

# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

*By William Shakespeare*

*Edited by Angela Harkness Robertson*



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Antonio

Bassanio

Portia

Nerissa

Jessica

Salerio

Gratiano

Lorenzo

Shylock

Launcelot Gobbo

The Duke of Venice

The Prince of Morocco

The Prince of Arragon

Tubal, Stephano, Solanio, Balthazar, Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Servants,  
and other Attendants

# ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Venice. A street. Enter ANTONIO, SALERIO*

ANTONIO: In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.  
It wearies me; you say it wearies you...

SALERIO: Your mind is tossing on the ocean;  
Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,  
The better part of my affections would  
Be with my hopes abroad.

Antonio  
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

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

SALERIO: Why then you are in love.

ANTONIO: Fie, fie!

*Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, GRATIANO*

SALERIO: Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,  
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well;  
I leave you now with better company.  
Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO: Good signior.

*Exit SALERIO*

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

BASSANIO: I will not fail you.

GRATIANO: You look not well, Signior Antonio;  
You have too much respect upon the world;  
They lose it that do buy it with much care.  
Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

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

GRATIANO: Let me play the fool.  
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;  
And let my liver rather heat with wine  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile.

LORENZO: Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time.

*Exeunt GRATIANO, LORENZO*

ANTONIO: Well; tell me now what lady is the same  
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,  
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

BASSANIO: 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,  
How much I have disabled mine estate  
By something showing a more swelling port  
Than my faint means would grant continuance;  
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd  
From such a noble rate; but my chief care  
Is to come fairly off from the great debts  
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,  
Hath left me gag'd. To you, Antonio,  
I owe the most, in money and in love;  
And from your love I have a warranty  
To unburden all my plots and purposes  
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

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

BASSANIO: In Belmont is a lady richly left,  
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,  
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes  
I did receive fair speechless messages.  
Her name is Portia – nothing undervalu'd  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.  
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;  
For the four winds blow in from every coast  
Renowned suitors.  
O my Antonio, had I but the means  
To hold a rival place with one of them,  
I have a mind presages me such thrift  
That I should questionless be fortunate.

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

*Exeunt*

## ACT 1 SCENE 2

*Belmont. Portia's house. Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

- PORTIA: By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.
- NERISSA: You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; 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.
- PORTIA: Good sentences, and well pronounc'd.
- NERISSA: They would be better, if well follow'd.
- PORTIA: If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?
- NERISSA: Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore the lott'ry that he hath devised in these three chests, of gold, silver, and lead – whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you – will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?
- PORTIA: I pray thee over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and according to my description, level at my affection.
- NERISSA: First, there is the Neapolitan prince.
- PORTIA: Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; I am much afraid my lady his mother play'd false with a smith.
- NERISSA: How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?
- PORTIA: God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he – he is every man in no man. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.
- NERISSA: What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?
- PORTIA: You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him; he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show?

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

PORTIA: Very vilely in the morning when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk. When he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast.

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

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

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

PORTIA: I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

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

PORTIA: Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, so he was call'd.

NERISSA: True, madam; he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

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

*[TEXT ALERT to NERISSA]*

How now! what news?

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

PORTIA: If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach.  
Come, Nerissa, go before.  
Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer,  
Another knocks at the door.

*Exeunt*

## ACT 1 SCENE 3

*Venice. A public place. Enter BASSANIO, SHYLOCK.*

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

BASSANIO: Your answer to that.

SHYLOCK: Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO: Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK: Ho, no, no, no, no; my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient; yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England – and other ventures he hath, squand' red abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves – I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats – I think I may take this bond.

BASSANIO: Be assur'd you may.

SHYLOCK: I will be assur'd I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO: If it please you to dine with us.

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

*Enter ANTONIO*

BASSANIO: This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK: *[aside]* How like a fawning publican he looks!  
I hate him for he is a Christian;  
But more for that in low simplicity  
He lends out money gratis, and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.  
If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

BASSANIO: Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK: I am debating of my present store.  
*[to Antonio]* Rest you fair, good signior;  
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO: Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow  
By taking nor by giving of excess,  
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
I'll break a custom. *[to Bassanio]* Is he yet possess'd  
How much ye would?

SHYLOCK: Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO: And for three months.

SHYLOCK: Three thousand ducats – 'tis a good round sum.  
Three months from twelve; then let me see, the rate –

ANTONIO: Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHYLOCK: Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
In the Rialto you have rated me  
About my moneys and my usances;  
Still I have borne it with a patient shrug,  
For suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe;  
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine own.  
Well then, it now appears you need my help;  
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say  
'Shylock, we would have moneys'. You say so –  
You that did void your rheum upon my beard  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.  
What should I say to you? Should I not say  
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or  
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,  
With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness,  
Say this:  
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last,  
You spurn'd me such a day; another time  
You called me dog; and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

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

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

BASSANIO: This were kindness.



## ACT 2 SCENE 2

*A street, Venice. Enter LAUNCELOT GOBBO*

LAUNCELOT: Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this cur my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me 'Gobbo, good Launcelot Gobbo', use your legs, take the start, run away'. My conscience says 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot, take heed, honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run; scorn running with thy heels'. Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend. 'For the heavens, rouse up a brave mind' says the fiend 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son' or rather 'an honest woman's son'; for indeed my father did something smack, he had a kind of taste – well, my conscience says '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 rul'd by my conscience, I should stay with my master, who is a kind of devil; and, to run away from him, I should be ruled by the fiend, who is the devil himself. Certainly my master is the very devil incarnation. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run. Well, well; as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground.... to one master Bassanio; if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! Here comes the man.

*Enter BASSANIO*

LAUNCELOT: God bless your worship!

BASSANIO: Gramercy; wouldst thou aught with me?

LAUNCELOT: Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve Shylock, and have a desire – to be brief, the very truth is that he, having done me wrong, doth cause me... In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know -

BASSANIO: What would you?

LAUNCELOT: Serve you, sir.

BASSANIO: I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit.  
Go.

Take leave of thy old master, and inquire  
My lodging out.

*[handing him a list]* I pray thee, think on this.

These things being bought and orderly bestowed,

Return in haste, for I do feast to-night

My best esteem'd acquaintance; hie thee, go.

*Exit LAUNCELOT.*

*Enter GRATIANO*

GRATIANO: Signior Bassanio!

BASSANIO: Gratiano!

GRATIANO: I have suit to you.

BASSANIO: You have obtained it.

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

BASSANIO: Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:  
Thou art too wild too rude, and bold of voice –  
Parts that become thee happily enough,  
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;  
But where thou are 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 misconst' red in the place I go to  
And lose my hopes.

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

BASSANIO: Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO: Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gauge me  
By what we do to-night.

BASSANIO: No, that were pity;  
I would entreat you rather to put on  
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends  
That purpose merriment. But fare you well;  
I have some business.

GRATIANO: And I must to Lorenzo and the rest;  
But we will visit you at supper-time.

*Exeunt.*

## ACT 2 SCENE 3

*Venice. Shylock's house. Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT*

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

LAUNCELOT: Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Adieu! these foolish drops do something drown  
my manly spirit; adieu!

JESSICA: Farewell, good Launcelot.

*Exit LAUNCELOT*

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

*Exit*

## ACT 2 SCENE 4

*Venice. A street. Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALERIO*

LORENZO: Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,  
Disguise us at my lodging, and return  
All in an hour.  
'Tis now but four o'clock; we have two hours  
To furnish us.

*Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

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

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

GRATIANO: Love-news, in faith!

LAUNCELOT: By your leave, sir.

LORENZO: Whither goest thou?

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

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

*Exit LAUNCELOT*

Meet me and Gratiano  
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALERIO: 'Tis good we do so.

*Exit SALERIO*

GRATIANO: Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO: I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed  
How I shall take her from her father's house;  
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;  
What page's suit she hath in readiness.  
Come, go with me, peruse this as thou goest.

*Exeunt*

## ACT 2 SCENE 5

*Venice. Before Shylock's house. Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.*

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

*Enter JESSICA*

JESSICA: Call you? What is your will?

SHYLOCK: I am bid forth to supper, Jessica;  
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?  
I am not bid for love; they flatter me;  
But yet I'll go in hate. Jess'ca, my girl,  
Look to my house. I am right loath to go.

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

SHYLOCK: So do I his.

LAUNCELOT: And they have conspired together.

SHYLOCK: Hear you me, Jessica:  
Lock up my doors.  
Clamber not you up to the casements girl,  
Nor thrust your head into the public street.  
Go you before me, sirrah; Say I will come.

LAUNCELOT: I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window for all this.  
There will come a Christian by  
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

*Exit*

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

JESSICA: His words were 'Farewell, mistress'; nothing else.

SHYLOCK: The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder,  
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day  
More than the wild-cat; drones hive not with me,  
Therefore I part with him; and part with him  
To one that I would have him help to waste  
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in;  
Perhaps I will return immediately.  
Do as I bid you, shut doors after you.

*Exit*

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

*Exit*

## ACT 2 SCENE 6

*Venice. Before Shylock's house. Enter the maskers, GRATIANO and SALERIO.*

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

SALERIO: His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO: And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,  
For lovers ever run before the clock.

*Enter LORENZO*

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

*Enter JESSICA above.*

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

LORENZO: Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA: Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed.  
Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

LORENZO: Descend.  
But come at once,  
For the close night doth play the runaway,  
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

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

*Exit above*

LORENZO: Beshrew me, but I love her heartily,  
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,  
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,  
And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself;  
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,  
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

*Enter JESSICA below.*

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

*Exit with JESSICA and SALERIO. Enter ANTONIO*

ANTONIO: Who's there?

GRATIANO: Signior Antonio?

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

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

*Exeunt*

## ACT 2 SCENE 7

*Belmont. Portia's house/TV Studio. Flourish of coronets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, FOLLOWERS, with PORTIA, NERISSA and TRAIN. (TV CREW etc.)*

- MOROCCO: Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun,  
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
- PORTIA: In terms of choice I am not solely led  
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;  
Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny  
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.  
But, if my father had not scanted me,  
And hedg'd me by his wit to yield myself  
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,  
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair  
As any comer I have look'd on yet  
For my affection.
- MOROCCO: Even for that I thank you.  
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets  
To try my fortune.
- PORTIA: You must take your chance,  
And either not attempt to choose at all,  
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong,  
Never to speak to lady afterward  
In way of marriage; therefore be advis'd.
- MOROCCO: Nor will not; come, bring me unto my chance.
- PORTIA: Go draw aside the curtains and discover  
The several caskets to this noble prince.  
Now make your choice.
- MOROCCO: How shall I know if do choose the right?
- PORTIA: The one of them contains my picture, Prince;  
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
- MOROCCO: Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;  
I will survey th' inscriptions ...  
What says this leaden casket?  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath'.  
Must give – for what? For lead? Hazard for lead!  
This casket threatens; men that hazard all  
Do it in hope of fair advantages.  
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;  
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.  
What says the silver with her virgin hue?  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves'.  
As much as he deserves! Pause then, Morocco,  
And weigh thy value with an even hand.  
If thou beest rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough, and yet enough  
May not extend so far as to the lady;  
And yet to be afraid of my deserving  
Were but a weak disabling of myself.  
As much as I deserve? Why, that's the lady!  
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,  
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;  
But more than these, in love I do deserve.  
What if I stray'd no farther, but chose here?  
Let's see one more, this saying grav'd in gold:  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'.  
Why, that's the lady! All the world desires her;  
From the four corners of the earth they come  
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.  
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.  
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation  
To think so base a thought; it were too gross  
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.  
Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,  
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?  
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem  
Was set in worse than gold.

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

PORTIA: There, take it, Prince, and if my form lie there,  
Then I am yours.

*He opens the golden casket.*

MOROCCO: O hell! what have we here?  
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye  
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.  
'All that glisters is not gold,  
Often have you heard that told;  
Many a man his life hath sold  
But my outside to behold.  
Gilded tombs do worms infold.  
Had you been as wise as bold,  
Young in limbs, in judgement old,  
Your answer had not been inscroll'd.  
Fare you well, your suit is cold.'  
Cold indeed, and labour lost,  
Then farewell, heat, and welcome, frost.  
Portia, adieu! I have too griev'd a heart  
To take a tedious leave; thus losers part.

*Exit with his train and a flourish of coronets.*

PORTIA: A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.  
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

## ACT 2 SCENE 9 *(act 2 scenes 8 and 9 have been swapped)*

*Belmont. Portia's house. TV Crew.*

NERISSA: Quick, quick, I pray thee, draw the curtain straight;  
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,  
And comes to his election presently.

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

PORTIA: Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.  
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,  
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemniz'd;  
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,  
You must be gone from hence immediately.

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

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

ARRAGON: And so have I address'd me. Fortune now  
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'  
You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.  
What says the golden chest? Ha! let me see:  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'.  
What many men desire – that 'many' may be meant  
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,  
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach.  
I will not choose what many men desire,  
Because I will not jump with common spirits  
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.  
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure house!  
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear.  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
And well said too; for who shall go about  
To cozen fortune, and be honourable  
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume  
To wear an undeserved dignity.  
O that estates, degrees, and offices,  
Were not deriv'd corruptly, and that clear honour  
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!  
How many then should cover that stand bare!  
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned  
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour  
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,

To be new varnish'd! Well, but to my choice.  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,  
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*He opens the silver casket*

What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot  
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.  
'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?  
[reads] 'The fire seven times tried this;  
Seven times tried that judgement is  
That did never choose amiss.  
Some there be that shadows kiss,  
Such have but a shadow's bliss.  
There be fools alive iwis  
Silver'd o'er, and so was this.  
Take what wife you will to bed,  
I will ever be your head.  
So be gone; you are sped.'

Still more fool I shall appear  
By the time I linger here.  
With one fool's head I came to woo,  
But I go away with two.  
Sweet, adieu, I'll keep my oath,  
Patiently to bear my wrath.

*Exit with his train*

PORTIA: Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.  
O, these deliberate fools! When they do choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.  
Come, draw the curtain Nerissa.

*[TEXT ALERT]*

NERISSA: Madam, there is alighted at your gate  
A young Venetian, one that comes before  
To signify th' approaching of his lord,  
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets;  
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,  
Gifts of rich value.

PORTIA: Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see  
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

NERISSA: Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!

*Exeunt*

## ACT 2 SCENE 8

*Venice. A street. Enter SALERIO and SOLANIO*

- SALERIO:           Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail;  
                          With him is Gratiano gone along;  
                          And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
- SOLANIO           The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke,  
                          Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
- SALERIO:           He came too late, the ship was under sail;  
                          But there the Duke was given to understand  
                          That in a gondola were seen together  
                          Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica;  
                          Besides, Antonio certified the Duke  
                          They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
- SOLANIO           I never heard a passion so confus'd,  
                          So strange, outrageous, and so variable,  
                          As the dog Jew did utter in the streets.
- [SHYLOCK]         'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!  
                          Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!  
                          Justice! the law! My ducats and my daughter!  
                          A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,  
                          Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!  
                          And jewels – two stones, two rich and precious stones,  
                          Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl;  
                          She hath the stones upon her and the ducats.'
- SALERIO:           Let good Antonio look he keep his day,  
                          Or he shall pay for this.
- SOLANIO                                 Marry, well remember'd;  
                          I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,  
                          Who told me, in the narrow seas that part  
                          The French and English, there miscarried  
                          A vessel of our country richly fraught.  
                          I thought upon Antonio when he told me,  
                          And wished in silence that it were not his.
- SALERIO:           You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;  
                          Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.  
                          I pray thee, my friend, go and find him out,  
                          And quicken his embraced heaviness  
                          With some delight or other.

*Exit SOLANIO*

# ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Venice. A street. Continues from ACT 2 Scene viii)*

SALERIO: *[Text, alert]* Now, what news on the rialto?  
*[READS]*: Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas -

It is true, he hath lost a ship.  
I would it might prove the end of his losses.

*Enter SHYLOCK*

How now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?

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

SALERIO: That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was flidge; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

SHYLOCK: She is damn'd for it. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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

SHYLOCK: There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was us'd to come so smug upon the mart. Let him look to his bond. He was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond. He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

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

SHYLOCK: To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me and hind'red me half a million; laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies. And what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

*Enter TUBAL*

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

*MESSAGE ALERT*

SALERIO: *[READS]*: Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with me.

*Exit SALERIO*

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

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

SHYLOCK: Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! 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 hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so – and I know not what's spent in the search. Why, thou – loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no lights but o' my breathing; no tears but o' my shedding!

TUBAL Other men have ill luck too; Antonio, as I heard in Genoa –

SHYLOCK: What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

TUBAL: Hath an argosy cast away coming from Tripolis.

SHYLOCK: I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?

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

SHYLOCK: I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news – ha, ha!

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

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

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

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

TUBAL: But Antonio is certainly undone.

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

*Exeunt*

## ACT 3 SCENE 2

*Belmont, Portia's house. Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA and their trains. IV crews.  
Behind the scenes*

- PORTIA: I pray you tarry; pause a day or two  
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company; therefore forebear awhile.  
There's something tells me – but it is not love –  
I would not lose you; and you know yourself  
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
- BASSANIO: Let me choose;  
For as I am, I live upon the rack.
- PORTIA: Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess  
What treason there is mingled with your love.
- BASSANIO: None but that ugly treason of mistrust,  
Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love;  
There may as well be amity and life  
'Tween snow and fire as treason and my love.
- PORTIA: Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,  
Where men enforced do speak anything.
- BASSANIO: Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.
- PORTIA: Well then, confess, and live.
- BASSANIO: 'Confess' and 'love'  
Had been the very sum of my confession.  
O happy torment, when my torturer  
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!  
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
- PORTIA: Away, then; I am lock'd in one of them.  
If you do love me, you will find me out.
- BASSANIO: So may the outward shows be least themselves;  
The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.  
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt  
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,  
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,  
What damned error but some sober brow  
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,  
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?  
There is no vice so simple but assumes  
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.  
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore  
To a most dangerous sea; in a word,  
The seeming truth which cunning times put on  
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,  
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;



And so did mine too, as the matter falls;  
For wooing here until I sweat again,  
And swearing till my very roof was dry  
With oaths of love, at last – if promise last –  
I got a promise of this fair one here  
To have her love, provided that your fortune  
Achiev'd her mistress.

PORTIA: Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA: Madam, it is, so you stand pleas'd withal.

BASSANIO: And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO: Yes, faith, my lord.

BASSANIO: Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.  
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infedel?  
What, and my old Venetian friend, Salerio!

*Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, SALERIO from Venice*

By your leave,  
I bid my friends and countrymen,  
Sweet Portia, welcome.

PORTIA: So do I, my lord;  
They are entirely welcome.

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

SALERIO: I did, my lord,  
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio  
Commends him to you. *[Gives Bassanio a letter, which he opens]*

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

PORTIA: There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper  
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek.  
With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,  
And I must freely have the half of anything  
That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO: O sweet Portia,  
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words  
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,  
When I did first impart my love to you,  
I freely told you all the wealth I had  
Ran in my veins – I was a gentleman;  
And then I told you true. When I told you  
My state was nothing, I should then have told you

That I was worse than nothing; for indeed  
I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,  
Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,  
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,  
The paper as the body of my friend,  
And every word in it a gaping wound  
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?  
Hath all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?

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

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

BASSANIO: The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
The best condition'd and unwearied spirit  
In doing courtesies; and one in whom  
The ancient Roman honour more appears  
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA: What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO: For me, three thousand ducats.

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

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

PORTIA: O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

BASSANIO: Since I have your good leave to go away,  
I will make haste; but, till I come again,  
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,  
Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

*Exeunt*

### ACT 3 SCENE 3

*Venice. A street. Enter SHYLOCK, SALERIO, ANTONIO.*

ANTONIO: Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK: I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond.  
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,  
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs;  
The Duke shall grant me justice.

ANTONIO: I pray thee hear me speak.

SHYLOCK: I'll have my bond, I will not hear thee speak;  
I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.

*Exit*

SALERIO: I am sure the Duke  
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANTONIO: The Duke cannot deny the course of law;  
For the commodity that strangers have  
With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
Will much impeach the justice of the state,  
Since that the trade and profit of the city  
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go.  
Well, friend, on; pray God Bassanio come  
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not.

*Exeunt*

## ACT 3 SCENE 4

*Belmont. Portia's house. Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, BALTHAZAR.*

PORTIA: Lorenzo, I commit into your hands  
The husbandry and manage of my house  
Until my lord's return; for mine own part,  
I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow  
To live in prayer and contemplation,  
Only attended by Nerissa here,  
Until her husband and my lord's return.  
There is a monastery two miles off,  
And there we will abide.

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

JESSICA: I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA: I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd  
To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.

*Exeunt Lorenzo and Jessica*

Now, Balthazar,  
As I have ever found thee honest-true,  
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,  
And use thou all th'endeavour of a man  
In speed to Padua; see thou render this  
Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario;  
And look what notes and garments he doth give thee,  
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed  
Unto the trajet, to the common ferry  
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,  
But get thee gone; I shall be there before thee.  
Come on, Nerissa, I have work in hand  
That you yet know not of; we'll see our husbands  
Before they think of us.

*Exit BALTHAZAR*

NERISSA: Shall they see us?

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

Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind  
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,  
Which I will practise.  
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*

**ACT 3 SCENE 5** *cut*

## ACT 4 SCENE 1

*Venice. The Court of Justice. Enter DUKE, Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO*

DUKE: What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO: Ready, so please your Grace.

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

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

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

*Enter SHYLOCK*

DUKE: Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,  
That thou but ledest this fashion of thy malice  
To the last hour of act; and then, 'tis thought,  
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse, more strange  
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;  
And where thou now exacts the penalty,  
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,  
Thou wilt not only lose the forfeiture,  
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,  
Forgive a moiety of the principal,  
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,  
That have of late so huddled on his back –  
Enow to press a royal merchant down,  
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK: I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose,  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.  
If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.  
You'll ask me why I rather choose to have  
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive  
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,  
But say it is my humour – is it answer'd?  
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;  
Some that are mad if they behold a cat;  
And others, when the bagpipe sings i' th' nose,  
Cannot contain their urine; for affection,  
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:  
As there is no firm reason to be rend'red

Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;  
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;  
Why he, a woollen bagpipe, but of force  
Must yield to such inevitable shame  
As to offend, himself being offended;  
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,  
More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing  
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus  
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

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

SHYLOCK: I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

BASSANIO: Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK: Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO: Every offence is not a hate at first.

SHYLOCK: What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

ANTONIO: I pray you, think you question with the Jew.  
You may as well use question with the wolf,  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;  
You may as well do any thing most hard  
And speak to soften that – than which what's harder? –  
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,  
Make no more offers, use no farther means,  
But with all brief and plain conveniency  
Let me have judgement, and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO: For your three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK: If every ducat in six thousand ducats  
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,  
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE: How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?

SHYLOCK: What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
The pound of flesh which I demand of him  
Is dearly bought, 'tis mine, and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law!  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgement; answer; shall I have it?

DUKE: Upon my power I may dismiss this court,  
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,  
Whom I have sent for to determine this,  
Come here to-day.

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

DUKE: Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

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

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

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

DUKE: Come you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA: From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace. *[presents a letter]*

DUKE: Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK: To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

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

SHYLOCK: No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRATIANO: O, be thou damn'd, execrable dog!  
And for thy life let justice be accus'd.

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

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

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

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

NERISSA *[reads]* 'Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick; but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome – his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant; we turn'd o'er many books together; he is furnished with my opinion which, bettered with his own learning – the greatest 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 him commendation.'

*Enter PORTIA (for BALTHAZAR), dressed like a Doctor of Laws*

DUKE: You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes;  
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.  
Give me your hand; come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA: I did, my lord.

DUKE: You are welcome; take your place.  
Are you acquainted with the difference  
That holds this present question in the court?

PORTIA: I am informed thoroughly of the cause.  
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE: Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA: Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK: Shylock is my name.

PORTIA: Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;  
Yet in such a rule that the Venetian law  
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.  
You stand within his danger, do you not?

ANTONIO: Ay, so he says.

PORTIA: Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO: I do.

PORTIA: Then must Shylock be merciful.

SHYLOCK: On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA: The quality of mercy is not strain'd;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though Justice be thy plea, consider this –  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

- SHYLOCK: My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.
- PORTIA: Is he not able to discharge the money?
- BASSANIO: Yes; here I tender it for him in the court;  
Yea, twice the sum; if that will not suffice,  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er  
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart;  
If this will not suffice, it must appear  
That malice bears down truth. And, I beseech you,  
Wrest once the law to your authority;  
To do a great right to do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.
- PORTIA: It must not be; there is no power in Venice  
Can alter a decree established;  
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,  
And many an error, by the same example,  
Will rush into the state; it cannot be.
- SHYLOCK: O wise young judge, How I do honour thee!
- PORTIA: I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
- SHYLOCK: Here 'tis, most reverend Doctor; here it is.
- PORTIA: Shylock, there's thrice thy money off'red thee.
- SHYLOCK: An oath, an oath! I have an oath in heaven.  
Shall I lay perjury on my soul?  
No, not for Venice.
- PORTIA: Why, this bond is forfeit;  
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim  
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off  
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful.  
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

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

ANTONIO: Most heartily I do beseech the court  
To give the judgement

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

SHYLOCK: O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA: For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty,  
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

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

PORTIA: Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

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

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

SHYLOCK: I have them ready.

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

SHYLOCK: Is it so nominated in the bond?

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

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

PORTIA: You, merchant, have you anything so say?

ANTONIO: But little: I am arm'd and well prepar'd.  
Give me your hand Bassanio; fare you well.  
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,  
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom. It is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow

An age of poverty; from which ling'ring penance  
Of such misery doth she cut me off.  
Commend me to your honourable wife;  
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;  
Say how I lov'd you; speak me fair in death;  
And, when tale is told, bid her be judge  
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.  
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,  
And he repents not that he pays your debt.

BASSANIO:

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

PORTIA:

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

GRATIANO:

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

NERISSA:

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

SHYLOCK:

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

PORTIA:

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

SHYLOCK:

Most rightful judge!

PORTIA:

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

SHYLOCK:

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare.

PORTIA:

Tarry a little; there is something else.  
The bond doth give thee here no jot of blood:  
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh'.  
Then take thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;  
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed  
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods  
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate  
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO:

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

SHYLOCK:

Is that the law?



Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.  
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;  
For it appears by manifest proceeding  
That indirectly, and directly too,  
Thou hast contrived against the very life  
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd  
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.  
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRATIANO: Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself

DUKE: That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,  
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.  
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;  
The other half comes to the general state,  
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

PORTIA: Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

SHYLOCK: Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.  
You take my house when you do take the prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my life  
When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA: What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

ANTONIO: So please my lord the Duke and all the court  
To quit the fine for one half of his goods;  
I am content, so he will let me have  
The other half in use, to render it  
Upon his death unto the gentleman  
That lately stole his daughter –  
Two things provided more: that, for this favour,  
He presently become a Christian;  
The other, that he do record a gift,  
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd  
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

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

PORTIA: Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK: I am content.

PORTIA: Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

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

DUKE: Get thee gone, but do it.

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

*Exit SHYLOCK*

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

DUKE: I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.  
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,  
For in my mind you are much bound to him.

*Exeunt DUKE, Magnificoes, and train*

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

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

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

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

PORTIA: You press me far, and therefore I will yield.  
*[to Antonio]* Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake.  
*[to Bassanio]* And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.  
Do not draw back your hand: I'll take no more,  
And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASSANIO: This ring, good sir – alas, it is a trifle;  
I will not shame myself to give you this.

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

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

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

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

PORTIA: That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.  
An if your wife be not a mad woman,  
And know how well I have deserv'd this ring,  
She would not hold out enemy for ever  
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

*Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA*

ANTONIO: My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.  
Let his deservings, and my love withal,  
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

BASSANIO: Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,  
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste.  
Come, you and I will thither presently;  
And in the morning early will we both  
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

*Exit GRATIANO*

*Exeunt*

## ACT 4 SCENE 2

*Venice. A street. Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

PORTIA: Enquire Shylock's house out, give him this deed.  
And let him sign it; we'll away to-night,  
And be a day before our husbands home.  
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

*Enter GRATIANO*

GRATIANO: Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.  
My lord Bassanio, upon more advice,  
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat  
Your company at dinner.

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

GRATIANO: That will I do.

NERISSA: Sir, I would speak with you.  
*[aside to Portia]* I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,  
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA: *[to Nerissa]* Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing  
That they did give the rings away to men;  
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.  
*[aloud]* Away, make haste, thou know'st where I will tarry.

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

*Exeunt*





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

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

NERISSA:         Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

GRATIANO:        Now by this hand I gave it to a youth,  
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy  
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;  
A prating boy that begg'd it as a fee;  
I could not for my heart deny it him.

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

BASSANIO:        *[aside]* Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,  
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

GRATIANO:        My lord Bassanio gave his ring away  
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed  
Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,  
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;  
And neither man nor master would take aught  
But the two rings.

PORTIA:                        What ring gave you, my lord?  
Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me.

BASSANIO:        If I could add a lie unto a fault,  
I would deny it; but you see my finger  
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

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

NERISSA:                        Nor I in yours  
Till I again see mine.

BASSANIO:                                 Sweet Portia,  
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,  
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,  
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,  
And how unwillingly I left the ring,  
When nought would be accepted but the ring,  
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA:                                 If you had known the virtue of the ring,  
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,  
Or your own honour to contain the ring,  
You would not have parted with the ring.  
What man is so much unreasonable,  
If you had pleas'd to have defended it  
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty  
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?  
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:  
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO:                                 No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,  
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,  
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,  
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,  
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away –  
Even he that had held up the very life  
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?  
I was enforc'd to send it after him;  
I was beset with shame and courtesy;  
My honour would not let ingratitude  
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;  
For by these blessed candles of the night,  
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd  
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA:                                 Let not that doctor e'er come near my house;  
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,  
And that which you did swear to keep for me,  
I will become as liberal as you;  
I'll not deny him anything I have,  
No, not my body, nor my husband's bed.  
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.  
Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus;  
If you do not, if I be left alone,  
Now, by my honour which is yet mine own,  
I'll have that doctor for mine bedfellow.

NERISSA:                                 And I his clerk; therefore be well advis'd  
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

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

ANTONIO:                                 I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA: Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

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

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

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

ANTONIO: Here, Lord Bassanio, swear to keep this ring.

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

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

NERISSA: And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,  
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,  
In lieu of this, last night did lie with me.

GRATIANO: What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserv'd it?

PORTIA: Speak not so grossly. You are all amaz'd.  
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;  
It comes from Padua, from Bellario;  
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,  
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here  
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,  
And even but now return'd; I have not yet  
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;  
And I have better news in store for you  
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon;  
There you shall find three of your argosies  
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.  
You shall not know by what strange accident  
I chanced on this letter.

BASSANIO: Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?

GRATIANO: Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

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

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

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

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

PORTIA:                   It is almost morning,  
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied  
Of these events at full. Let us go in,  
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,  
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO:             Let it be so. The first inter'gatory  
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,  
Whether till the next night she had rather stay,  
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.  
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,  
Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk.  
Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing  
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

*Exeunt*

## EPILOGUE

*Lorenzo, Jessica, and Shylock*