The Merchant of Venice

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SHAKESPEARE'S

The Merchant of Venice

EDITED, WITH NOTES, OUTLINE STUDY AND EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

BY

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AND

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PREFACE.

The stage for which Shakespeare wrote used costume and other accessories merely to suggest, not to illustrate, the ideas of the playwright.

To the audience of Shakespeare's day, the human passions which form the groundwork of a fictitious plot were abstract conceptions; actors and action were of interest only so far as they assisted the dramatist in presenting these conceptions vividly. The modern mind has outgrown this childlike faculty of appreciating a story merely as a story. Fiction must now be presented as history, and the characters introduced must be real men and women moving amid appropriate surroundings.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE will have no interest in the class-room, unless a real Venice, with its concourse of merchants, magnificoes, and Jews, exist in the mind of the pupil. It is to aid the teacher and student in forming such a mental picture that the notes on costume and stage accessories found in this text are designed. The usual authorities on mediaeval costume have been followed without regard to theatrical usage.

The modern stage in presenting Shakespeare has difficulties to surmount and purposes of its own to serve which do not concern the reader of the plays.
INTRODUCTION.

I. CHARACTER AND SOURCE OF THE "MERCHANT OF VENICE."

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE" is a dramatized tale, a diverting story, adapted to the stage as a popular play, full of incident and sparkling dialogue and appealing in every line to the opinions and prejudices of the spectators who witnessed its first production.

The main plot of the play was doubtless suggested to Shakespeare by an Italian novel, one of a collection published about 1558 as the work of one Ser Giovanni of Florence. These novels purported to be stories of contemporary real life; and, as Italy was regarded as the country where the art of refined social intercourse was most successfully cultivated, they were eagerly read all over Europe.

This novel of Ser Giovanni's collection, illustrating as it did the dangers of suretyship and showing the cruel revenge of a usurer foiled by a woman's wit, at once caught the popular fancy. It was translated into English and made the subject of an English ballad which had a wide circulation.

Shakespeare seems to have been attracted to the story by the ballad; but he certainly compiled his play directly from the Italian novel, combining with it two stories from a collection of moral tales written in Latin and
known as the GESTA ROMANORUM. From the former of these stories came the incident of the forfeit of a pound of flesh demanded by a Jew; from the latter, the incident of the three caskets. These stories furnished Shakespeare with the leading episodes of the play, its central plot, and the outlines of the characters of Antonio, Bassanio, and Shylock. Under his master hand, these materials, which, in their original shape, had made a story as uninteresting to modern taste as it was improbable, became a drama which has outlived the race hatred that first gave it popularity and still holds a high place in both popular and critical estimation, notwithstanding the absurdities of its plot and its very doubtful moral tendency.

2. CHARACTER SKETCHES.

Shylock and Antonio.—The central figure in the MERCHANT OF VENICE is the usurer Shylock, whose name has become a synonym in the English language for remorseless greed and vindictiveness. The character of Shylock as drawn by Shakespeare is intended to bear a double load of obloquy; he is shown to the reader as the embodiment of all the objectionable qualities which the ignorance and prejudice of the time ascribed to his race; and as a man who feels himself justified in giving free rein to the darkest of human passions —avarice, hatred and revenge. As the type of a race, the character of Shylock can be regarded only as a gross caricature. The Jews of mediaeval Europe hoarded
money and jewels, not because they were misers by na-
ture, but because their circumstances allowed them no
opportunity to invest in other kinds of property. They
seldom practiced the trade of money lending on a small
scale, but, as a rule, the wealth of the community was
deposited in the hands of a few of its leading members
and loaned in large sums to princes, states, and great
merchants. For this reason, progressive mercantile
cities regarded prosperous Jewish communities within
their walls as distinctly advantageous; and, in such
cities, the Jews, although they were hated and often
abused by the mob of aliens and unbelievers, were en-
titled to legal protection for person and property. The
Jews were a proud and sensitive race; they returned in-
sult for insult; and, but for the fact that they were un-
armed in the midst of an armed population, they would
doubtless have answered violence with violence. But the
belief that the Jews sought to avenge the wrongs of their
race by oppressing the Christians with whom they had
business dealings was merely a vulgar superstition.

Although it pleases Shylock to regard Antonio as
representing the persecutors of the Jewish race, he evi-
dently singles him out as the object of special hatred for
reasons purely personal. We may suppose that the two-
men are equal in means and in magnitude of business
dealings. It mortifies and enrages Shylock to see his
rival regarded as an ornament to the state, associating
on equal terms with princes and nobles, while he him-
self is treated as a social outcast by the men who bor-
row his money. The conduct of Antonio has been most exasperating. As a business man, Antonio knows well that the business of lending money for profit is as legitimate as doing anything else for profit, yet he does not hesitate to proclaim on the Rialto his opinion that Shylock's business operations indicate a sordid nature and a corrupt religious creed. More than that, he calls the attention of the rabble to the physical helplessness of the Jew by gross personal insults.

But making all allowance for years of such provocation and for the maddening misfortune which overtakes Shylock during the action of the play, his scheme of revenge seems inhuman and revolting. We can admire the grandeur of his hatred as we can admire the ferocity of the tiger, but we rejoice at the escape of his intended prey and have little sympathy for his real losses and calamities.

Portia.—The character of Portia is wholly the creation of Shakespeare, only the incidents of the Trial Scene and the foolery with the rings being borrowed from the Italian novel. Aside from the charm of youth, beauty, and wit with which the dramatist has endowed her, she is the typical Italian grand lady, reared in princely magnificence and haughty seclusion. It was a common thing for such young women to devote a portion of their abundant leisure to the study of the abstract sciences, especially to such studies as framed the mind for those subtle disquisitions on which the learning of the Middle Ages lavished itself. Italian fiction
saw nothing impossible in the incident of a young lady so trained throwing a doctor's gown over her ordinary costume and impersonating a Doctor of the Civil Law in a court of justice.

*Jessica & Lorenzo.*—The rather uninteresting characters of Jessica and Lorenzo seem to owe their existence to the dramatic necessity of keeping the love story element in operation throughout the play.

The other characters are merely parts of the stage machinery and need no special notice.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT I.—SCENE I—A STREET.

Note. This opening scene introduces, either in person or by name, the principal characters of the play; explains the title; and sets to working the machinery which later serves to develop the plot.

(1). Setting of the Scene. A street in Venice.—An open square paved with red brick, looking out over a sea wall on the open sea beyond; vessels under sail are seen in the distance; near the sea-wall, gondolas are floating about or are swinging at gaily painted mooring posts. The right of the scene is the wall of a lofty palace, showing the elaborate window tracery and the gold and colored marble decoration characteristic of Venetian architecture. The left of the scene is a two-storied colonade of marble elaborately carved and decorated.

(2). Actors.

Antonio, a wealthy merchant of Venice.
Bassanio, a Venetian nobleman.
Salarino, Salario, Gratiano, Lorenzo, Friends of Antonio and Bassanio, but of humbler rank.

(3). Costumes.

Antonio wears a doublet, or sleeved waistcoat, of purple velvet, with starched ruffs of white linen at the neck and frills of the same at the wrist; tight fitting trunk hose of the same material, reaching to the knee; white stockings and black leather shoes. A light silk cloak is thrown over his right shoulder; on his head he
wears a velvet cap, resembling somewhat the modern "Scotch cap"; he carries a walking stick.

_Bassanio_ wears a similar costume but more vivid in color and of richer material. His ruffs and ruffles are of lace; he wears much jewelry; and carries a sword at his left side.

_The Other Gentlemen_ wear costumes of similar fashion but more simple in material and cut.

(5). _Time of Action._ A summer forenoon, somewhere in the beginning of the sixteenth century.
Scene I] \hspace{1cm} THE MERCHANT OF VENICE \hspace{3cm} 3

THE TEXT.

ACT I.

Scene I. Venice. A street.

Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio.

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad: It wearies me; you say it wearies you; But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born, I am to learn; And such a want-wit\(^1\) sadness makes of me, That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean; There, where your argosies\(^2\) with portly sail, Like signiors\(^3\) and rich burghers\(^4\) on the flood, Or, as it were, the pageants\(^5\) of the sea, Do overpeer the petty traffickers, That curtsy to them, do them reverence, As they fly by them\(^6\) with their woven wings.\(^7\)

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth, The better part of my affections would

\(1^\) Define the word.
\(2^\) Merchant ships of the long voyage.
\(3^\) Noblemen.
\(4^\) Merchants.
\(5^\) Salarino compares Antonio's ships to the gorgeously decorated vessels frequently exhibited in the carnivals of the time.
\(6^\) Describe the image presented to your mind by these lines.
\(7^\) Paraphrase.
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.

_Salar._ My wind cooling my broth Would blow me to an ague; when I thought What harm a wind too great might do at sea. I should not see the sandy hour-glass run, But I should think of shallows and of flats, And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand, Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs To kiss her burial. Should I go to church. And see the holy edifice of stone, And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks, Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side, Would scatter all her spices on the stream, Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks, And, in a word, but even now worth this, And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought To think on this, and shall I lack the thought

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8 Always.
9 i.e. Tossing up a light leaf to see which way the wind would waft it.
10 Anchorages.
11 Describe an hourglass and state the significance of the adjective _sandy._
12 A common name for a ship, in England.
13 Lowering.
14 Burial-place. _Paraphrase lines 25-29._
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

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

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

15 Modern English would demand what word here?
16 A Roman divinity represented by a statue with two faces, one merry and the other sad.
17 State the significance of this verb.
18 An example of Shakespeare's use of the singular for the plural number.
19 Where is the accent on this word?
20 The oldest and gravest of the heroes in Homer's "Iliad".
Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.

Lor. 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.
Bass. I will not fail you.
Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

21 i. e. Anticipated me.
22 An American would say, "You are quite a stranger".
23 i. e. "You take things too seriously".
Scene I]  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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

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

24 Study carefully the meaning and derivation of this word.
25 Explain lines 85-86.
26 Consult the Dictionary for the meaning of these words in this connection.
27 i. e. There are some men who assume a severe and dignified expression and who maintain an obstinate silence, that thereby they may acquire a reputation for wisdom.
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools. I'll tell thee more of this another time: But fish not, with this melancholy bait, For this fool gudgeon, this opinion. Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile: I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 Paraphrase lines 95-102.
29 i. e. "For what you have given me", viz. the lecture.
30 Flourishing appearance.
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

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

Bass. 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: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.
Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time 150
To wind about my love with circumstance; 35
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong.
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

Bass. In Belmont 36 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: 37
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchus’ strand: 38
And many Jasons 39 come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means

35 i. e. To be so long in coming to the point.
36 This name is taken from the novel of Ser Giovanni in
which the city is represented as a seaport on the coast of
Dalmatia; Shakespeare makes it a suburb of Venice on the
mainland.
37 The wife of the younger Brutus, well known as one of
the characters in Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar”.
38 A land in the far East whither, according to the old Greek
myth, the Argonauts sailed in search of the Golden Fleece.
39 The chief of the Argonauts. Consult the Classical Dic-
tionary for the entire story.
To hold a rival place with one of them, 
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity 
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make.
To have it of my trust or for my sake.41

[Exeunt

40 Prosperity.
41 i. e. Either as a loan or as a favor.

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT I.—SCENE II—BELMONT.—A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE.

Note. This scene introduces the heroine of the story; 
mentions casually the device of the caskets and the situation arising therefrom; and reveals Portia's attitude towards her suitors.

(1). Setting of the Scene.

Portia's boudoir—a small room hung with rich tapestry; frescoed ceiling; tiled floor, partly covered with a soft rug; fireplace with carved mantel. The furniture consists of a sofa piled high with cushions, two or three leather armchairs, footstools, work table, etc.
The curtain rising, shows Portia, half reclining on the sofa with Nerissa, comfortably seated in an armchair near by.

(2). **Actors.**

*Portia, the heiress of Belmont.*

*Nerissa, Portia's waiting gentlewoman.*

*A serving man.*

(3). **Costumes.**

*Portia* wears a loose white gown with long, close-fitting sleeves; her hair, confined by a plain gold band about the forehead, falls loosely over her shoulders; she wears a gold chain with a locket, rings, and other jewelry.

*Nerissa's* gown is gray with trimmings of black embroidery; her hair is confined under a lace cap, which covers the top and back of her head. She wears no jewelry, except a few rings.

*The serving man,* a young page, wears doublet, trunk hose, hose and shoes—all white.

(4). **Time of Action.** Simultaneous with Scene I.

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**Scene II.** *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

*Enter Portia and Nerissa.*

*Por.* By my troth\(^1\), Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

*Ner.* You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean:

\(^1\) i. e. As I speak truthfully.
superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.²

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple.³ But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

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

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou

² Put Nerissa's lines into your own words.
³ Notice and explain the figure of speech.
namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.⁴

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt⁵ indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County⁶ Palatine.⁷

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say "If you will not have me, choose:" he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher⁸ when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth⁹ than to either of these. God defend me from these two!⁵¹

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

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

⁴ Explain this sentence.
⁵ A headstrong young man. The pun lies in the fact that the Neapolitan nobles of Shakespeare's time prided themselves upon their horsemanship.
⁶ Count. Shakespeare frequently makes this title a two syllabled word.
⁷ A Count Palatine was a nobleman who had the right of administering justice on his own estates, like a reigning prince.
⁸ Consult the Clásical Dictionary under "Heraclitus."
⁹ The familiar "memento mori".
he is every man in no man; if a thrrostle\textsuperscript{10} sing, he falls straight a capering; he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

\textit{Ner.} What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England.

\textit{Por.} You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me,\textsuperscript{11} nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth\textsuperscript{12} in the English. He is a proper man's picture,\textsuperscript{13} but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited!\textsuperscript{14} I think he bought his doublet\textsuperscript{15} in Italy, his round hose\textsuperscript{16} in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour every where.

\textit{Ner.} What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

\textit{Por.} That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I

\textsuperscript{10} Thrush or any hedge bird.

\textsuperscript{11} The ability to converse in several languages has always been regarded as an unusual accomplishment among English speaking people, while on the continent of Europe it is merely a mark of ordinary education.

\textsuperscript{12} i. e. My knowledge of English is not worth much.

\textsuperscript{13} i. e. He looks like the man I want.

\textsuperscript{14} Clothed.

\textsuperscript{15} Sleeved waistcoat.

\textsuperscript{16} Breeches; at this period worn short, full, and extravagantly ornamented.
think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.17

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

Por. 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 a little better than a beast; and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.18

Ner. 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.19

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the Devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.20

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of

17 The meaning of this passage is as follows:—The Scottish lord has received an affront (box of the ear) from the Englishman, which he does not resent now, but has sworn to repay when he shall be able. The Frenchman has signed the bond with him (sealed under) that he will give as good as he has received (another). The allusion is to the wars between England and Scotland in which the Scots were supported by promises of French assistance.

18 Put the stress on the last word of the sentence.

19 Rewrite the paragraph changing the auxiliary verbs to accord with modern usage.

20 The Germans of Shakespeare's time regarded the ability to drink long and heavily a mark of manliness.
these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

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

Ner. 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?

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

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

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

Enter a Serving-Man.

How now! What news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from

21 Consult the Classical Dictionary.
22 Note the change in Portia's manner.
a fifth, the Prince of Morocco,\textsuperscript{23} who brings word the Prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth\textsuperscript{24} welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he had the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wife me.\textsuperscript{25}

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

While we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

\[\text{Exeunt.}\]

\begin{center}
\textbf{SCENE-SETTING.}
\end{center}

\textbf{ACT I.— SCENE III.—A STREET.}

\textit{Note.} This is the famous “Bond Scene”, one of the four great scenes of the MERCHANT OF VENICE. It opens up the plot; discloses Shylock's scheme of revenge; reveals the theme of the drama; and delineates the characters of the two chief actors in the play.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
A street as in Act I, Scene 1.

(2). Actors.
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Shylock}, a Hebrew money lender.
  \item \textit{Bassanio} & \textit{Antonio}.
\end{itemize}

(3). Costumes.
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Shylock}, a man of sixty years, with reddish gray hair and long, shaggy beard, enters the scene leaning on a
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{23} He is represented as an African negro. Many such served the Venetian state as allies or mercenaries.

\textsuperscript{24} \textbf{How many suitors have really been mentioned?}

\textsuperscript{25} i. e. He may have all the qualities (condition) of a saint; he certainly has the complexion of a devil; and, at any rate, I would prefer him as a Father Confessor rather than as a husband.
knotted staff. He wears a long silk gown, dark green in color with a brown border. Over the gown is the gaberdine, a long, sleeveless, hooded cloak, extending to the knees, but open and thrown back in front. The cloak is brown, with hood and linings of green. Pointed shoes of red leather, a leather pouch suspended from a girdle, and a red skull-cap complete the costume.

Antonio is a man of forty-five years, smooth shaven, with a haughty expression and bearing. His gown is of rich red silk open at the neck and showing the yellow doublet underneath. Over the gown is thrown a light, brown cloak covering the shoulders. Red pointed shoes and a green skull cap complete the costume. Like Shylock, Antonio carries a staff.

Bassanio is a man under thirty years of age. He wears a doublet, trunk hose, and stockings—all of crimson embroidered with gold; his shoes are red; a dagger hangs from a jewelled belt; a long black cloak falls over his shoulders; his hair is long and heavy. On his head he wears a high crowned hat with a narrow rim.

The day following the action of Scenes 1 & 2.

Scene III. Venice. A public place.
Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

Shy. Three thousand ducats;¹ well.²
Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.
Shy. For three months; well.
Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.³

¹ Intended to convey the idea of an indefinitely large sum; in reality, not more than eight thousand dollars in our money.
² "I understand you thus far".
³ Become responsible for repayment.
Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bass. May you stead⁴ me? will you pleasure⁵ me? shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.⁶

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Oh, no, no, no, no; my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient.⁷ Yet his means are in supposition:⁸ he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis,⁹ another to the Indies;¹⁰ I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered¹¹ 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.

⁴ Assist me.
⁵ Meet my wishes.
⁶ Shylock uses the expression technically; Bassanio affects to misunderstand him.
⁷ Able to perform his contract.
⁸ Dependent on circumstances.
⁹ On the coast of Syria.
¹⁰ The East Indies, around the Cape of Good Hope. In including the Indies and Mexico, Shakespeare confounds the voyages of the Venetians with those of the Portuguese and Spaniards.
¹¹ Scattered.
The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.12

_Bass._ Be assured you may.13

_Shy._ I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me.14 May I speak with Antonio? 

_Bass._ If it please you to dine with us.

_Shy._ Yes, to smell pork.15 I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto?16 Who is he comes here?

_Enter Antonio._

_Bass._ This is Signior Antonio.

_Shy._ [Aside.] How like a fawning publican17 he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity18
He lends out money gratis19 and brings down

---

12 i. e. "I suppose he will sign a bond for my security?"
13 Bassanio’s eagerness to make promises in the name of his friend arouses Shylock’s suspicions.
14 i. e. "I will make myself certain of this and, in doing so, will carefully scrutinize the proposed transaction."
15 Forbidden food to the Jews.
16 The piazza of the Rialto, a small square surrounded by colonnaded walks—the meeting place of merchants and the center of the commercial life of the busy city.
17 One who flatters the great and oppresses the poor.
18 The depth of foolishness.
19 Free of cost.
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!

Bass. Shylock, do your hear?

Shy. 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 Ant.] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom.—Is he yet possessed

Note. The business conversation is in prose; with the entrance of Antonio the style changes.
20 Rate of interest.
21 An expression used by wrestlers.
22 Compare our use of the words "usury" and "interest" with Shakespeare's use of them.
23 Gains, savings.
24 Kindred.
25 Entire sum.
26 A greater amount than the principal sum.
27 Requiring immediate attention.
How much you would?  

_Shy._  
Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.  

_Ant._ And for three months.  

_Shy._ 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.  

_Ant._ I do never use it.  

_Shy._ Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.  

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

_Ant._ Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?  

_Shy._ 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  

---  

28 This to Bassanio:—"Is he informed how much you require?"  

29 Shylock is mentally reckoning the interest for a year and dividing it by four.  

30 Beholden. i. e. In your debt.  

31 A sheep-killing dog, the meanest of curs.  

32 This repeats the idea of "spit upon", used above.
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"?

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.33
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends;34 for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

Shy. 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.

33 See Note 10. Outline Study.
34 Antonio makes the point that his request for a loan is a mere matter of business.
Bass. This were kindness

Shy. This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,\footnote{As no circumstances could be imagined which would have compelled Antonio to sign such a bond as Shylock proposed, the dramatist adopted the expedient of making him sign the bond in jest.} 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.

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

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

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

Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are, Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this; If he should break his day, what should I gain By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man Is not so estimable, profitable neither, As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.  

_Ant._ Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

_Shy._ 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.

_Ant._ Hie thee, gentle Jew.

[Exit Shylock.

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

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

_Ant._ Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

[Exeunt.

---

36 i. e. "Do not make my proffer of friendliness ground for suspicion."

37 Note the meaning of the word.

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**SCENE-SETTING.**

**ACT II.—SCENE I.—BELMONT.**

_Note._ This short scene of which scene vii, is the conclusion, introduces the Prince of Morocco and further explains the device of the caskets by stating the penalty for wrong choice. It seems to be inserted here in order that Portia may not be out of the action for too long a time.

(1). _Setting of the Scene._

The reception room of Portia's palace, a long narrow
room with vaulted ceiling brightly frescoed, and with a mosaic floor; the walls and pillars are of marble of varied colors; the hangings are of heavy silk. At one end of the hall is a large window looking out over a typical Venetian landscape; in front of this window is a large, leather-covered arm chair, elaborately carved, in which Portia sits with Nerissa and her other attendants grouped behind her. The Prince enters from the opposite end of the room, and Portia rises to meet him.

(2). Actors.

Portia.
The Prince of Morocco, one of Portia’s suitors.

Nerissa.

Attendants of Portia and of the Prince of Morocco.

(3). Costumes.

Portia’s gown is of cream colored silk with a long train, and with ruffles of rich lace at throat and wrists; from her elaborate coiffure hangs a long veil of silk gauze threaded with gold; she wears a gold chain and locket, earrings, jewelled hair ornaments, and a number of rings.

Nerissa is dressed as in Act I, scene ii.

Portia’s attendants are dressed as Nerissa, but their gowns are of simpler fabric.

The Prince of Morocco wears a white cotton gown, with sash of purple and gold silk and full sleeves; full Turkish trousers of red cotton; yellow slippers upon his bare feet; across his breast a sword belt from which hangs a curved sword in a scabbard, both sword and scabbard covered with jewels; his head is covered with a turban of spotless white cotton fastened by a diamond studded clasp.

The Attendants wear gowns, trousers, and turbans of plain white cotton.


The day following the action of Act I, Scene ii.
ACT II.

SCENE I. Belmont. A room in Portia's house.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco and his train, Portia, Nerissa, and others attending.

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery\(^1\) of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus' fire\(^2\) scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect\(^3\) of mine
Hath feared\(^4\) 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.\(^5\)

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;\(^6\)
Besides, the lottery of my destiny\(^7\)

---

1. Explain the metaphor.
2. The sun.
3. Face.
4. Made afraid.
5. Paraphrase this line.
6. i.e. The fine distinctions of manner and appearance which ordinarily influence a maiden.
7. The device of the caskets.
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scantled me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair.
As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.

Mor. 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 suckling cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so, may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

8 The Oriental curved sword.
9 A title of the Persian Emperor.
10 The Turkish Emperor.
11 For the story of Hercules and Lichas, consult the Classical Dictionary.
12 Hercules.
Por. 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.

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

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then! To make me blest or cursed’st among men.

[Cornets, and exeunt.

13 To the chapel where the oath was to be taken.

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE II.—A STREET.

Note. This humorous scene helps to brighten the drama, brings Bassanio with the minor characters of the play before the reader, and further reveals the character of Shylock by showing his behaviour to his dependents.

(1). Setting of the Scene.

A street in front of Shylock’s house.—The street is roughly paved with red brick; the house, which forms the back of the scene, is a two-storied brick structure, the lower story painted green, the upper story yellow; the street door open on a balcony at the top of a short flight of stone steps, at the foot of which Launcelot lounges. The windows in the lower story are narrow slits in the brick work, each barred by iron grill work inside; in the second story are several arched windows in a cluster fitted with tightly closed latticed shutters.
(2). *Actors.*

*Bassanio.*

*Gratiano,* Bassanio's friend and companion.

*Leonardo,* Bassanio's servant.

*Launcelot Gobbo,* Shylock's servant and the clown in the drama.

*Old Gobbo,* father of Launcelot—an old peasant.

(3). *Costumes.*

*Bassanio* wears the costume of Act I, scene iii.

*Gratiano* wears a plain costume of similar cut.

*Leonardo* wears a servant's livery—a tight-fitting doublet of scarlet trimmed with green braid and buttons; tight fitting breeches of the same material; white stockings; black shoes; skull cap worn over long hair.

*Launcelot Gobbo* wears a coarse gray jacket belted at the waist; breeches; worsted stockings; heavy shoes tied with twine; a high cap with narrow brim.

*Old Gobbo,* a tottering old man, is dressed like his son with the addition of a long cloak; he leans on a staff and carries a basket.

(4). *Time of the Action.*

The same day as Act II, scene i.

*Scene II. Venice. A street.*

*Enter Launcelot.*

*Laun.* Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says "No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot
Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: "Via!" says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, "Launcelot, budge not."

"Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well;" "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

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

Laun. [Aside.] O heavens, this is my true-be-gotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

---

1 Away.
2 An expression frequently used by old writers and public speakers. It has the force of "I mean just what I say".
3 An apology for the use of an improper expression.
4 What does Launcelot mean to say here?
5 "Sand-blind" means dim-sighted; "stone-blind" means entirely blind; Launcelot invents a medium degree which he calls "gravel-blind".
Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. 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.

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

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [Aside.] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.

Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

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

Laun. Well, let his father be what a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

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6 Sanctity, i. e. By the holiness of God.
7 What does Launcelot mean by this expression?
8 A title implying middle class condition, as "sir" implied high rank.
9 i. e. Likely to live long.
10 i. e. "I am sorry to contradict your worship, but I said plain 'Launcelot'.
11 Therefore or because. i. e. "Therefore, as you have said we do not wish to quarrel, please say 'Master Launcelot'.
12 Like "worship", a mere complimentary address.
Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

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

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

Gob. 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?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

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

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

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

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

13 i.e. "You have spoken of my mastership, therefore you have said 'Master Launcelot'.

14 The three Fates. Consult the Classical Dictionary.
Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

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

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard has thou got! thou has got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

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

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

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground.  

My master's a very Jew; give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives

15 The respectful "you" is dropped when the old man recognizes his son.

16 Thill horse, i. e. carriage horse.

17 A gaming phrase for the stake or bet. Launcelot says, "I have risked my all on my resolution".

18 Have gone somewhere.

19 The very Jew of popular belief.

20 A clownish transposition of the words, "You may tell every rib I have with your finger."
rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. Oh rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers.

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

[Exit a Servant.

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

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

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

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

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

Laun. 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—

---

21 i. e. To the ends of the earth.
22 Explain the ellipsis.
23 An interjection denoting surprise.
24 Intimate friends on a footing of relationship.
Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Laun. 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.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit: Shylock thy master spoke with me this day, And hath preferred thee, if it be preferment To leave a rich Jew's service, to become The follower of so poor a gentleman.

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

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.

Take leave of thy old master and inquire My lodging out. Give him a livery More guarded than his fellows: see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I

25 A pigeon pie.
26 What word does Launcelot wish to use here? Describe the manner in which this conversation is conducted.
27 Give the exact meaning of these words.
28 "The grace of God is wealth enough".
29 i. e. Wealth enough.
30 i. e. With broader and stouter facings.
have ne'er a tongue in my head. [Looks on his palm.] Well, if any man in Italy hath a fairer table, which doth offer to swear upon a book! I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [Exeunt Launcelot and old Gobbo.]

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this: These things being bought and orderly bestowed, Return in haste, for I do feast to-night My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go. Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein. 

Enter Gratiano.

Gra. Where is your master? Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [Exit.

Gra. Signior Bassanio! Bass. Gratiano! Gra. I have a suit to you.

31 The palm of the hand was so called in the jargon of the pretended science of palmistry. Certain markings or lines on the palm were supposed to indicate a prosperous or an adverse career, and other lines indicated marriages.
32 Ironical.
33 "A good girl for showing me such favor".
Scene II]  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE  39

Bass.  You have obtained it.

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

Bass.  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 behaviour I be misconstrued in the place I go to And lose my hopes.

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

Bass.  Well, we shall see you bearing.

Gra.  Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not guage me

34  An outward show of seriousness.
35  Put into your own words the meaning conveyed by Bazzanio's speech on conduct and Gratiano's reply.
By what we do to-night.

*Bass.* Well, we shall see your bearing.

I would entreat you rather to put on your boldest suit of mirth,\(^{36}\) for we have friends that purpose merriment. But fare you well: I have some business.

*Gra.* And I must to Lorenzo and the rest: But we will visit you at supper-time. \[Exeunt.\]

\(^{36}\) Paraphrase this expression.

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**SCENE-SETTING.**

**ACT II.—SCENE III.—A ROOM IN SHYLOCK’S HOUSE.**

*Note.* This short scene opens up the underplot of the drama.

(1). *Setting of the Scene.*

A room in Shylock’s house communicating with the street. A long narrow room with stone walls and ceiling, tiled floor, narrow windows high up in the wall secured by iron grill work. Everything is bare and cold; no furniture except one or two heavy, iron-bound chests. At one side of the scene is the street door of oak clamped with iron and fitted with sockets for heavy bars.

(2). *Actors.*

*Launcelot,* Bassanio’s new servant.

*Jessica, the daughter of Shylock.*

(3). *Costumes.*

*Launcelot* is dressed as in Act II, Scene ii.

*Jessica* wears a full skirt of figured silk, tight fitting bodice of the same material with full sleeves; ruffles at neck and wrists. Her black hair is plaited at the back of her head and covered with a lace cap.
(3). Time of the Action.
The action of this scene follows immediately upon that of Act II, scene ii.

Scene III. The same. A room in Shylock’s house.

Enter Jessica and Launcelot.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness. But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see Lorenzo, who is thy new master’s guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! These foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

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

1 Paraphrase the line.
2 According to the ideas of Shakespeare’s audience, Jessica’s unfilial conduct was fully atoned for by her conversion.
SCENE-SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE IV.—A STREET.

Note. This scene reveals the entire underplot.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
   A street paved with red brick in herring-bone pattern; in the distance is seen a canal with gondolas and mooring posts; in the extreme background a church and other buildings rise beyond the canal.

(2). Actors.
   Gratiano & Lorenzo.
   Salarino & Salanio.
   Launcelot.

(3). Costumes.
   The gentlemen are dressed as in previous scenes.
   Launcelot wears an ill-fitting suit of livery like that of Leonardo in Act II, scene ii, which accentuates his loutish appearance.

   Immediately following Act II, scene iii.

Scene IV. The same. A street.

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time, Disguise us at my lodging and return, All in an hour.
   Gra. We have not made good preparation.
   Salar. We have not spoke us\(^1\) yet of torch-bearers.

\(^1\) Bespoken, engaged.
Scene IV]  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE  43

Solan. 'Tis vile, 2 unless it may be quaintly 3 ordered,
And better in my mind not undertook.

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

Enter Launcelot, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot what's the news? 9

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, 4 it
shall seem to signify.

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

Gra.  

Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to
sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold, here, take this: 5 tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately. [Exit Launcelot.

Go, gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer. 6

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

Salan. And so will I.

2 Common, i. e. not worth while.
3 With especial cleverness.
4 Break the seal of the letter.
5 He gives the servant money.
6 To complete the idea supply, "I have an idea that will
make the entertainment a success".
Lor. Meet me and Gratiano 25
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.
Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [Exeunt Salar. and Salan.
Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
Lor. 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 suits she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [Exeunt.

7 Explain the plot so far as it concerns Jessica and Lorenzo.
8 What is the antecedent of this pronoun?

SCENE SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE V.—A STREET.

Note. This scene gains the sympathy of reader and audience for Jessica in spite of her unfilial attitude and her unconventional conduct.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
The same scene as that of ACT II, Scene iii. Launcelot and Shylock meet in front of the street door which Jessica cautiously opens.

(2). Actors.
Launcelot.
Shylock.
Jessica.
Scene V. The same. Before Shylock's house.

Enter Shylock and Launcelot.

Shy. 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!

Laun. Why, Jessica!


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

Enter Jessica.

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. 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:

1 Between. Shylock is speaking to Launcelot about the latter's new master.
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

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

Shy. 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. By Jacob's staff, I swear, I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:

2 The reference is to the superstition that dreams "go by contraries".
3 Shylock makes a grim jest at Launcelot's misuse of the word.
4 Easter Monday. The speech is nonsense.
5 Probably referring to the fact that a fifer does not look directly at the instrument he is playing as other musicians do.
6 What does Shylock mean?
7 Genesis xxxii 10. This solemn oath seems to have been invented by Shakespeare.
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah; Say I will come.

_Laun._ 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.

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

_Jes._ His words were "Farewell mistress;" nothing else.

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

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

---

8 This remark is made as Shylock turns away.
9 Hagar was the bondwoman of Abraham the progenitor of the Hebrew race.
10 A half-wit.
11 The wild cat which makes its living in the night.

_Suggestion._ From Scenes v & vi, state your opinion of Jessica's character. What revelations does this scene make as to Shylock's character?
SCENE—SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE VI.—A STREET.

Note. This scene practically completes the underplot. Jessica and Lorenzo elope and do not appear again until the play draws to a close.

See Outline Study, Note 5, paragraph 2.

(1). Setting of the Scene.

The street of Act II, scene v. The balcony and steps form the "pent house" mentioned in line 1. The scene is dark except for a light shining through the lattice of one of the second story windows of Shylock's house; Jessica appears at the window; then joins Lorenzo at the street floor.

(2). Actors.

Gratiano, Salarino, Lorenzo.

Antonio.

Jessica.

(3). Costumes.

The young men wear painted half-masks covering the upper part of the face. They are in fancy dress for the masque; Salarino carries a musical instrument.

Jessica wears a page's dress similar to that already described in Act I, scene ii. Over her doublet and hose she wears a short cloak; she, also, is masked.

Antonio is dressed as in Act I, scene iii.

(4.) Time of Action.

Early evening of the day of Act II, scene v.

Scene VI. The same.

Enter Gratiano and Salarino, masqued.

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo desired us to make stand.
Scene VI]  The Merchant of Venice

Salar.  His hour is almost past.

Gra.  And it is marvel he out-dwells\(^1\) his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.\(^2\)

Salar.  O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons\(^3\) fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged\(^4\) faith unforfeited!

Gra.  That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread\(^5\) again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first?  All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.
How like a younker\(^6\) or a prodigal\(^7\)
The scarféd\(^8\) bark puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embraced by the fickle wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weathered ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggared by the fickle wind!

Salar.  Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter Lorenzo.

---

\(^1\) Overstays.
\(^2\) Paraphrase.
\(^3\) The doves which were said to draw the car of Venus, the goddess of love.
\(^4\) i. e. Faith bound by agreement.
\(^5\) Retrace his steps.
\(^6\) Care-free youth.
\(^7\) To what is the reference?
\(^8\) Decked with banners. Notice the use of the feminine pronouns although the simile has a young man for its basis.
Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;\(^9\)
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,\(^10\)
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within? \(^{25}\)

_Enter Jessica, above, in boy's clothes._

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

_Lor._ Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed.

For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

_Lor._ Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, yet 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.

_Lor._ Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too\(^{11}\) light.

\(^9\) What is the meaning of this word?
\(^{10}\) Explain the line.
\(^{11}\) What is the force of the repetition?
Scene VI]  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.  

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

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

[Exit above.

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

Lor.  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.

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

[Exit with Jessica and Salarino.

---

12 i. e. I ought to be concealed.
13 Secret.
14 Waited for.
15 Jessica must not be judged too harshly because of this speech. The reader understands that Jessica has been defrauded by her father's parsimony and is merely helping herself to that which is her own.
16 i. e. By my manhood.
17 "A gentle", one of good breeding. Gratiano makes a pun on the word, rendering it "Gentile", i. e. one who is not a Jew.
18 Some of the most beautiful lines in the drama are given to the minor character, Lorenzo.
Enter Antonio.

Ant. Who's there?

Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go abroad:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on 't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [Exeunt.

SCENE—SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE VII.—BELMONT.

Note. This scene still further explains the device of the caskets. These scenes, exhibiting the magnificence of Belmont, seem to have been scattered purposely through the play to relieve the monotony of the commonplace accessories of the scenes in the mercantile city.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
A room in Portia's house, as in Act II, scene i. The caskets are in an alcove concealed by a curtain. The whole setting of the scene is more formal and elegant than in ACT II, scene i.

(2). Actors.
Portia & Nerissa.
The Prince of Morocco.

(3). Costumes.
The costumes are the same as those of Act II, scene i.

The afternoon of the day of Act II, scene i.
Scene VII.  

Belmont.  

A room in Portia’s house.

Flourish of cornets.  
Enter Portia with the Prince of Morocco, and their trains.

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

Mor.  The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,  
“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;”  
The second, silver, which this promise carries,  
“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?  

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

Mor.  Some god direct my judgement!  
Let me see;  
I will survey the inscriptions back again.  
What says this leaden casket  
“This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,  
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?  
This casket threatens.  
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?

1 Portia speaks the first two lines to an attendant; the third, to the Prince of Morocco.  
2 Comment on the use of the relative pronoun.  
3 From what follows, explain these words.
"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:
And yet to be afear'd of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself. 4

As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no 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 5
The Hyrcanian deserts 6 and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia 7 are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar

4 Paraphrase lines 24-30.
5 The word "saint" is properly applied only to a person long since dead, therefore Shakespeare uses the two adjectives mortal and breathing to justify the application of the word in this connection.
6 The uninhabited north.
7 The uninhabited south.
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
As o’er a brook, to see fair Portia.  
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is’t like that lead contains her?  ’Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth\(^9\) in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she’s immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?\(^{10}\)
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold,\(^{11}\) but that’s insculped\(^{12}\) upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

*Por.* There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours.  
[He unlocks the golden casket.

*Mor.* O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death,\(^{13}\) within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I’ll read the writing.

[Reads.] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold

---

\(^{8}\) Paraphrase lines 41-46.

\(^{9}\) Winding sheet. i. e. Not only her body but anything that has touched her body is worthy of a richer grave. Rib — confine.

\(^{10}\) At the end of Elizabeth’s reign, the ratio of gold to silver coinage was about ten to one.

\(^{11}\) A gold coin corresponding in value to the Venetian ducat.

\(^{12}\) Stamped.

\(^{13}\) An empty skull.
But my\textsuperscript{14} outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled:\textsuperscript{15}
Fare you well; your suit is cold.
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!\textsuperscript{16}

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

[Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exeunt.

\textsuperscript{14} The skull is speaking. The reference is to the beauty of form and face.
\textsuperscript{15} i.e. The portrait of Portia would have answered you.
\textsuperscript{16} "Farewell, Frost" was a common expression at the termination of a disagreeable interview or incident.

SCENE—SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE VIII.—A STREET IN VENICE.

\textit{Note}. In this scene, the audience hears, from the lips of a third person, (1) of the success of Lorenzo's plans; (2) of the manner in which Shylock receives the news of his daughter's flight; (3) of the deep friendship existing between Antonio and Bassanio.

(1). \textit{Setting of the Scene}.

The street of Act I, scene i.
(2). Act5ors.
Salario, who has been keeping Shylock under ob-
servation in the interest of Lorenzo.
Salarino, who has accompanied Bassanio to the
ship which is to take him to Belmont.
(3). Costumes.
As in Act I, scene i.
The morning following Act II, scene vi.

Scene VIII. Venice. A street.
Enter Salarino and Salanio.

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

Salan. The villain\(^1\) Jew with outcries raised the
Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio’s ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola\(^2\) were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

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

\(^1\) Used by Shakespeare merely as a term of contempt.
\(^2\) The well known public conveyance in the watery streets of Venice.
As the old 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.”

Salan. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

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

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

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

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed.

Describe the various emotions which, according to Salanio, called forth these lines.
Explain.
Talked with.
The English Channel.
Of his return: he answered, "Do not so; Slubber\(^7\) 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:\(^8\) Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts To courtship and such fair ostents of love As shall conveniently become you there:"

And even there, his eye being big\(^9\) with tears, Turning his face, he put his hand behind him, And with affection wondrous sensible\(^{10}\) He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

_Salan._ I think he only loves the world for him. I pray thee, let us go and find him out And quicken his embraced heaviness\(^{11}\) With some delight or other.\(^{12}\)

_Salar._ Do we so. _Exeunt._

\(^7\) i. e. Do not make a mess of your business by undue haste.
\(^8\) Your loving mind.
\(^9\) Swollen.
\(^{10}\) i. e. Made sensitive by his affection.
\(^{11}\) As we say, "Hugs his sorrows or troubles", i. e. will not throw them off.
\(^{12}\) In what estimation is Antonio held by his friends and acquaintances?
SCENE SETTING.

ACT II.—SCENE IX.—BELMONT.

Note. Scene ix is, in effect, a continuation of scene vii, although the action is some days later.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
A room in Portia’s house, as in Act II, scene vii.

(2). Actors.
Portia, Nerissa, & Attendants.
The Prince of Arragon & His Retinue.

(3.) Costumes.
Portia & Nerissa are dressed as in Act II, scene vii.
The Prince of Arragon (a man of swarthy complexion, with a pointed black beard) wears a doublet and trunk hose of black silk with deep slashes lined with yellow; long scarlet cloak with lace ruffles at neck and wrists; black stockings; long pointed shoes; hat with conical top and narrow rim. A long straight sword with jewelled hilt, a jewelled dagger, and a gold necklace complete the costume.

The Attendants of the Prince of Arragon wear costumes of similar fashion with differences appropriate to their several ranks.

Some days later than the time of Act II, scene vii.

Scene IX. Belmont. A room in Portia’s house.
Enter Nerissa with a Servitor.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain¹ straight:

¹ The curtain which conceals the caskets.
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and their trains.*

*Por.* 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.

*Ar.* I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket ’twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

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

*Ar.* An so have I addressed me. Fortune now
To my heart’s hope! Gold; silver; and base lead. ²
“Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.”
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.³
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.”
What many men desire! that many may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,

² Choice.
³ This is said to the lead casket.
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;  
Which pries not to the interior, but like the martlet,  
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
Even in the force and road of casualty.  
I will not choose what many men desire,  
Because I will not jump with common spirits  
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.  
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;  
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:  
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:"  
And well said too; for who shall go about  
To cozen fortune and be honourable  
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 honour  
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!  
How many then should cover that stand bare!  
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned  
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour

4 Flattering.  
5 Martin or barn swallow.  
6 i. e. In the way of accident.  
7 An expression common in Shakespeare, meaning "make equal with".  
8 Cheat.  
9 Assume a position of honor.  
10 Should cover their heads in the presence of those to whom they now doff their hats in respect.  
11 This means that many peasants assume the rank and privileges of noblemen, while true noblemen are reduced by misfortune and ruin to the lowest ranks.
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnished! Well, but to my choice;
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
I will assume desert.  
Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[He opens the silver casket.]  
Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.
Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

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

Ar.  What is here?

[Reads.] The fire seven times tried this;  
Seven times tried that judgment is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, 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.

12 I will pretend that nothing is too good for me.
13 This passage means, "You were not competent to sit
in judgment on your own merits.
14 i.e. The silver of the casket.
Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[Exeunt Arragon and train.

_Por._ Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

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

_Por._ Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

_Enter a Servant.

_Serv._ Where is my lady?

_Por._ Here: what would my lord?\(^{15}\)

_Serv._ Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,\(^{16}\)
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely\(^{17}\) an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,

\(^{15}\) A sportive rebuke to the evident excitement of the messenger.

\(^{16}\) Substantial greetings.

\(^{17}\) In the sense of “promising”. This is one of the many so-called “Americanisms” found in Shakespeare.
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend’st such high-day\(^{18}\) wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid’s post that comes so mannerly.

Ner. Bassanio, lord Love,\(^{19}\) if thy will it be!

[Exeunt.

\(^{18}\) What is the significance of this adjective?
\(^{19}\) "O God of Love".

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SCENE-SETTING.

ACT III.—SCENE I.—A STREET.

Note. This scene (1) informs the reader that Antonio’s ships are reported lost; (2) presents Shylock torn by two emotions; exultation at the thought of the forfeited bond, and despair over the ducats which his daughter has stolen from him and is squandering in Genoa. Any sympathy which reader or audience may have felt for Shylock is banished by this scene.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
The Street of Act II, scene viii.

(2). Actors.
Salanio & Salarino.
Shylock.
Tubal, a friend of Shylock and of the same race.
A Servant.
(3). Costumes.

Salanio & Salarino are dressed as in Act I, scene i. Shylock wears the costume of Act I, scene iii. Tubal is dressed like Shylock. (He is younger than Shylock.)

The Servant is a page in livery.


A week or more later than the action of Act II,scene viii.

ACT III.

Scene I. Venice. A street.

Enter Salanio and Salarino.

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wracked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest

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1 Uncontradicted.
2 The Goodwin Sands, off the coast of Kent, England.
3 Nibbled.
Scene 1] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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

Salar. Come, the full stop. 4
Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.
Salan. Let me say Amen 5 betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter Shylock.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?
Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal. 6

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

Shy. She is damned for it.

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

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salar. 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. 7

4 i. e. "Get to the end of your sentence."
5 This means, "I could repeat your prayer, but will merely say 'Amen', lest the Devil should tempt me to change my mind while I am praying."
6 What does this mean?
7 The light colored, sour wines of Germany were little valued in Shakespeare's day.
But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

_Shy._ 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.

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

_Shy._ 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

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8 Unprofitable associate.
9 Come into the market so confidently.
10 _i._ _e._ As a duty one Christian owed to another.
11 _i._ _e._ As well as other things.
12 _i._ _e._ Half a million ducats in profits.
the rest, we will resemble you in that. I 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 villiany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

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

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal.

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

[Exeunt Salan., Salar., and Servant.

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

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

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt

13 The antecedent of "his" is Christian.
14 Forbearance.
15 If these were the only lines spoken by the Jew in the scene, the sympathy of the reader would easily be with him. The speech is a most eloquent and convincing one.
16 Frankfort-on-the-Main, a great market town of Germany.
17 It was generally believed by the Jews themselves that the scattered and homeless condition of the race was a punishment for sin and unbelief.
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!¹⁸

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.

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

*Shy.* What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

*Tub.* Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

*Shy.* I thank God, I thank God. Is’t true, is’t true?

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

*Shy.* I thank thee, good Tubal, good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

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

*Shy.* Thou stick’st a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

*Tub.* There came divers of Antonio’s creditors in

¹⁸ This is the utterance of the conventional miser of fiction, not of a Jew.
my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Shy.} I am very glad of it: I’ll plague him; I’ll torture him: I am glad of it.

\textit{Tub.} One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

\textit{Shy.} Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise\textsuperscript{20}; I had it of Leah\textsuperscript{21} when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{Tub.} But Antonio is certainly undone.

\textit{Shy.} Nay, that’s true, that’s very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer\textsuperscript{23}; bespeak him a fortnight before.\textsuperscript{24} I will have the heart of him,\textsuperscript{25} if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will.\textsuperscript{26} Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.\textsuperscript{27} \textit{[Exeunt.}

\textsuperscript{19} i. e. Become a bankrupt.
\textsuperscript{20} The Turquoise was highly valued by Orientals.
\textsuperscript{21} Evidently Shylock’s deceased wife.
\textsuperscript{22} Notice that he does not say he would not have parted with it for a really valuable consideration.
\textsuperscript{23} i. e. Retain an officer of the law to serve my writ when the time comes.
\textsuperscript{24} i. e. Before the day mentioned in the bond.
\textsuperscript{25} Antonio.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Explain.}
\textsuperscript{27} Describe the manner in which this conversation is carried on.
SCENE-SETTING.

ACT III.—SCENE II.—BELMONT.

Note. This is the famous Casket Scene in which the drama reaches its climax. (1) Bassanio makes successful choice of the casket; (2) News of the loss of Antonio's ships and of Shylock's determination to exact the forfeit-ure reach Bassanio at the moment of his betrothal; (3) Jessica and Lorenzo accompany the bearer of the bad tid-ings and are made welcome at Belmont.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
The Hall of Portia's palace at Belmont, as in Act II, scene vii.

(2). Actors.
Bassanio, Gratiano, Lorenzo.
Portia, Nerissa, Jessica.
Salerio, a messenger from Venice.
Pages & Waiting women.

(3). Costumes.
Portia and Nerissa are dressed as in previous scenes.
Jessica's costume is like that of Nerissa.
Gratiano wears a slashed doublet ornamented with gold buttons, trunk hose, black stockings and shoes, a short black cloak, sword and jewelry.
Bassanio wears a long black silk cloak over scarlet doublet and hose, black silk stockings, black shoes, sword with jewelled hilt, gold neck chain.
Lorenzo and the other gentlemen wear a costume like that of Gratiano with minor differences of color and cut.
Salerio wears a travelling costume—long gray cloak, buff doublet and hose, gray stockings and leather shoes, felt hat, and long leather gloves.
Three months later than Act III, scene i, somewhat more than three months after the Bond Scene.

Scene II. Belmont. A room in Portia’s house.

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerrissa, and Attendants.

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There’s something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well,—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you’ll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o’erlooked me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,

1 Notice the change in Portia’s manner in this scene.
2 Portia says in effect, “I will not confess that it is love, but you can see that it is not hate which actuates me”.
3 “I would be then a perjurer”.
4 A “lady’s malediction”—“May your eyes be blamed”.

[Notice the change in Portia’s manner in this scene. Portia says in effect, “I will not confess that it is love, but you can see that it is not hate which actuates me.” “I would be then a perjurer.” A “lady’s malediction”—“May your eyes be blamed.”]
And so all yours. O, these naughty times\(^5\)
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, through yours, not yours. Prove it so,\(^6\)
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.\(^7\)
I speak too long; but ’tis to piece the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.\(^8\)

_Bass._

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

_Por._ Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason\(^9\) there is mingled with your love.

_Bass._ None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love\(^10\):
There may as well be amity and life
’Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

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

_Bass._ Promise me life, and I’ll confess the truth.

_Por._ Well then, confess and live.

_Bass._ Confess and love

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

\(^5\) Referring to the condition of society, rights of parents, etc.
\(^6\) i. e. If it prove so.
\(^7\) i. e. “It will be Fortune, not I who is to blame”.
\(^8\) Paraphrase this whole speech of Portia’s. In what state of mind must the reader imagine her to be?
\(^9\) Lack of confidence.
\(^10\) i. e. “That I may not enjoy, etc”.
\(^11\) i. e. “I am guilty of nothing except love for you”.
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Por. Away, then! I am locked in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end.¹²
Fading in music; that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish¹³ when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch; such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom’s ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence,¹⁴ but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster:¹⁵ I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!

¹² Referring to the old fable that "the swan, when wounded, pours forth its last breath in notes most beautifully clear and loud".

¹³ Flourish of trumpets as the crown is placed on the head of a new king at his coronation.

¹⁴ Beauty and dignity.

¹⁵ Consult the Classical Dictionary under "Hercules".
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

Music, whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to
himself.

**Song.**

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.

*All.* Ding, dong, bell.

**Bass.** 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

---

16 i. e. "If you live, I live".
17 This song is sung by the pages and waiting women and is evidently intended to suggest the train of thought which leads Bassanio to the right casket. Portia has hinted to Bassanio that he pay attention to the music. **What inferences is Bassanio justified in drawing from this song?**
18 Passing fondness.
19 i. e. What they seem or should be.
Will bless it and approve it with a text,  
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?  
There is no vice so simple but assumes  
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:  
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false  
As stayers of sand, wear yet upon their chins  
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,  
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk;  
And these assume but valour’s excrement  
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,  
And you shall see ’tis purchased by the weight,  
Which therein works a miracle in nature.  
Making them lightest that wear most of it:  
So are those crisped snaky golden locks  
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,  
Upon supposed fairness, often known  
To be the dowry of a second head,  
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.

20 Artless.  
21 Bulwarks of sand that the least opposition will throw down”—Knight.  
22 i. e. Of the hero and the war-god.  
23 An idea adapted from the Roman superstition that a white liver in a sacrificial animal augured defeat in battle.  
24 Excrescence.  
25 Indomitable.  
26 i. e. Lightest in conduct.  
27 Endowment.  
28 i. e. Having graced another head before.  
29 Beset with treachery.
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, 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 threat'nest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Por. [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 they joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here?

[Opening the leaden casket.

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?

30 The veil worn by Oriental women, which conceals ugliness much oftener than beauty.
31 Consult the Classical Dictionary.
32 Place the accent on this word.
33 Silver, used for the most commonly circulated coins.
34 i. e. So near creating a living form, so perfect in the likeness.
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes,—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnished. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll, The continent and summary of my fortune.

[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;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,

35 Put this speech of Bassanio's into your own words.
36 That which contains.
37 Explain, and show how the metaphor is carried out in the latter part of Bassanio's speech.
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich:
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account. But the full sum of me
Is sum of nothing; which, to term in gross,
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;
Happy is this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happier of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o’er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord: 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.\textsuperscript{38}

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

\textit{Ner.} 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!

\textit{Gra.} My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:\textsuperscript{39}
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

\textit{Bass.} With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

\textit{Gra.} I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

\textsuperscript{38} Discuss this speech at length. Note its beauty and simplicity.
\textsuperscript{39} i. e. "Wish to rob me of none".
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved for intermission.
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very tongue was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa?
Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.
Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?
Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.
Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.
Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?

What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salerio, a messenger from Venice.

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

40 i. e. If the promise hold.
Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Saler. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives Bassanio a letter.

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.41

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

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio? 236
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons,42 we have won the fleece.

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

Por. There are some shrewd43 contents in yon same
paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:

41 The conversation between Salerio and Bassanio is an
"aside."
42 Consult the Classical Dictionary under "Jason".
43 Sharp, painful.
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.

_Bass._

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

_44_ i.e. To nothing less than his worst enemy.
_45_ Paraphrase lines 257-260.
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring\(^{46}\) rocks?

_Saler._ Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the Duke\(^{47}\) at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,\(^{48}\)
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes\(^{49}\)
Of greatest port,\(^{50}\) have all persuaded with him\(^{51}\);
But none can drive him from the envious\(^{52}\) plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

_Jes._ When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,\(^{53}\)
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

\(^{46}\) Give the force of this adjective.

\(^{47}\) The chief magistrate of Venice.

\(^{48}\) i. e. Call in question the assertion that Venice was governed by laws and not by the whim of a despot.

\(^{49}\) A peculiar Venetian term for noblemen of the highest rank.

\(^{50}\) Bearing or dignity.

\(^{51}\) Tried to persuade him.

\(^{52}\) Malicious.

\(^{53}\) i. e. Do not deny what the Jew demands in the name of justice.
Por. It is your dear friend that is thus in trouble?
Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
Por. What sum owes he the Jew?
Bass. For me three thousand ducats.54
Por.
What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface55 the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio’s fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia’s side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let us hear the letter of your friend.

54 i. e. “Three thousand ducats, and all for me”.
55 Define the word.
Bass. [Reads.] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away, I will make haste; but, till I come again, 320 No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay, No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.  [Exeunt.

56 Note the grammatical error in this letter.

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT III.—SCENE III.—VENICE.

Note. The debt secured by the bond being past due and unpaid, Shylock has had Antonio arrested, pending the trial of his right to exact the forfeiture. As the case is practically a matter of life and death to Antonio, bail for his appearance can not be accepted, and he has been lodged in prison. The jailer, in compassion, has allowed him to go out on the street to make a personal appeal to his creditor.

(1). Setting of the Scene.

A street in Venice—a narrow strip of pavement between a canal and the prison. The prison forms the background of the scene,—a plain, two-storied structure with narrow grated windows, and covered with dirty, yellow
stucco. In the foreground, are the usual accessories of mooring posts and gondolas in the canal.

(2). Actors.
Antonio.
Shylock.
Salarino.
The Jailor.

(3). Costumes.

Antonio is not confined as a criminal, nor has he been in prison long, so his appearance is not particularly changed. He wears a gray gown, slightly open in front, revealing the fact that his ankles are lightly shackled. He wears, also, gray stockings and shoes. His head is bare, his beard untrimmed.

Shylock & Salarino are dressed as in previous scenes.

The Jailer, a short, thick-set man, with iron gray hair and beard, wears a buff doublet and trunk hose, black stockings and leather shoes, and a gray conical hat. A dagger and a bunch of keys are at his girdle, and he carries a halbeard or spiked pole-axe in his hand.


A few days later than the action of Act III, scene ii.

Scene III. Venice. A street.

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio and Gaoler.¹

Shy. Gaoler, look at him: tell not me of mercy; This is the fool that lent out money gratis: Gaoler, look to him.

¹ The jailer, Antonio, and Salarino come out of the prison as Shylock is passing. Shylock gives them no opportunity to speak but denies their request before it is made.
Scene III] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond: I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond. Thou calledst me dog before thou hadst a cause; But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs: The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder, Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond To come abroad with him at his request.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak: I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more. I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool, To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield To Christian Intercessors. Follow not; I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [Exit.

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

Ant. Let him alone: I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. He seeks my life; his reason well I know: I oft delivered from his forfeitures

2 Good for nothing.
3 Foolishly sympathetic.
4 Notice that Shylock constantly associates folly with benevolence.
5 Referring to the efforts of the Duke and the merchants to save Antonio.
6 Impervious to reason.
7 i.e. Instead of associating with wild beasts.
8 Profitless.
Many that have at times made moan to me;\(^9\) Therefore he hates me.

_Salar._ I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold. \(^{25}\)

_Ant._ The Duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state;\(^{10}\)
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated\(^{11}\) me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [Exeunt.

\(^9\) Supplicated.

\(^{10}\) This means ‘If aliens are denied the use of legal facilities for doing business (commodity), the reputation of Venice as a city governed justly and wisely will be lost (impeached), and the city will lose the profit it now enjoys from the concourse of merchants of all nations.

\(^{11}\) Reduced.

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**SCENE-SETTING.**

**ACT III.—SCENE IV.—BELMONT.**

_Note._ Bassanio and Gratiano have been married, the one to Portia, the other to Nerissa, and have gone to Venice with money furnished by Portia to pay Antonio’s bond. Portia leaves Lorenzo and Jessica in charge of her house, and, pretending that she is to wait her husband’s return
at a near-by convent, hastens to Venice in the guise of a young doctor-at-law, with Nerissa disguised as a clerk. This scene hints at this plan of Portia and tells whence she obtains her advice and her disguise.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
The Hall at Belmont as in Act III, scene ii.

(2). Actors.
Portia & Nerissa.
Lorenzo & Jessica.
Balthasar, a page.

(3). Costumes.
Portia & Nerissa as in Act III, scene ii.
Lorenzo & Jessica as in Act III, scene ii.
Balthasar is the same page who appears in Act II, scene ix.

The same days as the action of Act III, scene iii.

Scene IV. Belmont. A room in Portia’s house.
Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthasar.

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence, You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly In bearing thus the absence of your lord. But if you knew to whom you show this honour, How true a gentleman you send relief,

1 Conception.
2 Friendship. The sentence means, “You know well what godlike friendship is”, i.e. the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio.
3 In what case?
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.\(^5\)

Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself;
Therefore no more of it; hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage\(^7\) 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\(^8\) and my lord's return:

\(^4\) In Shakespeare, this word means simply "one who loves".
\(^5\) i. e. "Than your ordinary acts of benevolence could constrain you to be".
\(^6\) Use up, spend.
\(^7\) Control and management.
\(^8\) What is the case?
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.

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

Por. My people do already know my mind, And will acknowledge you and Jessica In place of Lord Bassanio and myself. And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. 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 endeavour of a man In speed to Padua: see thou render this Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario; And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee, Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed Unto the traject, to the common ferry

9 A city on the mainland about 25 miles west of Venice, famous for its university, one of the oldest in Europe.

10 The speed of imagination.

11 Explain the meaning from what follows.
Which trades to Venice. Waste no times in words, But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.  
_Balth._ Madam, I go with all convenient speed.  

[Exit.

_Por._ Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands Before they think of us.

_Ner._ Shall they see us?

_Por._ They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit, That they shall think we are accomplished With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager, When we are both accoutred like young men, I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two, And wear my dagger with the braver grace, And speak between the change of man and boy With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps Into a manly stride, and speak of frays Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies, How honourable ladies sought my love, Which I denying, they fell sick and died; I could not do withal; then I'll repent, And wish, for all that, that I had not killed them; And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell, That men shall swear I have discontinued school Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind

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12 Dress.  
13 Ingenious.  
14 I could not help it.  
15 Affect remorse.
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks, Which I will practice. 
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device 
When I am in my coach, which stays for us 
At the park gate; and therefore haste away, 
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.  

[Exeunt.]

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT III.—SCENE V.—BELMONT.

Note. This rather dull scene is introduced to mark the interval between the conception of Portia's plot and its execution; it also serves to show Lorenzo and Jessica in a position of dignity worthy of the fortune with which they are to be endowed in the next act.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
A Garden in Belmont.—The background of the scene is the portico of Portia's mansion with marble steps leading up to it. In the foreground, a gravel walk, with trimmed shrubbery; vases, and statuary on each side.

(2). Actors.
Lorenzo & Jessica.
Launcelot.

(3). Costumes.
Jessica & Lorenzo are dressed as in Act III, scene iv.
Launcelot wears a well-fitting suit of page's livery, but betrays his lack of training by his uncouth appearance and his insolent manner.

(4.) Time of the Action.
A few hours later than the action of Act III, scene iv.
Scene V. The same. A garden.

Enter Launcelot and Jessica.

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

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

Enter Lorenzo.

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

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

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

Lor. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

1 By supplying one another's needs.
2 i. e. The most commendable manifestation of wit will be silence.
3 Who are not expected to know what they are saying.
Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

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

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

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

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

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

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

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited! The fool hath planted in his memory An army of good words; and I do know A many fools, that stand in better place, Garnished like him, that for a tricksy word

4 Wit-snapping is exchange of repartee.
5 Set the table.
6 Taking advantage of the form of an expression to dispute its meaning.
7 Your own wishes.
8 Good sense.
9 So fantastically adorned, i.e. so fantastically used.
10 A great many.
11 Mentally equipped.
12 A word that can be played upon.
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica? And now, good sweet, say thy opinion, How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

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

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

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

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

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

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

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.

[Exeunt.]
SCENE-SETTING.

ACT IV.—SCENE I.—VENICE.

Note. The Trial Scene is the last of the three great scenes in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. Portia, disguised as a Doctor-at-law, has entered the courtroom where Bassanio is, in vain, offering Shylock thrice his bond. Instructed by the learned lawyer, Bellario, she herself conducts the case to a finish successful for Antonio and disastrous for Shylock. At the close of the scene, the sympathy of the reader is, to some extent, with Shylock, in spite of his attitude towards Antonio.

The case of Shylock against Antonio is being tried before a special jury of doctors of the law. The only point at issue is whether the peculiar forfeiture described in the bond can be legally exacted. The verdict seems to be a foregone conclusion; the best legal opinion thus far obtained has been unanimously to the effect that the forfeiture of "a pound of flesh nearest the heart" is of the same nature as the forfeiture of lands or goods. The Venetian lawyers, however, are willing to defer to the higher authority of the learned Doctor of Padua, although they expect that his opinion will coincide with their own. The Duke is present in the interest of the Venetian State; the world must know that Venice is governed by its laws, not by arbitrary power; the Duke does not conceal his sympathy with Antonio, but Antonio's fate is wholly in the power of the law—a criminal may be pardoned, but no stretch of executive clemency can relieve a debtor of his legal obligations.

For Portia's conduct of the case, see Outline Study C, III, and the supplementary note at the end of this scene.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
A Court of Justice—a grand hall, one wall of which, ornamented with banners, shields, and armorial bearings carved in the stone, forms the background. Against the wall, extending nearly across the stage, is a raised platform supported by marble pillars and furnished with an elaborately carved balustrade. In the middle of this platform is the throne of the Duke; on either side of the throne are smaller, but elaborately and upholstered, seats for the magnificoes. In front of the raised platform, the stage is divided transversely, by railings, into three portions. The central division has a secretary’s desk at each rear corner, and a long table covered with crimson velvet cloth and surrounded by chairs and carved benches. The other divisions are fitted with plain benches for spectators, a passage way being left from the entrance at either side to the central division.

The Duke is seated on the throne with the magnificoes, among whom is Bassanio, around him. In the railed off enclosure in the center of the stage, clerks are writing at the desks which are littered with papers. Around the crimson covered table are grouped lawyers in rich silk or damask gowns, conversing with one another or turning the leaves of the huge law books which lie before them. Apart from this group, but inside the railing, Antonio stands with three or four of his friends, including Gratiano and Salarino. On the other side of the table stands Shylock, who has entered accompanied by some of his countrymen. On either side of the railed enclosure the benches are lined with spectators. Guards in rich velvet uniforms, wearing plumed metal helmets and armed with halberds, keep the passage ways clear. Portia, in a lawyer’s robe, followed, as far as the railing, by Nerissa as her clerk, in doublet and hose, is escorted to a place at the head of the table in the center of the stage, directly beneath the throne of the Duke.
(2). **Actors.**

*The Duke and Magnificoees of Venice.*

*Bassanio.*

*Antonio and other Merchants.*

*Shylock and others of his countrymen.*

*Gratiano, Salarino, Salanio and Others.*

*Portia, as a Doctor of the Civil Law.*

*Nerissa, as the Doctor's clerk.*

(3). **Costumes.**

*The Duke* wears a long, loose-sleeved gown of crimson silk embroidered with gold and ornamented with large gold buttons; over his shoulders is a cape of ermine; on his head, a crimson velvet cap with a gold band encircling the forehead.

Bassanio and the other Magnificoees wear shorter gowns of red or black, with stockings, shoes and skull caps of the same color. Many of them wear gold chains and other jewelry.

*Antonio*, who, now that he has appeared in court to answer Shylock's suit, is no longer a prisoner, is dressed as in Act I, scene i.

*Shylock and his Friends* wear costumes not differing essentially from those worn by Antonio and his companions, except as to the color of their tight-fitting caps, which is orange yellow, while the color of those worn by the Christian merchants is black. In a bag at his waist, Shylock has the bond, written on a narrow strip of vellum, and the knife, the razor-like edge of which he tries with his finger and wipes carefully on his sleeve. Another of the Jewish merchants carries the balances in which the pound of flesh is to be weighed.

*Portia*, as a Doctor of the Civil Law, wears a long gown of black silk, ungirdled, with very capacious open sleeves; a black silk cap conceals her hair.
Nerissa, as the Doctor’s clerk, wears a loose doublet, trunk hose, stockings and felt shoes, all black; narrow ruffles of white lace are at her neck and wrists.

The Spectators are variously dressed. Among them are many Jews, distinguished by their tawny yellow caps, also Turks and other foreigners in distinctive national dress.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.

Enter the Duke, the Maginificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salerio, and others.

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch Uncapable of pity, void and empty From any dram\(^1\) of mercy.

Ant. I have heard Your grace hath ta’en great pains to qualify His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate And that no lawful means can carry me Out of his envy’s\(^2\) reach, I do oppose My patience to his fury, and am armed To suffer, with a quietness of spirit, The very\(^3\) tyranny and rage of his.

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\(^1\) A minute quantity.

\(^2\) Malicious hatred. An obselete meaning of the word.

\(^3\) Actual. i. e. The actual injury which he threatens.
Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court, 14
Saler. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face. Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too, That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange Than is thy strange apparent cruelty; And where thou now exact'st the penalty, Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh, Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture, But, 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, Enow to press a royal merchant down And pluck commiseration of his state From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint, From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never trained To offices of tender courtesy.

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew. 9

Shy. I have possessed your grace of what I purpose;

4 i. e. "Lead men to suppose that you are thus malicious".  
5 Pity, relenting. What is the modern meaning of the word?  
6 Remarkable.  
7 Whereas.  
8 A pun on Gentile may be suggested here.  
9 Put the Duke's lines into your own words.  
10 i. e. "I have made you fully acquainted with".
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. 11
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;
But, say, it is my humour 12; is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleased to give then thousand ducats
To have it baned? 13 What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig; 14
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat.
As there is no firm 15 reason to be rendered,
Why he 16 cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not, 17
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

11 The mediaeval city was free to govern itself by its own laws, by virtue of a charter from some king or emperor. This charter might be revoked if the powers granted under it were abused. Venice, however, was an independent state.
12 Whim.
13 Poisoned.
14 Give your opinion as to the meaning of "gaping pig".
15 Sound.
16 He — he — this one....that one.
17 The double negative is meant to strengthen the statement.
Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current\textsuperscript{18} of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?\textsuperscript{60}
Bass. Every offence\textsuperscript{19} is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:\textsuperscript{20}
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question\textsuperscript{21} with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard.
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. 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.

\textsuperscript{18} Course.
\textsuperscript{19} State of being offended.
\textsuperscript{20} i. e. "Remember that you are arguing with the Jew—an undignified and useless course of procedure.
\textsuperscript{21} Ask.
Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?
Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs—
Why sweat they under burthens?—let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be 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 23 I may dismiss this court,  
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.
Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.
Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

22 Put Shylock's argument into your own words.
23 Authority.
24 Decide.
Bass. 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.

Ant. 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?

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

[DPresenting a letter.

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly? 25

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. 26 Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gra. O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras, 27
That souls of animals infuse themselves

25 Describe the stage action which calls worth this remark from Bassanio.
26 Give the meaning of the word. Where has the same word been used before in this scene?
27 Identify Pythagoras, and explain the sentence.
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Governed a wolf, who hanged for human slaughter. 125

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

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend 130
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Ner. He attendeth here hard by,28
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

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

* Paraphrase the line.
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?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.

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

Por. I am informed thoroughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. 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?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

---

29 i. e. The dispute that is the subject of this discussion.
30 i. e. So in accordance with the law.
31 Power to harm.
32 Constrained or compelled, that is, compulsion and mercy are incompatible ideas.
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above the sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

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

33 Is a symbol of.
34 Appears.
35 I. e., "If you persist in adhering to the letter of the law",
36 Paraphrase.
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart: If this will not suffice, it must appear That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you, Wrest once the law to your authority: To do a great right, do a little wrong, And curb this cruel devil of his will

Por. 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.

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

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

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

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

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

No, not for Venice.

Por. 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.

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37 i. e. Put a forced construction on the law.
38 Explain.
39 Study Outline Study C, III, 2.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound; I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.

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

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

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

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

Shy. I have them ready.

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

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Por. It is not so expressed: but what of that? 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

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

Por. You, merchant, have you anything to say?

Ant. 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 a misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge

Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

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

---

40 It is ever her custom.
41 Speak well of me.
42 A friend.
43 i. e. "If only you regret that you have lost a friend, then I will not regret that I have paid your debt."
44 Instantly.
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.

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

Gra. 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.

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

Shy. 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.

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

Shy. Most rightful judge!

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

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Por. 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.
   Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew; O learned judge!
   Shy. Is that the law?47
   Por. Thyself shall see the act:48
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.
   Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!
   Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.
   Bass. Here is the money.
   Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
   Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
   Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just49 pound, be it but so much

47 What would be an appropriate action on the part of Shylock at this point?
48 Define.
49 Exact.
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,\textsuperscript{50}
Or the divison of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,\textsuperscript{51}
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

\textit{Gra.} A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now infidel, I have thee on the hip.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Por.} Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
\textit{Shy.} Give me my principal, and let me go.
\textit{Bass.} I have it ready for thee; here it is.

\textit{Por.} He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

\textit{Gra.} A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

\textit{Shy.} Shall I not have barely my principal?

\textit{Por.} Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

\textit{Shy.} Why, then the Devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

\textit{Por.} \quad \textit{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,

\textsuperscript{50} i. e. In the entire weight.
\textsuperscript{51} \textbf{Explain.}
\textsuperscript{52} This expression, is taken from the language of wrestling.
It means "I have the advantage over you."
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the Duke.53

Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thy-
self:
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. 350

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.54

Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon55 not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop

53 Describe Shylock's predicament.
54 Which humility may commute into a fine.
55 i. e. Spare not that.
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

Ant. 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 favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content. 

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. 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.

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:

56 Draw a word picture of the scene.
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [Exit Shylock

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.
Por. 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.

Bass. 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.

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

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

57 Making the twelve jurymen who should pronounce sen-
tence of death.
55 Pardon of your grace.
59 Paraphrase.
60 Reward.
61 Requite.
62 Anxious for further payment.
Bass. Dear, sir, of force I must attempt you further;\textsuperscript{63}
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.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

[To Ant.] Give me your gloves, I’ll wear them for your sake;
[To Bass.] 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.

Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

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

Bass. There’s more depends on this man on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. 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.

Bass. 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.

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

\textsuperscript{63} i. e. “I must attempt to induce you to accept a fee”.
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever, 64
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.]

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deserving and my love withal
Be valued against your wife’s commandment.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him if thou canst,
Unto Antonio’s house: away! make haste.

[Exeunt Gratiano.]

Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. 440

Supplementary Note. The Trial Scene is a triumph of
dramatic art over the human reason. It is impossible to see
this scene acted or even to read the words for the first
time without feeling that for once poetic justice and legal
justice have coincided and that Shylock has been con-
founded by due process of righteous law.

Examined closely, however, the scene appears as a mere
travesty of judicial procedure. The bond transaction be-
tween Antonio and Shylock is either frivolous or criminal,
yet Portia decides that the court is bound to recognize it.
Having admitted the monstrous proposition that living
flesh can be cut from a human being by process of law,
she decides contrary to all principles of law and common
sense that the right to cut such flesh does not imply the
right to shed blood. Then, because the Jew had refused

64 Is Portia speaking as a Doctor-at-law should speak?
to sell his supposed legal right to the forfeiture named in the bond, the learned judge decrees that Antonio owes him nothing. Again, she arraigns the plaintiff on a criminal charge and condemns him without trial. In the end Shylock is glad to escape from the court house with his life and a life interest only in a fraction of his estate.

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT IV.—SCENE II.—VENICE.

(1). Setting of the Scene.
The street of Act II, scene iii.

(2). Actors.
Portia and Nerissa.
Gratiano.

(3). Costumes.
Portia and Nerissa have just come from the court room and are still in disguise.

Following immediately upon the action of Act IV, scene i.

SCENE II. The same. A street.

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.
Enter Gratiano.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o’erta’en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice¹
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. 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.²

Gra. That will I do.

Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.

[Aside to Por.] I’ll see if I can get my husband’s ring.
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Por. [Aside to Ner.] Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have old³ swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we’ll outface them, and outswear them too.

[Aloud.] Away! make haste: thou know’st where I will tarry.

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

[Exeunt.

1 Reflection or deliberation.
2 This is a dramatic device to enable Nerissa to obtain her ring from Gratiano.
3 Great.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT V.—SCENE I.—BELMONT.

Note. "The Fifth Act merrily finishes, at Belmont, the love affairs of the play". By the aid of this one scene, the impression produced by THE MERCHANT OF VENICE is, "in spite of Shylock's tragic fate", that of a pleasant comedy. The episode of the rings is the dramatic device by which Bassanio is made acquainted with Portia's part in the Trial Scene.

(1). Setting of the Scene.

The Garden at Belmont as in Act III, scene v. "The time is evening; the moon is in the heavens, full-orbed and shining with a steady luster; on the green sward fall the ever changing shadows of the lofty trees; where trees are not, the moonbeams sleep upon the bank; the distant horn is heard; music floats upon the breeze."

(2). Actors.

Lorenzo and Jessica.
Portia and Nerissa.
Bassanio and Gratiano.
Stephano and Launcelot.
Musicians.

(3). Costumes.

All the actors are dressed as in previous scenes.


The evening of the day on which the Trial Scene takes place.

Scene I. Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house.

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this, When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressida lay that night.¹

Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe² fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismayed away.

Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow³ in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Aeson.

Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrifty⁴ love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jes. 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.

¹ Lorenzo refers to the story of Troilus and Cressida told by Chaucer.
² Consult the Classical Dictionary for Thisbe, Dido, Carthage, and Medea.
³ The willow was emblematic of love forsaken.
⁴ Unthrifty.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

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

Enter Stephano.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

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

Lor. Who comes with her?
Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet returned?
Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter Launcelot.

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!
Lor. Who calls?

*Tread.

* Crosses and shrines may be seen by the roadside throughout Italy. In olden times it was the custom for travellers of all anks to kneel before them and pray for their "heart's desire".

† Launcelot is imitating the horn of the courier or "post".
Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [Exit.

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in? My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you, Within the house, your mistress is at hand; And bring your music forth into the air. [Enter Stephano.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! Here will we sit and let the sounds of music Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night Becomes the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold: There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st But in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins; Such harmony is in immortal souls;

8 Define.
9 To sing in harmony.
10 What is the plural of “cherub”? 
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay\textsuperscript{11}  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.  

\textit{Enter} Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana\textsuperscript{12} with a hymn:  
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear  
And draw her home with music.  

\textit{Jes.} I am never merry when I hear sweet music.  
\textit{Lor.} The reason is, your spirits are attentive:  
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,  
Or race of youthful and unhandled\textsuperscript{13} 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\textsuperscript{14} stand,  
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze  
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet\textsuperscript{15}  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;  
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,  
But music for the time doth change his nature.  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, strategems and spoils:  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night.

\textsuperscript{11} Paraphrase this line.  
\textsuperscript{12} To which of the attributes of Diana is the reference here?  
\textsuperscript{13} Unbroken.  
\textsuperscript{14} Simultaneous.  
\textsuperscript{15} Ovid, Books x and xi. Many other poets have told the story of Orpheus, for which, consult the Classical Dictionary.
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

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

Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

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

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

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

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season seasoned are
To their right praise and true perfection!

16 Consult the Classical Dictionary.
17 Learn lines 83-88: 90 & 91.
18 Paraphrase lines 94-97.
19 i. e. A thing is good or bad according to the point of view.
Portia goes on to explain her meaning by concrete examples.
20 Listened to.
21 From footnote 19, explain the meaning of this line.
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [Music ceases.
Lor. That is the voice, 110
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words. 115
Are they returned?
Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [A tucket sounds.
Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.
Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers.
Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.23

22 Consult the Classical Dictionary. Read Longfellow's poem entitled "Endymion".
23 "If you would always walk in the night, it would be day with us, as it now is on the other side of the globe".
**Scene I**  

**THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

*Por.* Let me give light, but let me not be light;  
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,  
And never be Bassanio so for me:  
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.  
**Bass.** I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.  
This is the man: this is Antonio,  
To whom I am so infinitely bound.  

*Por.* You should in all sense be much bound to him,  
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.  
**Ant.** No more than I am well acquitted of.  

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

*Gra.* [To Ner.] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;  
In faith, I gave it to the judge’s clerk.  

*Por.* A quarrel, ho, already! what’s the matter?  

*Gra.* About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring  
That she did give me, whose posy was  
For all the world like cutler’s poetry  
Upon a knife, “Love me, and leave me not.”  

*Ner.* What talk you of the posy or the value?  
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

_Ner._ Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

_Gra._ 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.

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

_Bass._ [Aside.] Why, I were best to cut my left hand
off

29 Mindful.
30 Small in stature.
31 Describe the action that justifies this line.
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

_Gra._ 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.

_Por._ What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

_Bass._ 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.

_Por._ Even so void is your false heart of truth.

_Bass._ 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.

_Por._ If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?^32

^32 Symbol.
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I’ll die for t’ but some woman had the ring.  
   Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And 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;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begged
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.
   Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.
   Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.
   Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—
   Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;

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23 Put into a plain statement lines 199-202.
24 A Doctor of Civil Law.
25 To what is the reference?
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,  
And there's an oath of credit.  

Bass.  
Nay, but hear me:  
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear  
I never more will break an oath with thee.  

Ant. 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.  

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this  
And bid him keep it better than the other.  

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.  

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

Por. You are all amazed:  
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;  
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:  
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,  
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here  
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you  
And even but now 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 harbour suddenly:  
You shall not know by what strange accident  
I chanced on this letter.  

Welfare.
Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living; For here I read for certain that my ships are safely come to road.

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

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possessed of.

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

Por. It is almost morning, And yet I am sure you are not satisfied Of these events at full.\(^{39}\) Let us go in; And charge us there upon inter'gatories,\(^{40}\) And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. \([Exeunt.]

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\(^{37}\) As of more importance than his mere body.

\(^{38}\) Purposely.

\(^{39}\) Fully satisfied.

\(^{40}\) i. e. "Ask us questions".

Note. Mrs. Jaimeson in her "Characteristics of Shakespeare's Heroines" closes her chapter upon the character of Portia, thus:—

"Shylock and his machinations being dismissed from our thoughts, and the rest of the dramatis personae assembled together at Belmont, all our interest and all our attention
are riveted on Portia, and the conclusion leaves the most delightful impression on the fancy. The playful equivocal of the rings, the sportive trick she puts on her husband, and her thorough enjoyment of the jest, show how little she was displeased by the sacrifices of her gift, and all are consistent with her bright and joyous spirit. In conclusion, when Portia invites the company into her palace to refresh themselves after her travels, and talk over these events at full, the imagination, unwilling to lose sight of the brilliant group, follows them in gay procession from the lovely moonlit garden to marble halls and princely revels, to splendor and festive mirth, to love and happiness!"
One copy del. to Cat. Div.

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