

# The Merchant of Venice

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## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE SYNOPSIS

Bassanio, a noble but indebted Venetian, asks to borrow three thousand ducats from his wealthy friend Antonio, so that he may court the beautiful and rich heiress of Belmont, Portia. Antonio's money, unfortunately, is invested in merchant ships that are presently at sea. To help his beloved friend, Antonio arranges for a short-term loan from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender he despises. Instead of the usual forfeiture of goods if the loan is not repaid, Shylock jokingly suggests that if Antonio does not repay the loan in three months, he will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh. Confident his ships will safely return to port, and despite Bassanio's misgivings, Antonio agrees to Shylock's terms. Shylock's daughter, Jessica elopes with the Christian gentleman, Lorenzo. Bassanio, accompanied by his friend Gratiano, departs for Belmont.

According to her father's will, Portia must marry whichever man chooses the right casket (box), out of a choice of gold, silver or lead. If a suitor chooses incorrectly, he is condemned to remain unmarried forever. The Prince of Morocco chooses the gold casket and fails; the Prince of Arragon chooses the silver casket and fails; Bassanio, with whom Portia has already fallen in love, chooses the lead casket and wins Portia and her fortune. Gratiano marries Portia's maid, Nerissa. The husbands pledge lifelong fidelity when given rings by their wives.

Word then comes that none of Antonio's ships has arrived in port. Shylock's hatred of Christians has been magnified by his daughter's elopement and her theft of his money and jewels. He decides to seek revenge upon Antonio and appeals to the Duke for his pound of flesh. Bassanio and Gratiano hurry back to support their friend. Portia and Nerissa follow, disguised as a judge and a clerk.

With a letter of introduction from the respected Dr. Belario, Portia (Balthasar) is given the responsibility of judging the case. Her appeals to Shylock for mercy are unsuccessful. Even when offered nine thousand ducats as payment, the vengeful Shylock insists on the letter of the law: the payment is late and he demands justice (a pound of Antonio's flesh). After Shylock refuses to supply a doctor to save Antonio's life, Portia grants Shylock his bond. Just before he cuts Antonio's flesh, Portia points out, on pain of death, that the pound must not include one drop of blood. Shylock relents but is then charged with plotting the death of a Venetian citizen. Ultimately, he is forced to relinquish half of his wealth, will all he owns to his son-in-law, Lorenzo, and become a Christian. Before parting for home, both 'judge' Portia and 'clerk' Nerissa request (as tokens of gratitude for saving Antonio's life) the rings they gave their husbands.

Once back in Belmont the two young women tease their husbands by accusing them of giving away their rings to women. They then reveal the whole story of the disguises and the trial, and produce the rings, which their husbands swear once again to keep forever. Portia also reveals to Antonio that three of his ships have come safely to harbor and Lorenzo learns of Shylock's will. The play has a bitter-sweet ending, for although there is now plenty of money to go around and three new marriages to celebrate, Antonio has lost his best friend to Portia, Jessica must now negotiate a life between two very different worlds and Shylock must renounce his faith.

## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

### LIST OF CHARACTERS

DUKE OF VENICE	
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO	Suitor to Portia
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON	Suitor to Portia
PORTIA	Heiress of Belmont
NERISSA	Gentlewoman to Portia
BALTHASAR	Servant to Portia
STEPHANO	Servant to Portia
ANTONIO	A merchant of Venice
BASSANIO	Antonio's friend and suitor to Portia
GRATIANO	Friend to Antonio and Bassanio
LORENZO	Bassanio's friend, in love with Jessica
SALERIO	Friend to Antonio and Bassanio
SALANIO	Friend to Antonio and Bassanio
LANCELOT GOBBO	Shylock's servant, later Bassanio's
OLD GOBBO	Lancelot's father
JAILER	
CLERK	
SHYLOCK	A Jewish moneylender
TUBAL	A Jew, his friend
JESSICA	Daughter of Shylock
Magnificoes of Venice, court officers, servants, musicians, and other attendants.	
SCENE	Venice and Belmont

**Act 1, Scene 1 Venice. A street**

(ANTONIO, SALERIO and SALANIO.)

ANTONIO

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

But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, what stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born, I am to learn.

SALERIO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean, where your argosies\* with portly sail  
do overpeer the petty traffickers\* that curtsy to them, as they fly by them with their woven wings.

SALANIO

Believe me sir, had I such venture\* forth, the better part of my affections would be with my hopes abroad.  
I should be still plucking the grass to know where sits the wind, peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;  
and every object that might make me fear misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt would make me sad.

SALERIO

My wind cooling my broth would blow me to an ague\* when I thought what harm a wind at sea might do.  
Should I go to church and see the holy edifice of stone I would 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.

I know Antonio is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO

Believe me, no. I thank my fortune 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.

SALANIO

Why, then you are in love.

ANTONIO

Fie, fie!

SALANIO

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad, because you are not merry.

(Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO and GRATIANO.)

SALANIO

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

Fare ye well. We leave you now with better company.

I would have stayed till I had made you merry, if worthier friends had not prevented me.

*argosies* - large merchant ships, *overpeer the petty traffickers* - tower above the smaller vessels,  
*venture* - risky enterprise, *ague* - shivering fever, *bottom* - keel or hull; hence, ship

ANTONIO

Your worth is very dear in my regard.

I take it your own business calls on you, and you embrace the occasion to depart.

SALANIO

Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

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

SALERIO

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

*(Exeunt SALERIO and SALANIO.)*

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.

*(Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO.)*

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.\*  
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 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 self same flight the self same way, with more advised watch, to find the other forth;  
and by adventuring both I oft found both.

*swelling port* - lavish behavior, *grant continuance* - allow to continue, *come fairly off* - honorably extricate myself, *warranty* - duty, *gaged* - pledged for, *occasions* - needs, *shaft* - arrow

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, I'll 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 and I am pressed\* unto it. Therefore speak.

BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left;\* and she is fair, and fairer than that word, 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.  
 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 knowest 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.  
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I, where money is.

(*Exeunt.*)

*hazard* - stake; chance; venture, *spend...circumstance* - needlessly persuade me with elaborate talk,  
*making...uttermost* - questioning that I will do all that I can, *pressed* - impelled,  
*richly left* - rich by inheritance, *nothing undervalued* - equal, *thrift* - profit; success, *commodity* - goods

## Act 1, Scene 2 Belmont. A room in Portia's house

(PORTIA and NERISSA.)

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are. And yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.

PORTIA

Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose nor refuse my own husband? So is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father.

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, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

PORTIA

He doth nothing but talk of his horse. I am much afeard his mother played false with a smith.\*

NERISSA

Then there is the County Palatine.

PORTIA

He doth nothing but frown. 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

Why he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, and a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine. If a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands.

*mother played false with a smith* - mother was unfaithful to the father with a blacksmith

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 is a proper man's picture,\* but who can converse with a dumb show?

How oddly he is suited!\* I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behavior everywhere.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk.

When he is best he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst he is little better than a beast.

NERISSA

If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket,

you should refuse to perform your father's will if you should refuse to accept him.

PORTIA

Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish\* wine on the contrary\* casket.

I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

*(A servant delivers a note to NERISSA.)*

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.

PORTIA

I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable,\*

for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

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

*proper man's picture* - handsome, *suit* - dressed (the English were known for their eclectic tastes in fashion), *Rhenish* - white German wine, *contrary* - wrong, *reasonable* - (because the price for choosing incorrectly is never marrying)

*(Enter a SERVANT.)*

How now? What news?

SERVANT

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

PORTIA

If I could bid the sixth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other five farewell,  
I should be glad of his approach.  
Come, Nerissa.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 1, Scene 3 Venice. A public place**

(BASSANIO and SHYLOCK.)

SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats\* well.

BASSANIO

Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK

For three months well.

BASSANIO

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

SHYLOCK

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

Oh, no, no, no, no!

My meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient.

Yet his means are in supposition.\* He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies;

I understand moreover, upon the Rialto,\* he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad.

But ships are but boards, sailors but men;

there be land rats and water rats 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.

*Three thousand ducats* - a good yearly income, *bound* - responsible, as a surety, *stead* - assist, *in supposition* - uncertain, *Rialto* - the business center of Venice

BASSANIO

Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK

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

BASSANIO

If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK

Yes, to smell pork.

I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, and walk with you;  
but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.  
Who is he comes here?

*(Enter ANTONIO.)*

BASSANIO

This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK

*(Aside.)* How like a fawning publican\* he looks.

I hate him for he is a Christian; 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, although I neither lend nor borrow by taking nor by giving of excess,  
yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend, I'll break a custom.

*(To BASSANIO.)* Is he yet possessed how much ye would?

*publican* - innkeeper, *low simplicity* - despicable naivety, *gratis* - without charging interest,  
*usance* - interest, *upon the hip* - at a disadvantage (a wrestling metaphor)

SHYLOCK

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO

And for three months.

SHYLOCK

I had forgot—three months, you told me so.

Well then, your bond; and let me see—

but hear you, methought you said you neither lend nor borrow upon advantage.

ANTONIO

I do never use it.

SHYLOCK

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—

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:

Laban and himself were agreed that all the eanlings\* which were streaked and pied\* should fall as Jacob's hire.\*

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

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?

*eanlings* - lambs, *pied* - spotted, *hire* - wages, *served for* - an objection to usury was that it involved no labor

## SHYLOCK

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft in the Rialto you have rated\* me about my moneys and my usances. Still have I borne it with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

You call me misbeliever, cut throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,\* and all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then, it now appears you need my help. 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 whispering humbleness, say this: 'Fair sir, you spit 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 spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.

If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not as to thy friends, for when did friendship take a breed for barren metal\* of his friend?

But lend it rather to thine enemy, who if he break, thou mayest 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.

*rated* - berated, *gaberdine* - loose cloak, *void your rheum* - spit, *spurn a stranger cur* - kick an unknown dog of mixed breed, a mongrel, *suit* - request, *bondman's key* - serf's tone or attitude, *breed for barren metal* - interest or offspring from barren gold, *doit of usance* - small sum of interest, *notary* - an official authorized to certify documents

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 Abraham, 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 profitable as flesh of muttuns, 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 will be with you.

ANTONIO

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

*(Exit SHYLOCK.)*

The Hebrew will turn Christian. He grows kind.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

Come on. In this there can be no dismay; my ships come home a month before the day.

*(Exeunt.)*

## Act 2, Scene 1 Belmont. A room in Portia's house

*(Flourish of trumpets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA and others attending.)*

MOROCCO

Mislike me not for my complexion.\*

Bring me the fairest creature northward born,

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

If my father had not 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 outstare 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.

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.

*(Flourish of trumpets. Exeunt.)*

*complexion* - black skin, *scimitar* - a short curved sword, *Sophy* - Emperor of Persia,  
*to the temple* - i.e. to swear his oath never to marry if he fails

**Act 2, Scene 2 Venice. A street***(LANCELOT.)*

LANCELOT

I hope 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, Lancelot Gobbo, or good Lancelot Gobbo use your legs, take the start, run away.'  
 My conscience says, 'No. Take heed, honest Lancelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,'  
 or as aforesaid, 'honest Lancelot Gobbo—do not run; scorn running with thy heels.'  
 Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack.  
 'Away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind.'  
 Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me,  
 'My honest friend Lancelot, 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, 'Lancelot, 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 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.  
 The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

*(Enter OLD GOBBO)*

GOBBO

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

LANCELOT

*(Aside.)* O heavens, this is my true begotten father, who being sand blind,\* knows me not.  
 I will try confusions with him.

GOBBO

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

LANCELOT

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

By God's sonties,\* 'twill be a hard way to hit!  
 Can you tell me whether one Lancelot dwell with him or no?

LANCELOT

Talk you of young Master Lancelot?  
*(Aside.)* Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.\*  
 Talk you of young Master Lancelot?

*fiend* - devil, *sand blind* - partly blind, *sonties* - saints?, *raise the waters* - raise tears

GOBBO

Of Lancelot, an't please your mastership.

LANCELOT

Talk not of Master Lancelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies is deceased.

GOBBO

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

LANCELOT

*(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?

LANCELOT

Do you not know me, father?

GOBBO

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

LANCELOT

Nay, if you had your eyes you might fail of the knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child.

I am Lancelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

GOBBO

I cannot think you are my son.

LANCELOT

I am Lancelot, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

GOBBO

Her name is Margery, indeed! Thou art Lancelot, mine own flesh and blood.

How dost thou and thy master agree?

LANCELOT

I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.

Father, I am glad you are come. You may present me to one Master Bassanio, who gives rare new liveries.\*

O rare fortune! Here comes the man. To him, father.

*(Enter BASSANIO and followers.)*

BASSANIO

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.

*cudgel* - club, *liveries* - uniforms for servants

*(Exit a servant.)*

LANCELOT  
To him, father.

GOBBO  
God bless your worship!

BASSANIO  
Gramercy.\* Wouldst thou with me?

GOBBO  
Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

LANCELOT  
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—

LANCELOT  
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.\*

LANCELOT  
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  
My suit is—

LANCELOT  
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?

LANCELOT  
Serve you, sir.

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

*Gramercy* - thank you; literally, {God} grant {you} mercy, *infection* - he means affection,  
*cater-cousins* - close friends, *frutify* - he means certify or notify,  
*impertinent* - he means pertinent, *defect* - he means effect

BASSANIO

I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit. Shylock 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. Go, father, with thy son. Take leave of thy old master and inquire my lodging out.  
(*To a servant.*) Give him a livery more guarded\* than his fellows'. See it done.

LANCELOT

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 of an eye.

(*Exeunt LANCELOT, OLD GOBBO and a servant.*)

(*Enter GRATIANO.*)

GRATIANO

Signior Bassanio.

BASSANIO

Gratiano.

GRATIANO

I have a suit to you.

BASSANIO

You have obtained it.

GRATIANO

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

BASSANIO

Why then you must.

But hear thee, Gratiano; thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice—  
parts that become thee happily enough 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, never trust me more.

BASSANIO

Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO

Nay, but I bar\* to night. You shall not gauge me by what we do tonight.

*guarded* - decorated, *gear* - business, *allay* - calm, *habit* - dress; demeanor, *bar* - exclude

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.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 2, Scene 3 Venice. A room in Shylock's house**

(Enter JESSICA and LANCELOT.)

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, Lancelot, 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.

LANCELOT

Adieu! Tears exhibit\* my tongue.  
Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived.

JESSICA

Farewell, good Lancelot.

(Exit LANCELOT.)

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.

(Exit JESSICA.)

*exhibit* - he means inhibit

## Act 2, Scene 4 Venice. A street

*(Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALERIO and SALANIO.)*

LORENZO

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

GRATIANO

We have not made good preparation.\*

SALANIO

We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

SALERIO

'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 LANCELOT, with a letter.)*

Friend Lancelot, what's the news?

LANCELOT

And it shall please you to break up this,\* it shall seem to signify.

LORENZO

I know the hand.

GRATIANO

Love news, in faith.

LANCELOT

By your leave, sir.

LORENZO

Whither goest thou?

LANCELOT

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

LORENZO

Hold here, take this. *(Gives money.)* Tell gentle Jessica I will not fail her. Speak it privately.

*(Exit LANCELOT.)*

**good preparation** - masquing was often an elaborate affair with costumes, masks, torchbearers, heralds and musicians, **quaintly ordered** - elaborately arranged, **break up this** - unseal the letter

I am provided of a torch bearer.  
Go, gentlemen; will you prepare for this masque tonight?

SALERIO  
I'll be gone about it straight.

SALANIO  
And so will I.

LORENZO  
Meet me and Gratiano at Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALERIO  
'Tis good we do so.

*(Exeunt SALERIO and SALANIO.)*

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 ever the Jew her father come to heaven, it will be for his gentle daughter's sake.  
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 2, Scene 5 Venice. Before Shylock's house**

(Enter SHYLOCK and LANCELOT.)

SHYLOCK

Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge, the difference of old Shylock and Bassanio—  
What, Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandise,\* as thou hast done with me—  
What, Jessica!—and sleep and snore, and rend apparel out\*—  
Why, Jessica, I say!

LANCELOT

Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK

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

LANCELOT

Your worship was wont to tell me that 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 to night.

LANCELOT

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

SHYLOCK

So do I his.

LANCELOT

And they shall have a masque.

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 foppery enter my sober house.

*gormandise* - feast, *rend apparel out* - ruin clothing by tearing, *prodigal* - exceedingly wasteful, *reproach* - he means approach, although Shylock takes him literally, *fife* - small pipe, *clamber* - climb, *casements* - windows

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.

LANCELOT

I will go before, sir.

Mistress, look out at window for all this. There will come a Christian by, will be worth a Jewess' eye.

*(Exit LANCELOT.)*

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 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.

*(Exit SHYLOCK.)*

JESSICA

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

*(Exit JESSICA.)*

**Hagar's offspring** - i.e. a gentile and an outcast, **wildcat** - a nocturnal animal that sleeps by day,  
**drone** - a male honeybee that serves only in a reproductive capacity, has no sting and does no work,  
**Fast bind, fast find** - a proverb about keeping things secure and thus finding them quickly

**Act 2, Scene 6 Venice. Before Shylock's house**

*(Enter the masquers, GRATIANO, SALANIO and SALERIO)*

GRATIANO

This is the penthouse\* under which Lorenzo desired us to make stand.

SALERIO

His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO

It is marvel he outdwells his hour, for lovers ever run before the clock.

SALANIO

Here comes Lorenzo.

*(Enter LORENZO.)*

LORENZO

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

*(Enter JESSICA above, in boy's clothes.)*

JESSICA

Who are you?

LORENZO

Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA

Lorenzo certain, and my love indeed, for who love I so much?  
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?  
Why, 'tis an office of discovery,\* love; and I should be obscured.

*penthouse* - slanting eaves, *abode* - delay, *exchange* - i.e. boys clothes for her maid's clothes,  
*an office of discovery* - torchbearing is an act that reveals

LORENZO

So are you, sweet, even in the lovely garnish of a boy.  
But come at once, for 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.

*(Exit JESSICA above.)*

GRATIANO

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

LORENZO

Beshrew me but I love her heartily!  
For she is wise, if I can judge of her, and fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,  
and true she is, as she hath proved herself,  
and therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true, shall she be placed in my constant soul.

*(Enter JESSICA below.)*

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

*(Exeunt LORENZO, JESSICA, SALANIO and SALERIO.)*

*(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 it. I desire no more delight than to be under sail and gone tonight.

*(Exeunt.)*

*stayed* - waited, *make fast* - lock, *gild* - overlay with a thin layer of gold, *hood* - (of his masquing cloak?)

**Act 2, Scene 7 Belmont. A room in Portia's house**

*(Flourish of trumpets. Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their trains.)*

PORTIA

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

MOROCCO

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

PORTIA

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 the inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket? 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'

Must give—for what? for lead? hazard for lead? This casket threatens.

Men that hazard all 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 be'st rated by thy estimation, thou dost deserve enough;

and yet enough may not extend so far as to 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 further, but chose here?

Let's see once more this saying graved in gold: 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'

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

from the four corners of the earth they come, to kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.

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.

Deliver me the key. Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

PORTIA

There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there, then I am yours.

*(MOROCCO unlocks the golden casket.)*

*advantages* - profit, *dross* - scum formed on the surface of molten metal, *rib* - enclose. Corpses were normally wrapped in lead, *cerecloth* - a waxed cloth used in wrapping for burial, *tried* - assayed; evaluated

MOROCCO

O hell! What have we here?

A carrion Death,\* within whose empty eye there is a written scroll.

I'll read the writing.

*(MOROCCO reads.)* All that glitters is not gold;  
Often have you heard that told.  
Many a man his life hath sold  
But my outside to behold.  
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.  
Had you been as wise as bold,  
Young in limbs, in judgment old,  
Your answer had not been inscrolled.  
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Cold, indeed, and labor lost. Then farewell heat, and welcome, frost!

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart to take a tedious leave.

*(MOROCCO exits with his train. Flourish of trumpets.)*

PORTIA

A gentle riddance.

Draw the curtains, go.

Let all of his complexion choose me so.

*(Exeunt.)*

*carrion death* - putrefied death's head skull

**Act 2, Scene 8 Venice. A street**

(Enter *SALERIO* and *SALANIO*.)

*SALERIO*

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

*SALANIO*

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

*SALERIO*

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.  
I never heard a passion so confused, so strange, and outrageous 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, stolen from me by my daughter!  
And jewels—two stones, two rich and precious stones, stolen by my daughter!  
Justice! Find the girl! She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'  
Now all the boys in Venice follow him, crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.  
Let good Antonio look he keep his day, or he shall pay for this.

*SALANIO*

Marry, well remembered.  
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.

*SALERIO*

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

*SALANIO*

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.'  
And even there, his eye being big with tears, and with affection wondrous sensible he wrung Bassanio's hand;  
and so they parted.

*SALERIO*

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.

*reasoned* - talked, *narrow seas* - the English Channel, *Slubber* - perform hastily,  
*quicken his embraced heaviness* - enliven the sadness he has embraced; cheer him up

SALANIO  
Do we so.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 2, Scene 9 Belmont. A room in Portia's house**

*(Enter NERISSA with a servant.)*

NERISSA

Quick, quick, I pray thee! Draw the curtain straight.  
The Prince of Arragon hath taken his oath, and comes to his election presently.

*(Flourish of trumpets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA and their trains.)*

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 every one doth swear that comes to hazard for my worthless self.

ARRAGON

And so have I addressed me. Fortune now to my heart's hope!  
Gold, silver, and base lead.  
'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.'  
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 the interior.  
I will not choose what many men desire, because I will not jump\* with common spirits.  
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!  
Well, but to my choice.  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.' I will assume desert.\*  
Give me a key for this, and instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*(ARRAGON opens the silver casket.)*

PORTIA

Too long a pause for that which you find there.

*pries* - looks closely, *jump* - be at one, *cozen* - cheat, *assume desert* - claim deserving reward

ARRAGON

What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot, presenting me a schedule!\*

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head? Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

I will read it.

(ARRAGON reads.) There be fools alive, I wis,  
 Silvered o'er; and so was this.  
 Take what wife you will to bed,  
 I will ever be your head.  
 So be gone; you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear by the time I linger here.  
 With one fool's head I came to woo, but I go away with two.  
 Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath, patiently to bear my wroath.\*

(Exeunt ARRAGON and train.)

PORTIA

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

NERISSA

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

PORTIA

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

(Enter a SERVANT.)

SERVANT

Where is my lady?

PORTIA

Here. What would my lord?

SERVANT

Madam, there is alighted at your gate a young Venetian,  
 one that comes before to signify the approaching of his lord, from whom he bringeth gifts of rich value.  
 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.  
 Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

(Exeunt.)

*schedule* - scroll, *wroath* - disappointment? anger?

**Act 3, Scene 1 Venice. A street**

(*SALANIO and SALERIO.*)

SALERIO

Now what news on the Rialto?

SALANIO

Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow sea—the Goodwins\* I think they call the place, a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried.

SALERIO

I would it might prove the end of his losses.

SALANIO

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

(*Enter SHYLOCK.*)

SALERIO

How now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?

SHYLOCK

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

SALERIO

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

SHYLOCK

She is damned for it.

SALANIO

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

SHYLOCK

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

SALERIO

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.

SALANIO

But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?\*

*Goodwins* - sandy shoals off the English (Kentish) coast,

*but...no* - in an attempt to get information, Salanio foolishly agitates Shylock by mentioning Antonio

SHYLOCK

There I have another bad match! A bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto, a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart!\*

Let him look to his bond. He was wont to call me usurer.\* Let him look to his bond.

He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy.\* Let him look to his bond.

SALERIO

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

SHYLOCK

To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge.

He hath disgraced me and hindered\* me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies and what's his reason?

I am a Jew.

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,\* senses, affections, passions?— fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?

If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.

If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge.

If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge.

The villany you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.\*

(Enter a SERVANT.)

SERVANT

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

SALERIO

We have been up and down to seek him.

(Enter TUBAL.)

SALANIO

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

(Exeunt SALANIO, SALERIO and SERVANT.)

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

*smug upon the mart* - arrogant (stylish) to the market,

*usurer* - one who lends money at an excessively or unlawfully high rate of interest,

*courtesy* - act of generosity, *hindered* - prevented me from earning,

*dimensions* - bodily parts, *better the instruction* - teach revenge better than Christians

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 on my shoulders, no sighs but of my breathing,  
no tears but of my shedding.

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

Hath an argosy cast away coming from Tripolis.

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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

SHYLOCK

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

TUBAL

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.

*hearsed* - loaded in the vehicle to carry her to her grave,

*fourscore* - eighty, *divers* - various; several, *break* - go bankrupt

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.

*(Exeunt.)*

*officer* - arresting officer,

*bespeak him a fortnight before* - engage his services two weeks before Antonio's bond is due,

*make what merchandise I will* - drive what bargains I wish

**Act 3, Scene 2 Belmont. A room in Portia's house**

(Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA and attendants.)

PORTIA

I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two before you hazard, for in choosing wrong I lose your company. Therefore forbear awhile.

There's something tells me, but it is not love, I would not lose you; and you know yourself hate counsels not in such a quality.

Beshrew\* your eyes! They have overlooked 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 put bars between the owners and their rights!

And so, though yours, not yours.

I speak too long, but 'tis to weight the time, to eke 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.\*

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.

(*Music.*)

SONG\* (*Sung by attendants.*) 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 eyes,  
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.

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.

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?

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.

**Beshrew** - a mild curse, **stay you from election** - delay you from choosing, **rack** - instrument of torture which stretches the victim's limbs out of place, **SONG** - bred, head, nourished and fed all rhyme with lead, **searched** - probed

Thus ornament is but the guiled\* shore to a most dangerous sea.  
 Therefore, thou gaudy gold, hard food for Midas,\* I will none of thee;  
 nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge\* 'tween man and man.  
 But thou, thou meagre lead which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,  
 thy paleness moves me more than eloquence; and here choose I.  
 Joy be the consequence!

PORTIA

*(Aside.)* How all the other passions fleet to air,  
 as doubtful thoughts, and rash embraced despair, and shuddering fear, and green eyed jealousy!  
 O love, be moderate, allay\* thy ecstasy, in measure rein thy joy, scant this excess.  
 I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less, for fear I surfeit.\*

BASSANIO

What find I here?

*(BASSANIO opens the leaden casket.)*

Fair Portia's counterfeit!\* What demi-god hath come so near creation?\*

Here are severed lips, parted with sugar breath.  
 Here in her hairs the painter plays the spider, and hath woven a golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men.  
 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 unfinished.  
 Yet look, how far the substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow in underprizing it.  
 Here's the scroll, the continent and summary of my fortune.

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

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave. *(BASSANIO kisses PORTIA.)*

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 virtue, beauties, livings, friends, exceed account.\*  
 But the full sum of me is sum of something, which, is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;  
 happy she is not yet so old but she may learn; happier she is not bred so dull but she can learn;  
 happiest of all is that her 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.

*guiled* - beguiling, *Midas* - a legendary king of Phrygia to whom Dionysus granted the power of turning everything he touched into gold, *common drudge* - i.e. because of silver's use in currency, *allay* - calm, *surfeit* - feed to excess, *counterfeit* - picture, *demi-god...creation* - i.e. only a demi-god could have painted such a lifelike creation, *sunder* - part, *account* - estimation

But now I was the lord of this fair mansion, master of my servants, queen over 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, 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.  
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.  
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.  
Your fortune stood upon the casket there, and so did mine too, as the matter falls;  
for wooing here I got a promise of this fair one 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.  
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?\* What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

*presage* - predict, *infidel* - one who does not believe in the prevailing religion (Christianity)

(Enter LORENZO, JESSICA and SALERIO.)

BASSANIO

Sweet Portia, by your leave, I bid my friends and countrymen, Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome.

PORTIA

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

LORENZO

I thank you.

My purpose was not to have seen you here, Bassanio,  
but meeting Salerio by the way, he did entreat me past all saying to come with him along.

SALERIO

I did my lord, and I have a reason for it. Signior Antonio commends him to you.

(Gives BASSANIO a letter.)

BASSANIO

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

SALERIO

Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind, nor well unless in mind. His letter there will show you his estate.

GRATIANO

Nerissa, cheer yon stranger;\* bid her welcome.

Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice? How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?  
I know he will be glad of our success.

PORTIA

There are some shrowd\* contents in yon 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 unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper!  
Gentle lady, when I did first impart my love to you, I freely 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.  
But is it true, Salerio? Have all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?  
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England, from Lisbon, Barbary and India?  
And not one vessel escape the dreadful touch of merchant marring rocks?

SALERIO

Not one, my lord.

*stranger* - Jessica, *shrowd* - cursed; bitter

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.

PORTIA

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

BASSANIO

The dearest friend to me and the kindest man 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 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.  
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASSANIO (*Reads the letter.*)

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

PORTIA

O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

BASSANIO

Since I have your good leave to go away, I will make haste.  
But till I come again, no bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay, nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.\*

(*Exeunt.*)

*impeach* - discredit, *magnificoes of greatest port* - magnates of greatest dignity, *forfeiture* - penalties, *deface* - cancel, *no bed...twain* - Bassanio takes an oath not to sleep until he has accomplished his undertaking

**Act 3, Scene 3 Venice. A street**

*(Enter SHYLOCK, SALANIO, ANTONIO and 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, and yield to Christian intercessors.\*

Follow not. I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond.

*(Exit SHYLOCK.)*

SALANIO

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

ANTONIO

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.

SALANIO

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 in Venice, if it be denied, will much impeach the justice of his state; since that the trade and profit of the city consisteth of all nations.

Well, jailer, on.

Pray God Bassanio come to see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

*(Exeunt.)*

*fond* - foolish, *intercessors* - a person who intercedes (Antonio has rescued those in debt to Shylock),

*bootless* - useless, *commodity* - commercial privileges

**Act 3, Scene 4 Belmont. A room in Portia's house**

*(Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA and BALTHASAR.)*

PORTIA

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 will we 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 know my mind and will acknowledge you and Jessica in place of Lord Bassanio and myself. And so farewell till we shall meet again.

LORENZO

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you.

JESSICA

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA

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

*(Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO.)*

Now, Balthasar, as I have ever found thee honest true, so let me find thee still. Take this same letter, and use thou all the endeavor of a man in speed to Padua. See thou render this into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario; what notes and garments he doth give thee bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed unto the common ferry which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words but get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

BALTHASAR

Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

*(Exit BALTHASAR.)*

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?

*husbandry* - care

## PORTIA

They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit,\* that they shall think we are accomplished with that we lack.  
I'll hold thee a wager, when we are both accoutered\* like young men, I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two.  
I'll tell thee 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.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 3, Scene 5 Belmont. Portia's garden**

*(Enter LANCELOT and JESSICA.)*

LANCELOT

I was always plain with you, and now I speak my agitation\* of the matter. I think you are damned. The sins of the father are to be laid upon the children. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good, and that is but a kind of bastard hope.

JESSICA

And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LANCELOT

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.

LANCELOT

Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and mother. You are gone both ways.

JESSICA

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

LANCELOT

The more to blame he! We were Christians enough before, even as many as could well live, one by another. This making Christians will raise the price of hogs if we grow all to be pork eaters.

*(Enter LORENZO.)*

JESSICA

I'll tell my husband, Lancelot, what you say. Here he comes.

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

Go in, sirrah.

Bid them prepare for dinner.

*agitation* - he means cogitation, *out* - arguing

LANCELOT

That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

LORENZO

What a wit snapper are you! Then bid them prepare dinner.

LANCELOT

That is done too, sir.

LORENZO

Go to thy fellows, bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

LANCELOT

'Twill be done, sir.

*(Exit LANCELOT.)*

LORENZO

How cheereest 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, then in reason he should never come to heaven.

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

LORENZO

I will anon. First let us go to dinner.

JESSICA

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

LORENZO

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

JESSICA

Well, I'll set you forth.

*(Exeunt.)*

*meet* - fitting, *stomach* - appetite; inclination

**Act 4, Scene 1 Venice. A court of justice**

*(Enter the DUKE, the magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, SALANIO and others.)*

DUKE

What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO

Ready, so please your grace.

DUKE

I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer a stony adversary,  
an inhuman wretch, incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram\* of mercy.

ANTONIO

I have heard your grace hath taken 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 lead'st this fashion of thy malice to the last hour of act;  
and then 'tis thought thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange than is thy strange apparent cruelty;  
and where thou now exact'st the penalty, which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,  
thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture, but touched with human gentleness and love,  
forgive a moiety\* of the principal, glancing an eye of pity on his losses, that have of late so huddled on his back.  
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?\*

*dram* - smallest amount, *qualify* - moderate,

*obdurate* - stubborn; hard hearted, *moiety* - portion, *baned* - poisoned

Some men there are love not a gaping pig;\* some that are mad if they behold a cat;  
and others, when the bagpipe sings in the nose,\* cannot contain their urine;  
for affection,\* mistress of passion, sways it to the mood of what it likes or loathes.

Now, for your answer:

as there is no firm reason to be rendered why he cannot abide a gaping pig, why he a harmless necessary cat,  
why he a woollen bagpipe, 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

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 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 tops when they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;  
you may as well do anything most hard as seek to soften his Jewish heart.

Therefore I do beseech you make no more offers, use no further means,  
but with all brief and plain conveniency let me have judgement, 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, rendering none?

*gaping pig* - i.e. served roasted with its mouth propped open, *sings in the nose* - i.e. sounds like a nasal voice,  
*affection* - feeling, *losing* - because he will gain a pound of flesh but lose 3000 ducats,  
*main flood* - sea at high tide, *bate* - reduce

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 judgement. 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 letter. Call the messenger.

BASSANIO

Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!

The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all, ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

ANTONIO

I am a tainted wether\* of the flock, meetest for death.

The weakest kind of fruit drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.

You cannot better be employed, Bassanio, than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

*(Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.)*

DUKE

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

*(NERISSA presents a letter.)*

BASSANIO

Why dost thou whet\* thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

*viands* - choice dishes, *tainted wether* - diseased, castrated ram, *whet* - sharpen

GRATIANO

Not on thy sole,\* but on thy soul, harsh Jew, thou makest thy knife keen;  
but no metal can, no, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness of thy sharp envy.  
Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO

O, be thou damned, inexorable\* dog!

SHYLOCK

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond, thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.

DUKE

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

NERISSA

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

DUKE

With all my heart. Go give him courteous conduct to this place.  
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

CLERK

*(Reads.)* "Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick;  
but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome.  
His name is Balthasar.  
I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant.  
We turned over many books together.  
He is furnished with my opinion which is bettered with his own learning,  
the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend.  
I beseech you let his lack of years be no impediment, for I never knew so young a body with so old a head."

DUKE

You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes; and here, I take it, is the doctor come.

*(Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws.)*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA

I did, my lord.

*sole* - Shylock is sharpening his knife on the sole of his shoe ,  
*inexorable* - worry of being cursed; unmoving

DUKE

You are welcome; take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference that holds this present question in the court?

PORTIA

I am informed thoroughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA

Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK

Shylock is my name.

PORTIA

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,  
yet in such rule\* that the Venetian law cannot impugn\* you as you do proceed.  
You stand within his danger, do you not?

ANTONIO

Ay, so he says.

PORTIA

Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO

I do.

PORTIA

Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA

The quality of mercy is not 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 sceptred sway; it is enthroned in the hearts of kings; it is an attribute to God himself,  
and earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons\* justice.

*rule* - proper order, *impugn* - oppose, *strained* - constrained; forced,  
*scepter* - ceremonial staff held by rulers signifying royal authority, *seasons* - tempers

Therefore, Jew, though justice be thy plea, consider this:  
 that in the course of justice none of us should see salvation.  
 We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.  
 I have spoke thus much to mitigate\* the justice of thy plea,  
 which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

Is he not able to discharge the money?

BASSANIO

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court, yea, thrice the sum.  
 If that will not suffice, I will be bound to pay it ten times over on forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.  
 I beseech you, wrest once the law to your authority.  
 To do a great right, do a little wrong, and curb this cruel devil of his will.

PORTIA

It must not be. There is no power in Venice can alter a decree established.  
 'Twill be recorded for a precedent, and many an error by the same example will rush into the state. It cannot be.

SHYLOCK

A Daniel\* come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel! O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!

PORTIA

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

Shylock, there's thrice thy money 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

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.

*mitigate* - moderate, *Daniel* - the shrewd young man who exposed the elders in their false charges against Susanna in the Old Testament

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

Why then, thus it is: you must prepare your bosom for his knife.

SHYLOCK

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA

Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK

Ay, his breast, so says the bond, doth it not, noble judge? 'Nearest his heart;' those are the very words.

PORTIA

It is so. Are there balance\* here to weigh the flesh?

SHYLOCK

I have them ready.

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA

It is not so expressed, but what of that? 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

ANTONIO

But little. I am armed and well prepared.

Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well.

Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you, for herein Fortune shows herself more kind than is her custom:  
it is still her use\* to let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
to view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow an age of poverty;  
from which lingering penance of such misery doth she cut me off.

*balance* - scales, *on your charge* - at your expense, *still her use* - always her custom

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.

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

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

GRATIANO

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

NERISSA

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

SHYLOCK

These be the Christian husbands!  
I have a daughter; would any of the stock of Barrabas\* had been her husband rather than a Christian!  
We trifle time. I pray thee pursue sentence.

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

Most rightful judge!

PORTIA

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

SHYLOCK

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

PORTIA

Tarry a little; there is something else.  
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood; the words expressly are 'a pound of flesh.'  
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;  
but in the cutting it if thou dost shed one drop of Christian blood,  
thy lands and goods are by the laws of Venice confiscate unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO

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

*Barrabas* - the murderer chosen for reprieve over Jesus

SHYLOCK

Is that the law?

PORTIA

Thyself shalt see the act; for as thou urgest justice, be assured thou shalt have justice more than thou desirest.

GRATIANO

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

SHYLOCK

I take this offer then. Pay the bond thrice and let the Christian go.

BASSANIO

Here is the money.

PORTIA

Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste; he shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO

O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more but just a pound of flesh.

If 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

Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

SHYLOCK

Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASSANIO

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

PORTIA

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

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

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

SHYLOCK

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

PORTIA

Tarry, Jew! The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

if it be proved against an alien that by direct or indirect attempts he seek the life of any citizen,

the party 'gainst the which he doth contrive shall seize one half his goods;

the other half comes to the privy coffer of the state; and the offender's life lies in the mercy of the Duke.

In which predicament I say thou stand'st.

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 spirits, I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.

For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;

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

PORTIA

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

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;\*

*I'll stay no longer question* - I'll remain no longer to argue the case, *halter* - hangman's noose, *quit* - remit, *use* - trust (Perhaps Antonio has heard of Lorenzo's and Jessica's lavish spending), *become a Christian* - modern audiences might consider this a serious violation of Shylock's basic human rights, but Elizabethans might have viewed it as Shylock's only chance at eternal salvation

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

Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK

I am content.

PORTIA

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.

*(Exit SHYLOCK.)*

DUKE

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

PORTIA

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.

I must away this night toward Padua, and it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify\* this gentleman, for in my mind you are much bound to him.

*(Exeunt DUKE and his train.)*

BASSANIO

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend have by your wisdom been this day acquitted of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof, three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew we freely cope\* your courteous pains withal.

ANTONIO

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

PORTIA

He is well paid that is well satisfied,

and I delivering you am satisfied, and therein do account myself well paid.

*gratify* - reward, *cope* - requite

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

BASSANIO

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

PORTIA

You press me far, and therefore I will yield. Give me your gloves; I'll wear them for your sake.  
(*BASSANIO takes off his gloves.*) 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

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.

PORTIA

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.  
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks you teach me how a beggar should be 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

That excuse serves many men to save their gifts.  
And if your wife be not a madwoman, and know how well I have deserved the ring,  
she would not hold out enemy for ever\* for giving it to me.  
Well, peace be with you!

(*Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA.*)

ANTONIO

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.  
Let his deservings, and my love withal, be valued against your wife's commandment.

BASSANIO

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
give him the ring and bring him if thou canst unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste!

*hold out enemy for ever* - persist in being your enemy

*(Exit GRATIANO.)*

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

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 4, Scene 2 Venice. A street**

*(Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.)*

PORTIA

Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed, and let him sign it.  
We'll away 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 overtaken.  
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat your company at dinner.

PORTIA

That cannot be.  
His ring I do accept most thankfully, and so I pray you tell him.  
Furthermore, I pray you show my youth old Shylock's house.

GRATIANO

That will I do.

NERISSA

Sir, I would speak with you.  
*(Aside to PORTIA.)* I'll see if I can get my husband's ring, which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA

*(Aside to NERISSA.)* Thou mayst, I warrant.  
We shall have old\* swearing that they did give the rings away to men;  
but we'll outface them, and outswear them too.  
*(Aloud.)* Away! Make haste! Thou knowest where I will tarry.

NERISSA

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

*(Exeunt.)*

*old* - plenty of

**Act 5, Scene 1 Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house**

(Enter LORENZO and JESSICA.)

LORENZO

The moon shines bright.

In such a night as this, when the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees and they did make no noise,  
in such a night Troilus\* methinks mounted the Troyan walls  
and 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 and ran dismayed away.

LORENZO

In such a night did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,  
and with an unthrift love did run from Venice as far as Belmont.

JESSICA

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, but I hear the footing of a man.

(Enter STEPHANO.)

LORENZO

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO

A friend.

LORENZO

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.  
And I have also heard word Bassanio will be here ere morning.

LORENZO

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you, within the house, your mistress is at hand,  
and bring your music forth into the air. (Exit STEPHANO.)

**Troilus** - Trojan whose beloved but false Cressida was sent away to the Grecian camp,

**Thisbe** - beloved of Pyramus, she fled from their meeting place when a lion approached

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.  
 Here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep in our ears.  
 Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patens\* of bright gold.

*(Enter Musicians.)*

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

*(Music.)*

JESSICA

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LORENZO

The reason is, your spirits are attentive.  
 For do but note a wild and wanton herd 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.  
 For music doth change their natures.  
 The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
 is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils. Let no such man be trusted.  
 Mark the music.

*(Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.)*

LORENZO

Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA

We have been praying for our husbands' 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 telltales, madam; fear you not.

*patens* - small dishes often made of gold; tiling, *Diana* - the moon goddess, *mistress'* - Portia's

*(Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO and their followers.)*

PORTIA

You are welcome home, my lord.

BASSANIO

I thank you, madam.

Give welcome to my friend. This is the man, this is Antonio, to whom I am so infinitely bound.

PORTIA

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

ANTONIO

No more than I am well acquitted of.

PORTIA

Sir, you are very welcome to our house.

GRATIANO

*(To NERISSA.)* By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong! In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

PORTIA

A quarrel already? What's the matter?

GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring that she did give me.

NERISSA

You swore to me when I did give it you that you would wear it till your hour of death.

Gave it a judge's clerk? No, God's my judge, the clerk will never wear hair on his face that had it.

GRATIANO

He will, and 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 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.

And 'twere to me, I should be mad at 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 never come in your bed until I see the ring!

NERISSA

Nor I in yours till I again see mine.

BASSANIO

Sweet Portia, if you did know to whom I gave the ring, if you did know for whom I gave the ring, and would conceive for what I gave the ring, and how unwillingly I left the ring when nought\* would be accepted but the ring, you would abate\* the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA

If you had known the virtue of the ring, or half her worthiness that gave the ring, or your own honor to contain the ring, you would not then have parted with the ring. Nerissa teaches me what to believe; I'll die for it 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 did uphold the very life of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? I was enforced to send it after him. Had you been there I think you would have begged the ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA

Let not that doctor ever come near my house.  
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved, and that which you did swear to keep for me, I will become as liberal as you;  
I'll not deny him any thing I have, no, not my body nor my husband's bed.  
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.  
Lie not a night from home for 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.

*nought* - nothing, *abate* - make less

ANTONIO

I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA

Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

BASSANIO

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong.

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 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, last night did lie with me.

GRATIANO

What, are we cuckolds\* ere we have deserved it?

PORTIA

Speak not so grossly.

You are all amazed.

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure. It comes from Padua, from Bellario.

There you shall find that Portia was the doctor, Nerissa there her clerk.

Lorenzo 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; there you shall find three of your argosies are richly come to harbor suddenly.

ANTONIO

I am dumb.

BASSANIO

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

*be his surety* - be responsible for him, *cuckold* - a man whose wife has committed adultery

GRATIANO

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it, unless he live until he be a man.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living!

For here I read for certain that my ships are safely come to road.

PORTIA

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

NERISSA

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica, from the rich Jew, all he dies possessed of after his death.

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 we will answer all things faithfully.

*(Exeunt.)*