.

SHYLOCK
I had forgot—three months. [*To Bassanio.*]
You told me so.—
Well then, your bond. And let me see—but hear
you:
Methoughts you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

ANTONIO I do never use it.

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

ANTONIO
And what of him? Did he take interest?

SHYLOCK
No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly “interest.” Mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes being rank
In end of autumn turned to the rams,
And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skillful shepherd pilled me certain wands,
And in the doing of the deed of kind
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colored 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 swayed and fashioned 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 [*aside to Bassanio*]

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 suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe).

You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog,

And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine,

And all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then, it now appears you need my help.

Go to, then. You come to me and you say

“Shylock, we would have moneys”—you say so,

You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,

And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur

Over your threshold. Moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I not say

“Hath a dog money? Is it possible

A cur can lend three thousand ducats?” Or

Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,

With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness,

Say this: “Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last;

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.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends, for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

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

BASSANIO This were kindness!

SHYLOCK This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
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

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

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

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

SHYLOCK

O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain

By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his 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

Then meet me forthwith at the notary's.
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I'll be with you.

ANTONIO Hie thee, gentle Jew.

[Shylock exits.]

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.

[They exit.]

Act 2

Scene 1

[Enter the Prince of Morocco, a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerissa, and their train.]

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,
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
The best regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA

In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.

MOROCCO Even for that I thank you.
Therefore I pray you lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the Earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lychas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand;
So is Alcides beaten by his page,

And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

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

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

PORTIA
First, forward to the temple. After dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

MOROCCO Good fortune then,
To make me blest—or cursed'st among men!
[They exit.]

Scene 2

[Enter Lancelet Gobbo the Clown, alone.]

LANCELET 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,
Lancelet Gobbo, good Lancelet,” or “good Gobbo,”
or “good Lancelet Gobbo, use your legs, take
the start, run away.” My conscience says “No. Take
heed, honest Lancelet, take heed, honest Gobbo,”
or, as aforesaid, “honest Lancelet Gobbo, do not
run; scorn running with thy heels.” Well, the most
courageous fiend bids me pack. “Fial!” says the
fiend. “Away!” says the fiend. “For the heavens,
rouse up a brave mind,” says the fiend, “and run!”
Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my
heart, says very wisely to me “My honest friend
Lancelet, 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 “Lancelet,
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 commandment. I will run.

[Enter old Gobbo with a basket.]

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

LANCELET *[aside]* O heavens, this is my true begotten father, who being more than sandblind, high gravelblind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

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

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

LANCELET Talk you of young Master Lancelet? *[Aside.]* Mark me now, now will I raise the waters.—Talk you of young Master Lancelet?

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.

LANCELET Well, let his father be what he will, we talk of young Master Lancelet.

GOBBO Your Worship's friend, and Lancelet, sir.

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

GOBBO Of Lancelet, an 't please your mastership.

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

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

LANCELET [*aside*] 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?

LANCELET Do you not know me, father?

GOBBO Alack, sir, I am sandblind. I know you not.

LANCELET 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. [*He kneels.*] 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 Lancelet my boy.

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

GOBBO I cannot think you are my son.

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

GOBBO Her name is Margery, indeed. I'll be sworn if thou be Lancelet, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshiped 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.

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

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

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

[*Enter Bassanio with Leonardo and a follower or two.*]

BASSANIO [*to an Attendant*] 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. [*The Attendant exits.*]

LANCELET To him, father.

GOBBO [*to Bassanio*] God bless your Worship.

BASSANIO Gramercy. Wouldst thou aught with me?

GOBBO Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

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

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

LANCELET 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—

LANCELET 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—

LANCELET 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?

LANCELET Serve you, sir.

GOBBO That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

BASSANIO *[to Lancelot]*
I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit.
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.

LANCELET 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. *[To an Attendant.]* Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows'. See it done.
[Attendant exits. Bassanio and Leonardo talk apart.]

LANCELET Father, in. I cannot get a service, no! I have ne'er a tongue in my head! Well, *[studying his palm]* if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book—I shall have good fortune, go to! Here's a simple line of life. Here's a small trifle of wives—alas, fifteen wives is nothing; eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in

for one man—and then to 'scape drowning
thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a
featherbed! 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. *[Lancelet and old Gobbo exit.]*

BASSANIO

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this.
[Handing him a paper.]

These things being bought and orderly bestowed,
Return in haste, for I do feast tonight
My best esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go.

LEONARDO

My best endeavors shall be done herein.

[Enter Gratiano.]

GRATIANO *[to Leonardo]* Where's your master?

LEONARDO Yonder, sir, he walks. *[Leonardo exits.]*

GRATIANO Signior Bassanio!

BASSANIO Gratiano!

GRATIANO I have 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,
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults.
But where thou art not known—why, there they
show
Something too liberal. Pray thee take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

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

BASSANIO Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO
Nay, but I bar 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
That purpose merriment. But fare you well.
I have some business.

GRATIANO
And I must to Lorenzo and the rest.
But we will visit you at supper time.
[They exit.]

Scene 3

[Enter Jessica and Lancelet Gobbo.]

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, Lancelet, 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.

LANCELET 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 Farewell, good Lancelet.

[Lancelet exits.]

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child?
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

[She exits.]

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

We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

SOLANIO

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

LORENZO

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

[Enter Lancelet.]

Friend Lancelet, what's the news?

LANCELET An it shall please you to break up this, it
shall seem to signify. *[Handing him Jessica's letter.]*

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!

LANCELET By your leave, sir.

LORENZO Whither goest thou?

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

LORENZO
Hold here, take this. [*Giving him money.*] Tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her. Speak it privately.

[*Lancelet exits.*]

Go, gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?
I am provided of a torchbearer.

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.
[*Salarino and Solanio exit.*]

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 furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me. Peruse this as thou goest;
[*Handing him the letter.*]

Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.

[*They exit.*]

Scene 5

[*Enter Shylock, the Jew, and Lancelet,
his man that was, the Clown.*]

SHYLOCK

Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio.—
What, Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandize
As thou hast done with me—what, Jessica!—
And sleep, and snore, and rend apparel out.—
Why, Jessica, I say!

LANCELET Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK

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

LANCELET Your Worship was wont to tell me I could
do nothing without bidding.

[Enter Jessica.]

JESSICA Call you? What is your will?

SHYLOCK

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys.—But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love. They flatter me.
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian.—Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house.—I am right loath to go.
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money bags tonight.

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

SHYLOCK So do I his.

LANCELET 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,
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 fopp'ry enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth tonight.
But I will go.—Go you before me, sirrah.
Say I will come.

LANCELET I will go before, sir. [*Aside to Jessica.*] Mistress,
look out at window for all this.
There will come a Christian by
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*He exits.*]

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

JESSICA
His words were "Farewell, mistress," nothing else.

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

JESSICA
Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost.
[*She exits.*]

Scene 6

[*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

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

GRATIANO

That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth 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
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embraced 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!

[Enter Lorenzo.]

SALARINO

Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter.

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, dressed 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,

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 stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA

I will make fast the doors and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.
[Jessica exits, 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,
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, gentleman, away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[All but Gratiano exit.]

[Enter Antonio.]

ANTONIO Who's there?

GRATIANO Signior Antonio?

ANTONIO
Fie, fie, Gratiano, where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock! Our friends all stay for you.
No masque tonight; the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard.
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO
I am glad on 't. I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone tonight.
[They exit.]

Scene 7

*[Enter Portia with the Prince of Morocco and both
their trains.]*

PORTIA
Go, draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
[A curtain is drawn.]
Now make your choice.

MOROCCO
This first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men
desire";
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he
deserves";
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he
hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

PORTIA
The one of them contains my picture, prince.

If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

MOROCCO

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see.

I will survey 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

Do it in hope of fair advantages.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?

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

As much as he deserves—pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand.

If thou beest rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady.

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,

But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I strayed no farther, but chose here?

Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:

"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

Why, that's the lady! All the world desires her.

From the four corners of the Earth they come

To kiss this shrine, this mortal, breathing saint.

The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds

Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now

For princes to come view fair Portia.

The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head

Spets in the face of heaven, is no bar

To stop the foreign spirits, but they come

As o'er a brook to see fair Portia.

One of these three contains her heavenly picture.

Is 't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation

To think so base a thought. It were too gross

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.

Or shall I think in silver she's immured,

Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?

O, sinful thought! Never so rich a gem

Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculped upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within.—Deliver me the key.
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may.

PORTIA

There, take it, prince. [*Handing him the key.*] And if
my form lie there,
Then I am yours.
[*Morocco opens the gold 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:

*All that glisters is not gold—
Often have you heard that told.
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold.
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been enscrolled.
Fare you well, your suit is cold.*

Cold indeed and labor lost!

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost.

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart

To take a tedious leave. Thus losers part.

[*He exits, with his train.*]

PORTIA

A gentle riddance! Draw the curtains, go.

Let all of his complexion choose me so.

[*They exit.*]

Scene 8

[*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,

Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALARINO

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

SOLANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets.
“My daughter, O my ducats, O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice, the law, my ducats, and my daughter,
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol’n from me by my daughter,
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

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
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

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

SALARINO

A kinder gentleman treads not the Earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return. He answered “Do not so.

Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love.
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there."
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand—and so they parted.

SOLANIO

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

SALARINO Do we so.

[They exit.]

Scene 9

[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.

[Enter the Prince of Arragon, his train, and Portia.]

PORTIA

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince.
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:
First, never to unfold to anyone
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 everyone 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.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he
hath."

You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.

What says the golden chest? Ha, let me see:

"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men
desire."

What many men desire—that "many" may be
meant

By the fool multitude that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach,
Which pries not to th' interior, but like the martlet
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then, to thee, thou silver treasure house.
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear.

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

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

O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare?
How many be commanded that command?
How much low peasantry would then be 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."

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,

[He is given a key.]

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?

[He reads.]

*The fire seven times tried this;
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive, iwis,
Silvered o'er—and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head.
So begone; 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. *[He exits with his 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 Messenger.]

MESSENGER

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 regrets;
To wit (besides commends and courteous breath),
Gifts of rich value; yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

PORTIA

No more, I pray thee. I am half 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!

[They exit.]

Act 3

Scene 1

[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 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—O, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

SALARINO Come, the full stop.

SOLANIO 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?

SHYLOCK 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.

SALARINO 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 I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood.

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

SHYLOCK There I have another bad match! A bankrout, 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 cur'sy; 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 villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

[Enter a man from Antonio.]

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

SALARINO We have been up and down to seek him.

[Enter Tubal.]

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

[Salarino, Solanio, and the Servingman exit.]

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

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

SHYLOCK Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in 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 a' my shoulders, no sighs but a' my breathing, no tears but a' 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 it true, is it 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, one night fourscore ducats.

SHYLOCK Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting, fourscore ducats!

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

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

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

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

TUBAL But Antonio is certainly undone.

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

[They exit.]

Scene 2

[Enter Bassanio, Portia, and all their trains, Gratiano, Nerissa.]

PORTIA
I pray you tarry, pause a day or two

Before you hazard, for in choosing wrong
I lose your company; therefore forbear a while.
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 then I am forsworn.
So will I never be. So may you miss me.
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'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. O, these naughty times
Puts bars between the owners and their rights!
And so though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time,
To eche it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

BASSANIO Let me choose,
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

PORTIA
Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASSANIO
None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love.
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

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

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

PORTIA
Well, then, confess and live.

BASSANIO "Confess and love"

Had been the very sum of my confession.
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA

Away, then. I am 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,
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And wat'ry deathbed for him. He may win,
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch. Such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence but with much more love
Than young Alcides when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of th' exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live. With much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

*[A song the whilst Bassanio comments on
the caskets to himself.]*

*Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engendered in the eye,
With gazing fed, and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell.
I'll begin it.—Ding, dong, bell.*

ALL *Ding, dong, bell.*

BASSANIO

So may the outward shows be least themselves;
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who inward searched have livers white as milk,
And these assume but valor's excrement
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.
So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
Which maketh such wanton gambols with the wind
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulcher.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, then, 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 meager lead,
Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!
[Bassanio is given a key.]

PORTIA *[aside]*
How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts and rash embraced despair,
And shudd'ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,
In measure rain thy joy, scant this excess!
I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

[Bassanio opens the lead casket.]

BASSANIO What find I here?
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demigod
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
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
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
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
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.

[He reads the scroll.]

*You that choose not by the view
Chance as fair and choose as true.
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss.*

A gentle scroll! Fair lady, by your leave,
I come by note to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no,
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I even so,
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

PORTIA

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish
To wish myself much better, yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich, that only to stand high in your account
I might in virtues, 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, unpracticed;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
Is now converted. But now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring,
[Handing him a ring.]
Which, when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASSANIO

Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,
And there is such confusion in my powers
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude,
Where every something being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
Expressed and not expressed. 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 honors mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you
Even at that time I may be married too.

BASSANIO

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

GRATIANO

I thank your Lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets 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
With oaths of love, at last (if promise last)
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

PORTIA Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA
Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

BASSANIO
And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO
Our feast shall be much honored in your marriage.

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

NERISSA What, and stake down?

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

*[Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salerio, a messenger
from Venice.]*

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

BASSANIO
Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither—
If that the youth of my new int'rest 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. 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
To come with him along.

SALERIO I did, my lord,

And I have reason for it. *[Handing him a paper.]*

Signior Antonio

Commends him to you.

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.

[Bassanio opens the letter.]

GRATIANO

Nerissa, cheer yond 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 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?—
With leave, Bassanio, I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words

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

SALERIO Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and greedy to confound a man.
He plies the Duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port have all persuaded with him,
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

JESSICA
When I was with him, I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him. And I know, my lord,
If law, authority, and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

PORTIA
Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best 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
For me, three thousand ducats.

PORTIA What, no more?
Pay him six thousand and deface the bond.
Double six thousand and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend!
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away,
For you shall hence upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

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

PORTIA
O love, dispatch all business and begone!

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,
Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

[They exit.]

Scene 3

*[Enter Shylock, the Jew, and Solanio, and 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.
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,
But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
The Duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder,
Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

ANTONIO I pray thee, hear me speak—

SHYLOCK

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

SOLANIO

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

ANTONIO Let him alone.

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

SOLANIO I am sure the Duke

Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANTONIO

The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity that strangers have

With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go.
These griefs and losses have so bated me
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.—
Well, jailer, on.—Pray God Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not.

[They exit.]

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.
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

I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now; for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
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
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,

Until her husband and my lord's return.
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

LORENZO Madam, with all my heart.
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

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

Now, Balthazar,
As I have ever found thee honest true,
So let me find thee still: take this same letter,
And use thou all th' endeavor of a man
In speed to Padua. See thou render this
Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario.
[She gives him a paper.]

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
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. *[He exits.]*

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 accoutered like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies
How 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.
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 Why, shall we turn to men?

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

[They exit.]

Scene 5

[Enter Lancelet, the Clown, and Jessica.]

LANCELET Yes, truly, for look you, the sins of the father
are to be laid upon the children. Therefore I
promise you 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?

LANCELET 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!

LANCELET 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.

LANCELET Truly the more to blame he! We were Christians enow before, e'en as many as could well live one by another. This making of 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, Lancelet, what you say. Here he comes.

LORENZO I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Lancelet, if you thus get my wife into corners!

JESSICA Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo. Lancelet and I are out. He tells me flatly there's 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, Lancelet.

LANCELET 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.

LANCELET That is done, sir. They have all stomachs.

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

LANCELET That is done too, sir, only “cover” is the word.

LORENZO Will you cover, then, sir?

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

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.

LANCELET 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 humors and conceits shall govern. *[Lancelet exits.]*

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

JESSICA
Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life,
For having such a blessing in his lady
He finds the joys of heaven here on Earth,
And if on Earth he do not 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,
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
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.

JESSICA Well, I'll set you forth.

[They exit.]

Act 4

Scene 1

[Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Salerio, and Gratiano, with Attendants.]

DUKE What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO Ready, so please your Grace.

DUKE
I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage of his.

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

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

[Enter Shylock.]

DUKE
Make room, and let him stand before our face.—
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but leadest 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 exacts the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touched with humane gentleness and love,
Forgive a moi'ty of the principal,
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses

That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks, and Tartars never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK

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!
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 humor. Is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you 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,
Cannot contain their urine; for affection
Masters oft 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,
Why he a harmless necessary cat,
Why he a woolen bagpipe, but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended,
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

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 *[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
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard
As seek to soften that than which what's harder?—
His Jewish heart. Therefore I do beseech you
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK

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

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring 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 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:
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 today.

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

DUKE

Bring us the letters. 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 employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

[Enter Nerissa, disguised as a lawyer's clerk.]

DUKE

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA *[as Clerk]*

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.

*[Handing him a paper, which he reads, aside, while
Shylock sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe.]*

BASSANIO

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrout there.

GRATIANO

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

SHYLOCK

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO

O, be thou damned, inexecrable dog,
And for thy life let justice be accused;
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras
That souls of animals infuse themselves
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
Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

SHYLOCK

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

DUKE

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

NERISSA [*as Clerk*] 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.

[*Attendants exit.*]

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

[*He 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 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.

You hear the learned Bellario what he writes.

[Enter Portia for Balthazar, disguised as a doctor of laws, with Attendants.]

And here I take it is the doctor come.—
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA *[as Balthazar]*
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 *[as Balthazar]*
I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here? And which the Jew?

DUKE
Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA *[as Balthazar]*
Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK Shylock is my name.

PORTIA *[as Balthazar]*
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
Ay, so he says.

PORTIA *[as Balthazar]* Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO

I do.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*] Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

The quality of mercy is not strained.
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 scepter 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 sceptered 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 [*as Balthazar*]

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. [*To the Duke.*] 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 [*as Balthazar*]
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 honor thee!

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
I pray you let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK
Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
[Handing Portia a paper.]

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

SHYLOCK
An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven!
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice!

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*] Why, this bond is forfeit,
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart.—Be merciful;
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK
When it is paid according to the tenor.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law; your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO
Most heartily I do beseech the court

To give the judgment.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*] Why, then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife—

SHYLOCK
O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar, to Antonio*]
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 [*as Balthazar*]
It is so.
Are there balance here to weigh the flesh?

SHYLOCK I have them ready.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar*]
You, merchant, have you anything to say?

ANTONIO

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
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty, from which ling'ring penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honorable wife,
Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death,
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend
And he repents not that he pays your debt.
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

BASSANIO

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself,
But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not with me esteemed above thy life.
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

PORTIA [*aside*]

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

GRATIANO

I have a wife who I protest I love.
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

NERISSA [*aside*]

'Tis well you offer it behind her back.
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

SHYLOCK

These be the Christian husbands! I have a
daughter—
Would any of the stock of Barabbas
Had been her husband, rather than a Christian!
We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

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 [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar*] Thyself shalt see the act.
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st.

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 [*as Balthazar*]
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 [*as Balthazar*]

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 tak'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple—nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO

A second Daniel! A Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

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 [*as Balthazar*]

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 [*as Balthazar*]

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. [*He begins to exit.*]

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*] 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 incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRATIANO

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself!
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's
charge.

DUKE

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 [*as Balthazar*]

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 [*as Balthazar*]

What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO

A halter gratis, nothing else, for God's sake!

ANTONIO

So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it

Upon his death unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter.
Two things provided more: that for this favor
He presently become a Christian;
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 pronounced here.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK
I am content.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*] Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK
I pray you give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. Send the deed after me
And I will sign it.

DUKE Get thee gone, but do it.

GRATIANO
In christ'ning 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.
[Shylock exits.]

DUKE [*to Portia as Balthazar*]
Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]
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.
[The Duke and his train exit.]

BASSANIO [*to Portia as Balthazar*]

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof
Three thousand ducats due unto the Jew
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO

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

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

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.
[She begins to exit.]

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
Give me your gloves; I'll wear them for your sake—
And for your love I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more,
And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO

This ring, good sir? Alas, it is a trifle.
I will not shame myself to give you this.

PORTIA [*as Balthazar*]

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 [*as Balthazar*]

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 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 [*as Balthazar*]

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
And if your wife be not a madwoman,
And know how well I have deserved this ring,
She would not hold out enemy forever
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.

[*Portia and Nerissa exit.*]

ANTONIO

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst 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.

[*Gratiano exits.*]

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

[*They exit.*]

Scene 2

[*Enter Portia and Nerissa, still in disguise.*]

PORTIA

Inquire the Jew's house out; give him this deed
And let him sign it. [*She gives Nerissa a paper.*] We'll
away tonight,
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. *[He gives her a ring.]*

PORTIA *[as Balthazar]* 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 *[as Clerk]* 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 forever.

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.—
Away, make haste! Thou know'st where I will tarry.
[She exits.]

NERISSA *[as Clerk]*
Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?
[They exit.]

Act 5

Scene 1

[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 Trojan walls
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

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 Aeson.

LORENZO In such a night

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA In such a night

Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

LORENZO In such a night

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

JESSICA

I would out-night you did nobody come,
But hark, I hear the footing of a man.

[Enter Stephano, a Messenger.]

LORENZO

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO A friend.

LORENZO

A friend? What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend.

STEPHANO

Stephano is my name, and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

LORENZO Who comes with her?

STEPHANO

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

LORENZO

He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

[Enter Lancelet, the Clown.]

LANCELET Sola, sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!

LORENZO Who calls?

LANCELET Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master
Lorenzo, sola, sola!

LORENZO Leave holloaing, man! Here.

LANCELET Sola! Where, where?

LORENZO Here!

LANCELET Tell him there's a post come from my master
with his horn full of good news. My master will
be here ere morning, sweet soul. *[Lancelet exits.]*

LORENZO *[to Jessica]*

Let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter; why should we go in?—
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand,
And bring your music forth into the air.

[Stephano exits.]

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
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 Stephano and musicians.]

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

[Music plays.]

JESSICA

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO

The reason is, your spirits are attentive.
For do but note a wild and wanton herd
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood,
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes 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,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,

Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

[Enter Portia and Nerissa.]

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

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

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

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

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

NERISSA
Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

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

[Music ceases.]

LORENZO That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

PORTIA

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

LORENZO Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA

We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed we hope the better for our words.
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—
Nor you, Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.

[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
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.

[Gratiano and Nerissa talk aside.]

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 begged it as a fee.
I could not for my heart deny it him.

PORTIA

You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift,
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it, and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
An 'twere to me I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO [*aside*]

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

GRATIANO

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begged it, and indeed
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

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 [*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,
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,
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
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 honor, madam, by my soul,
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 had held up 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 honor 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 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,
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.
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 honor, which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

NERISSA

And I his clerk. Therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO

Well, do you so. Let not me take him, then,
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO

I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA

Sir, grieve not you. You are welcome
notwithstanding.

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself,
In each eye one. Swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

BASSANIO Nay, but hear me.

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

ANTONIO

I once did lend my body for his wealth,
Which but for him that had your husband's ring
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

PORTIA

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
[Giving Antonio a ring.]
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.
[She shows a ring.]

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.
[She hands a paper to Bassanio.]

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 returned. I have not yet
Entered my house.—Antonio, you are welcome,
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.
[Handing him a paper.]

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 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 *[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;

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.
[Handing him a paper.]

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 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
Till 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.
[They exit.]