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The Merchant of Venice

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The Kingsley English Texts

Shakespeare, William

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The Merchant of Venice

*EDITED, WITH NOTES, OUTLINE STUDY
AND EXAMINATION QUESTIONS*

BY

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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.

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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 mediæval Europe hoarded

money and jewels, not because they were misers by nature, 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 entitled to legal protection for person and property. The Jews were a proud and sensitive race; they returned insult for insult; and, but for the fact that they were unarmed 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 evidently 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 himself 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 disputations 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.

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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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.

THE TEXT.

ACT I.

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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 ;

5

And such a want-wit¹ sadness makes of me,

That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;

There, where your argosies² with portly sail,

Like signiors³ and rich burghers⁴ on the flood,

10

Or, as it were, the pageants⁵ of the sea,

Do overpeer the petty traffickers,

That curtsy to them, do them reverence,

As they fly by them⁶ with their woven wings.⁷

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,

The better part of my affections would

16

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 still⁸
 Plucking the grass,⁹ to know where sits the wind;
 Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;¹⁰
 And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would make me sad. 20

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-glass¹¹ run, 25
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy Andrew¹² docked in sand,
 Vailing¹³ her high-top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial.¹⁴ Should I go to church.
 And see the holy edifice of stone, 30
 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, 35
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought

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. 40

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. 45

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither?¹⁵ 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,¹⁶
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time: 51
Some that will evermore peep¹⁷ through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other¹⁸ of such vinegar aspect¹⁹
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile, 55
Though Nestor²⁰ 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, 60

If worthier friends had not prevented²¹ 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. 65

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say when?

You grow exceeding strange²²: 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, 70
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:²³
They lose it that do buy it with much care: 75
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".

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, 80
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying²⁴ 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 85
By being peevish?²⁵ 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 mantle²⁶ like a standing pond, 90
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!"²⁷
O my Antonio, I do know of these 95
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: 100

But fish not, with this melancholy bait,

For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.²⁸

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, 106

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.²⁹

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, 120

By something showing a more swelling port³⁰

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 125
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged.³¹ 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 130
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.³² 136

Bass. In my school-days,³³ 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 140
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 self³⁴ way 145
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.

³¹ Bound.

³² Paraphrase the line.

³³ The reference is to the custom in the England of Shakespeare's day of training school boys to shoot with the long bow.

³⁴ Give the meaning of this word.

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 155
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

Bass. In Belmont³⁶ is a lady richly left;
 And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes 160
 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 165
 Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand.³⁸
 And many Jasons³⁹ come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means 170

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 Dictionary for the entire story.

To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,⁴⁰
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity 175
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, 180
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.

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

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. By my troth¹, Nerissa, my little body is awearry 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. 10

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? 34

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 Classical Dictionary under "Heraclitus."

⁹ The familiar "memento mori".

he is every man in no man; if a throstle¹⁰ 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.

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England. 65

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me,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 pennyworth¹² in the English. He is a proper man's picture,¹³ but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited!¹⁴ I think he bought his doublet¹⁵ in Italy, his round hose¹⁶ in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour every where.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour? 76

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

¹⁰ Thrush or any hedge bird.

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.

¹² i. e. My knowledge of English is not worth much.

¹³ i. e. He looks like the man I want.

¹⁴ Clothed.

¹⁵ Sleeved waistcoat.

¹⁶ Breeches; at this period worn short, full, and extravagantly ornamented.

think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.¹⁷ 81

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 89

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,²¹ I will die as chaste as Diana,²¹ 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. 109

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,²² it was Bassanio,—as I think, so was he called. 114

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. 119

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,²³ who brings word the Prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth²⁴ 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 wive me.²⁵

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before. 130

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

SCENE-SETTING.

ACT I.— SCENE III.—A STREET.

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.*

Shylock, a Hebrew money lender.

Bassanio & Antonio.

(3). *Costumes.*

Shylock, a man of sixty years, with reddish gray hair and long, shaggy beard, enters the scene leaning on a

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

²⁴ How many suitors have really been mentioned?

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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

5

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. www.libtool.com.cn 10

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.⁶

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the con-
trary? 14

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 In-
dies;¹⁰ I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath
a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ven-
tures 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 in-
cluding 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 be ~~think me.~~¹⁴ May I speak with Antonio? 30

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? 36

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 usance²⁰ here with us in Venice.
 If I can catch him once upon the hip,²¹
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
 He hates our sacred nation, and he rails, 45
 Even there where merchants most do congregate,
 On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,²³
 Which he calls interest.²² Cursed be my tribe,²⁴
 If I forgive him!

Bass. Shylock, do your hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store, 50
 And, by the near guess of my memory,
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross²⁵
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months 55
 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,²⁶
 Yet, to supply the ripe²⁷ wants of my friend, 60
 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?²⁸

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so. ⁶⁵
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—²⁹ 70

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding³⁰ 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, 75
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,³¹
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: 80
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
"Shylock, we would have moneys:" you say so;
You, that did void your rheum³² 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. 85
 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, 90
 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?" 95

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? 100
 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, 105
 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, ³⁵ 110

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 115

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. 124

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, 125

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 130

Is not so estimable, profitable neither,

As flesh of muttuns, beefs, or goats. I say,

³⁵ 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.

To buy his favour, I extend this friendship :

If he will take it, so ; if not, adieu ;

And, for my love,³⁶ I pray you wrong me not. 135

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 fearful³⁷ guard 140

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 ; 145
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.

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 livery¹ of the burnished sun,
 To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
 Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
 Where Phœbus' fire² 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 aspect³ of mine
 Hath feared⁴ the valiant: by my love, I swear
 The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
 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 destiny⁷ 15

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 scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair. 20
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 scimitar⁸
That slew the Sophy⁹ and a Persian prince 25
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,¹⁰
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, 30
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while !
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice¹¹
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand :
So is Alcides¹² beaten by his page; 35
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, 40
 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:¹³ after dinner
 Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then! 45
 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. www.libtool.com.cn

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: "Via¹!" 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,² is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence,³ is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation;⁴ 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? 27

Laun. [*Aside.*] O heavens, this is my true-be-gotten father! who, being more than sand-blind,⁵ 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? 33

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,⁶ 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no? 43

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside.*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.⁷ Talk you of young Master⁸ 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.⁹

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

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.¹⁰

Laun. But I pray you, ergo,¹¹ old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.¹²

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.¹³ Talk not of Mas- 55
ter Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, ac-
cording to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings,
the Sisters Three¹⁴ 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. 63

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 gentle-
man; but I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his
soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father? 70

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. 79

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 thou¹⁵ 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-horse¹⁶ has on his tail. 91

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 rest¹⁷ to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground.¹⁸ My master's a very Jew;¹⁹ give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.²⁰ 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.²¹ Oh rare fortune! here comes the man: to him,²² 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!²³ 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;¹¹⁵ 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—

120

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins—²⁴

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— ¹²⁵

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 doves²⁵ that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent²⁶ 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. 135

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit: Shylock thy master spoke with me this day, And hath preferred²⁷ thee, if it be preferment²⁷ To leave a rich Jew's service, to become The follower of so poor a gentleman. 140

Laun. The old proverb²⁸ is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.²⁹

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

Take leave of thy old master and inquire 145 My lodging out. Give him a livery More guarded³⁰ 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,³¹ 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.³² Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear.³³ 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-esteemed acquaintance: hie thee, go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein. 165

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".

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; www.libtool.com.cn

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; 175
 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 180
 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 185
 Thus with my hat, and sigh and say Amen,
 Use all the observance of civility,
 Like one well studied in a sad ostent³⁴
 To please his grandam, never trust me more.³⁵ 189

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 Bassanio'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

195

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.

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.¹
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see 5
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 Christian² 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.

Laucelot wears an ill-fitting suit of livery like that of *Leonardo* in Act II, scene ii, which accentuates his loutish appearance.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 us¹ yet of torch-bearers.

¹ Bespoken, engaged.

Salan. 'Tis vile,² unless it may be quaintly³ ordered,

And better in my mind not undertook.

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

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. 15

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, 21

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 all⁷. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house. 30

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, 35

Unless she⁸ 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.

(3). *Costumes.**Launcelot* is dressed as in Act II, scene iv.*Shylock* is dressed as in Act I, scene iii.*Jessica* is dressed as in Act II, scene iii.(4.) *Time of Action.*

Immediately following the action of Scene iv.

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 of¹ 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;— 5
 Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!*Shy.* Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.*Laun.* Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.*Enter JESSICA.**Jes.* Call you? what is your will? 10

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, 15
 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-bags² to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth
expect your reproach.³ 20

Shy. So do I his www.libtool.com.cn

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-necked⁴ fife, 30
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces,⁶
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter 35
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,⁷
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,⁸ look out at window, for all this; 41

There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [Exit.

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's⁹ offspring, ha?

Jes. His words were "Farewell mistress;" nothing else.

Shy. The patch¹⁰ is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat:¹¹ drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste 50
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.

Salar. His hour is almost past.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells¹ his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.²

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons³ fly 5
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged⁴ 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 untread⁵ again 10
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 younker⁶ or a prodigal⁷
The scarfed⁸ bark puts from her native bay, 15
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! 19

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 30

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: 35

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. 40

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

They in themselves, good sooth, are too too¹¹ light.

⁹ What is the meaning of this word?

¹⁰ Explain the line.

¹¹ What is the force of the repetition?

Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.¹²

Lor. So are you sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy. 45
But come at once; www.libtool.com.cn

For the close¹³ night doth play the runaway,
And we are stayed for¹⁴ at Bassanio's feast.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself¹⁵
With some more ducats, and be with you straight. 50
[Exit above.]

Gra. Now, by my hood,¹⁶ a gentle¹⁷ 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, 55
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.¹⁸

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? 60

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: 65

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 ~~waside the curtains and~~ discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.¹

Mor. The first, of gold, who² this inscription bears,
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;"
The second, silver, which this promise carries, 6
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

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.³
What says this leaden casket 15
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross; 20
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: 25
 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 afeard of my deserving
 Were but a weak disabling of myself.⁴ 30
 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? 35
 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 saint⁵ 40
 The Hyrcanian deserts⁶ and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia⁷ 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 45

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.⁸

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 cerecloth⁹ 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 insculped¹² 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 my¹⁴ outside to behold:
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 Had you been as wise as bold, 70
 Young in limbs, in judgement old,
 Your answer had not been inscrolled:¹⁵
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.
 Cold, indeed; and labour lost:

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!¹⁶ 75

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.]

¹⁴ The skull is speaking. The reference is to the beauty of form and face.

¹⁵ i. e. The portrait of Portia would have answered you.

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.

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). *Setting of the Scene.*

The street of Act I, scene i.

(2). *Actors.*

Salanio, who has been keeping Shylock under observation in the interest of Lorenzo.

Salario, who has accompanied Bassanio to the ship which is to take him to Belmont.

(3). *Costumes* www.libtool.com.cn

As in Act I, scene i.

(4). *Time of the Action.*

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 villain¹ 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 gondola² 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! 15

Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!

Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!

A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats, 20

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; 21

She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.”³

Salar. 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,⁴ 25

Or he shall pay for his.

Salar. Marry, well remembered.

I reasoned with⁵ a Frenchman yesterday,

Who told me, in the narrow seas⁶ that part

The French and English, there miscarried

A vessel of our country richly fraught: 30

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. 35

I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:

Bassanio told him he would make some speed

³ Describe the various emotions which, according to Salanio, called forth these lines.

⁴ Explain.

⁵ Talked with.

⁶ The English Channel

Of his return: he answered, "Do not so;
 Slubber⁷ not business for my sake, Bassanio,
 But stay the very riping of the time; 40
 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:" 45
 And even there, his eye being big⁹ with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
 And with affection wondrous sensible¹⁰
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him. 50
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out
 And quicken his embraced heaviness¹¹
 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 neckchain complete the costume.

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

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 election² 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, 5
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 10
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, 15
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. 20
"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 25
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,

² Choice.

³ This is said to the lead casket.

Not learning more than the fond⁴ eye doth teach;
 Which pries not to the interior, but like the martlet,⁵
 Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
 Even in the force and road of casualty.⁶ 30
 I will not choose what many men desire,
 Because I will not jump with⁷ common spirits
 And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear: 35
 "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:"
 And well said too; for who shall go about
 To cozen⁸ fortune and be honourable⁹
 Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
 To wear an undeserved dignity. 40
 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!¹⁰
 How many be commanded that command! 45
 How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
 From the true seed of honour!¹¹ 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.¹² Give me a key for this, 51
 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. 55

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? 60

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
 And of opposed natures.¹³

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads.*] The fire seven times tried this;¹⁴
 Seven times tried that judgment is,
 That did never choose amiss. 65
 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, 75
 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, 80
 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 85
 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, 90
 Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
 So likely¹⁷ 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. 95

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-day¹⁸ wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly. 100

Ner. Bassanio, lord Love,¹⁹ if thy will it be!

[*Exeunt.*]

¹⁸ What is the significance of this adjective?

¹⁹ "O God of Love".

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 unchecked¹ that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wracked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins,² I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word. 7

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped³ 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

¹ Uncontradicted.

² The Goodwin Sands off the coast of Kent, England.

³ Nibbled.

Antonio,——O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!— 14

Salar. Come, the full stop.⁴

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship. www.libtool.com.cn

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say Amen⁵ betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew. 21

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 26

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? 37

Shy. There I have another bad match:⁸ a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart⁹; 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 courtesy¹⁰; let him look to his bond. 44

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

Shy. To bait fish withal¹¹: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million¹²: 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

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 sufferance¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.

[Exit 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.

75

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort!¹⁶ The curse¹⁷ 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,— 90

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? 95

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? 99

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! 104

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.¹⁹

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it. 109

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

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise²⁰; I had it of Leah²¹ when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.²² 115

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer²³; bespeak him a fortnight before.²⁴ I will have the heart of him,²⁵ if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will.²⁶ Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.²⁷ [*Exeunt.*

¹⁹ i. e. Become a bankrupt.

²⁰ The Turquoise was highly valued by Orientals.

²¹ Evidently Shylock's deceased wife.

²² Notice that he does not say he would not have parted with it for a really valuable consideration.

²³ i. e. Retain an officer of the law to serve my writ when the time comes.

²⁴ i. e. Before the day mentioned in the bond.

²⁵ Antonio.

²⁶ Explain.

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 forfeiture reach Bassanio at the moment of his betrothal; (3) Jessica and Lorenzo accompany the bearer of the bad tidings 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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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, tarry¹: 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, 5
 Hate counsels not in such a quality.²
 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 10
 How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;³
 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,⁴
 They have o'erlooked me and divided me; 15
 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".

And so all yours. O, these naughty times⁵
 Put bars between the owners and their rights!
 And so, through yours, not yours. Prove it so,⁶ 20
 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. 25

Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
 What treason⁹ there is mingled with your love.

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
 Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love¹⁰:
 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; 30
 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: 40

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 45

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 50

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 55

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! 60

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:¹⁶ 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.

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SONG.

Tell me where is fancy¹⁸ bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished? 65

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: 70

I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:¹⁹

The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt 75
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? 80
 There is no vice so simple²⁰ but assumes
 Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
 How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
 As stayers²¹ of sand, wear yet upon their chins
 The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,²² 85
 Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk;²³
 And these assume but valour's excrement²⁴
 To render them redoubted!²⁵ Look on beauty,
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
 Which therein works a miracle in nature. 90
 Making them lightest²⁶ 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 dowry²⁷ of a second head, 95
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.²⁸
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore

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 Excrement.

²⁵ Indomitable. From Notes 21-25, paraphrase lines 83-88.

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 scarf³⁰
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas,³¹ I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee,³² thou pale and common drudge³³
 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
 Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught, 105
 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! 110
 O love,
 Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
 In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess.
 I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
 For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here? 115

[*Opening the leaden casket.*]

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
 Hath come so near creation?³⁴ 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 120
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, 125
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.³⁵ Here's the scroll, ¹³⁰
The continent³⁶ 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 135
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; 140
I come by note,³⁷ 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 145
 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, 150
 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 155
 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, 160
 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 165
 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, 170
 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 175
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.³⁸

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 180
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 185
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

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! 190

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:³⁹
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you, 195
Even at that time I may be married too.

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

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

³⁸ Discuss this speech at length. Note its beauty and simplicity.

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 ; 200
 You loved, I loved for intermission.
 No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
 Your fortune stood upon the basket there,
 And so did mine too, as the matter falls ;
 For wooing here until I sweat again, 205
 And swearing till my very tongue was dry
 With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,⁴⁰
 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? 210

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? 215

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, 220
 Sweet Portia, welcome.

⁴⁰ i. e. If the promise hold.

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, 245
 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, 250
 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 255
 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,⁴⁴
 To feed my means.⁴⁵ Here is a letter, lady; 260
 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, 265
 From Lisbon, Barbary and India?

⁴⁴ i. e. To nothing less than his worst enemy.

⁴⁵ Paraphrase lines 257-260.

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 290
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; 295
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, 300
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. 305
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. 310
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.⁵⁶ 317

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 Jailer.

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(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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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:
Goaler, 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.

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 naughty² gaoler, that thou art so fond³
To come abroad with him at his request. 10

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,⁴
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield 15
To Christian Intercessors.⁵ Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [*Exit.*

Salar. It is the most impenetrable⁶ cur
That ever kept with men.⁷

Ant. Let him alone:

I'll follow him no more with bootless⁸ prayers. 20
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 30
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated¹¹ me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come 35
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.

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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 conceit¹
 Of god-like amity²; 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 gentleman³ 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 lover⁴ 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, 10
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste⁶ the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion 15
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed 20
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish 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 manage⁷ of my house 25
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 husband⁸ and my lord's return: 30

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; 35
 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. 40

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, 45
 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:⁹ 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 imagined¹⁰ speed
 Unto the traject,¹¹ 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. 55

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

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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,¹² 60
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, 65
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 quaint¹³ lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love, 70
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal¹⁴; then I'll repent,¹⁵
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 75
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind

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.*]

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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. www.libtool.com.cn

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another.¹ This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eat-⁵ ers, 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. ¹⁰

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. ¹⁵

Lor. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence,² and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots.³ 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-snapper⁴ are you! ²⁰
then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only cover⁵ is the
word. www.libtool.com.cn

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

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

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion!⁶ Wilt²⁵
thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant.
I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain mean-
ing: 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 ³⁰
the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in
to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits ⁷
shall govern. [Exit.

Lor. O dear discretion,⁸ how his words are suited!⁹
The fool hath planted in his memory 35
An army of good words; and I do know
A many¹⁰ fools, that stand in better place,
Garnished¹¹ like him, that for a tricky¹² 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.¹³ How cheer'st thou, Jessica?¹⁴
 And now, good sweet, say thy opinion, 40
 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; 45
 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 50
 Pawned with the other, for the poor rude world
 Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
 Hast thou of me¹⁵ 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. 55

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.¹⁶ 59

[*Exeunt.*

¹³ The meaning of anything.

¹⁴ What cheer?

¹⁵ In me.

¹⁶ Describe you as you are.

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 Magnificoes 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 *Magnificoes* 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 5
From any dram¹ 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's² reach, I do oppose 10
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very³ tyranny and rage of his.

¹ A minute quantity.

² Malicious hatred. An obsolete 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 malice⁴
 To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse⁵ more strange⁶ 20
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
 And where⁷ 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, 25
 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 30
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never trained
 To offices of tender courtesy.
 We all expect a gentle⁸ answer, Jew.⁹ 34

Shy. I have possessed¹⁰ 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 40
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;
 But, say, it is my humour¹²; is it answered?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat
 And I be pleased to give then thousand ducats 45
 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 firm¹⁵ reason to be rendered,
 Why he¹⁶ cannot abide a gaping pig; 50
 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? 55

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 current¹⁸ 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? ⁶⁰

Bass. Every offence¹⁹ 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 :²⁰

You may as well go stand upon the beach

And bid the main flood bate his usual height; 65

You may as well use question²¹ 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; 70

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. 75

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.

¹⁸ Course.

¹⁹ State of being offended.

²⁰ i. e. "Remember that you are arguing with the Jew—an undignified and useless course of procedure.

²¹ Ask.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong? 80

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— 85
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, 90
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?²²

Duke. Upon my power²³ I may dismiss this court, 95
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine²⁴ this,
Come here to-day.

Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua. 100

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. 105

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario? 110

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your
grace. [Presenting 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, 115
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. 120
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. 135
 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: 150

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?²⁹

Por. I am informed thoroughly of the cause. 155

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; 160 Yet in such rule³⁰ that the Venetian law Cannot impugn you as you do proceed. You stand within his danger,³¹ do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful. 165

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

Por. The quality of mercy is not strained;³² 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 : 170
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown :
 His sceptre shows³³ the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ; 175
 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 show³⁴ likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew, 180
 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 185
 To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;
 Which if thou follow,³⁵ 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. 190

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money ?³⁶

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 Appear.

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: 195
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority.³⁷
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will 200

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. 205

Shy. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!³⁸
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: 215
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.³⁹

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 220
 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. 225

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 230
 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: 235
 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, 240

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. 245

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 250
Than is her custom. It is still her use⁴⁰
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. 255
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair⁴¹ in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.⁴² 260
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;⁴³
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently⁴⁴ with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife 265
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.

270

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.

275

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 Barrabas⁴⁵
 Had been her husband rather than a Christian!

280

[*Aside.*

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:

285

The laws allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, pre-
 pare!⁴⁶

Por. Tarry a little; there is something else.

⁴⁵ Identify. How did Shakespeare pronounce the name?

⁴⁶ Enumerate all the details which would enter into the composition of a painting of this scene at this point.

As makes it light or heavy in the substance,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,⁵¹
 Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate. 315

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
 Now infidel, I have thee on the hip.⁵²

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is. 320

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

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

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal? 325

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

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

Por. Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you. 330

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,

⁵⁰ i. e. In the entire weight.

⁵¹ Explain.

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 335
 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; 340
 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. 345
 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.⁵⁴ 355

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 360

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 365

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; 370

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. 375

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

Shy. I am content.⁵⁶

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. 380

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:

⁵⁶ Draw a word picture of the scene.

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten⁵⁷ 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:⁵⁸ 385
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.⁵⁹
Antonio, gratify⁶⁰ this gentleman;
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him. 390

[*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 cope⁶¹ 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: 400
My mind was never yet more mercenary.⁶²
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 sentence of death.

⁵⁸ 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;⁶³

Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute, 405

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; 415

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. 420

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 425

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,

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, ⁶⁴ 430
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 deservings and my love withal
Be valued against your wife's commandment.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him; 435
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. [*Exeunt.* 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 confounded by due process of righteous law.

Examined closely, however, the scene appears as a mere travesty of judicial procedure. The bond transaction between 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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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.

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.

(4). *Time of Action.*

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

Lor. In such a night 20

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 footing⁵ of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night? 25

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 30
By holy crosses,⁶ 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. 35
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!⁷

Lor. Who calls? 40

⁵ Tread.

⁶ Crosses and shrines may be seen by the roadside throughout Italy. In olden times it was the custom for travellers of all ranks to kneel before them and pray for their "heart's desire".

⁷ 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. www.libtool.com.cn

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? 50

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 55

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 patines⁸ of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60

But in his motion like an angel sings,⁹
Still quiring⁹ to the young-eyed cherubins;¹⁰
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 decay¹¹
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. 65

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana¹² with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive: 70
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled¹³ colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound, 75
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual¹⁴ stand,
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet¹⁵
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage, 81
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, stratagem and spoils: 85
The motions of his spirit are dull as night

¹¹ Paraphrase this line.

¹² To which of the attributes of Diana is the reference here?

¹³ Unbroken.

¹⁴ Simultaneous.

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:¹⁶
 Let no such man be trusted.¹⁷ 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! 90
 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 95
 Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
 Into the main of waters.¹⁸ Music! hark!

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

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:¹⁹
 Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day. 100

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
 When neither is attended,²⁰ and I think
 The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought 105
 No better a musician than the wren.
 How many things by season seasoned are²¹
 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 Endymion²²

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; 120
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, 125
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".

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort²⁴ 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. 135

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 our²⁵ house:
It must appear in other ways than words, 140
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.²⁶

Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me
wrong;²⁷

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 145
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife,²⁸ "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, 150

²⁴ Suit.

²⁵ Give the charming significance of this pronoun.

²⁶ i. e. The courtesy of mere words.

²⁷ Describe the action which justifies this line.

²⁸ Knives were often inscribed with mottoes or proverbs in rhyme.

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 respective²⁹ and have kept it.
 Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge, 155
 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 scrubbed³⁰ boy, 160
 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; 165
 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 170
 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
 off³¹ 175

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; 180
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 185
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, 190
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, 195
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 200
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.³³

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul, 205
 No woman had it, but a civil doctor,³⁴
 Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
 And begged the ring; the which I did deny him
 And suffered him to go displeas'd away;
 Even he that did uphold the very life 210
 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; 215
 For, by these blessed candles of the night,³⁵
 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. 220

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; 225

³³ Put into a plain statement lines 199-202.

³⁴ A Doctor of Civil Law.

³⁵ 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,³⁶ 230
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul³⁷ upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.³⁸

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this 235
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; 240

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 245

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: 250

You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced on this letter.

³⁶ 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 255
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, 260
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; 265
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.*]

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 equivoque 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!"

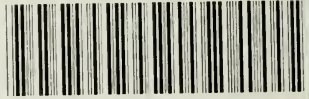
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