

ANDRÉ TCHAIKOWSKY

THE MERCHANT
OF VENICE

Opera in Three Acts and an Epilogue
After William Shakespeare

Libretto by
JOHN O'BRIEN

LIBRETTO



JOSEF WEINBERGER LTD

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OPERA

Josef Weinberger Ltd., London

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Libretto: John O'Brien

Music: André Tchaikowsky

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London W1N 8EL,
England.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

<u>Cast</u>	Jessica	-	High Soprano (B ^b - D'')
	Portia	-	Mezzo-Dram. Soprano (G - B'')
	Nerissa	-	Mezzo-Soprano (G - A'')
	Antonio	-	Counter-Tenor (F - F')
	Bassanio	-	Tenor (C - C')
	Lorenzo	-	Lyric Tenor (Low C - B ^b)
	Shylock	-	Baritone (Low G - A)
	Salerio	-	Baritone
	Solanio	-	Bass
	Gratiano	-	Bass (Low F - F)
	Duke of Venice	-	Bass (Small Part)

SATB Chorus, Boys Chorus

Orchestra 3333/4331/Tp/2Po/Xyl/Glock/Cel/Harpsichord/Hp/Strings

Stage Band Lute/2 Recorders/Oboe d'A/Oboe da Cacce/2 Bsns/Harpsichord

Duration 2½ hours of music

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Act I

Characters in Act I

Antonio - a merchant of Venice
Bassanio - his friend
Gratiano - a young attendant on Bassanio
Solanio } young friends of Bassanio
Salerio } and Antonio
Lorenzo }
Shylock - a Jewish money lender
Jessica - his daughter
Chorus - at various times Venetians
of differing rank, servants
and attendants masquers

and a group of street urchins

Venice

The setting is the same for the entire Act.

The stage is divided in two by a small canal such that the left and right hand sides of the stage form two separate acting areas, the one a small piazza with Shylock's house at the back - this has a door opening onto the piazza and above the door there is a shuttered balcony; the other half of the stage is a larger piazza, which at different times represents different parts of Venice. A small bridge is the only link between the two piazzas. At the back of the stage there is the suggestion of a much wider canal flowing right across. At the end of the act it will be necessary to bring several gondolas across the back of the stage. The setting should be completed with a back cloth suggestive of an opulent but not fussy Venice (hinting at Canaletto).

When the curtain rises the stage is full of Venetians going about their business; insolent pride and fierce money grubbing jostle with one another and velvet gowns are the natural prey of ragged urchins between bouts of rough play over the spoils. There should be a feeling of great drive, as ruthless as gorgeous, which swirls over and around the bridge. As the crowds disperse Antonio can be seen to stand aloof on the bridge, Solanio and Salerio stand nearby.

Shylock comes onto the stage and tries to make his way across it to his own house. He notices Antonio on the bridge and moves away, choosing to go home by a different route. As the crowds move off the stage the children linger for a short while, flinging abusive gestures about like a ball before they chase each other off the stage, leaving only Antonio and his friends on the bridge.

(The sensation of this opening should be similar to that of wide angle photography which then zooms in on the particular detail which in its stillness contrasts with the flux within the wider vista. And it is only when we are in close-up, so to speak, that we become aware of the human voice - Antonio's)

ANTONIO: Alas,
 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 was born,
 I am to learn,
 and such a want-wit
 sadness makes of me
 that I have much ado
 to know myself.

SOLANIO: Your mind is tossing on the ocean with your argosies

SALERIO: I know, Antonio is sad to think upon his merchandise

ANTONIO: Believe me,
 no -
 my merchandise makes me
 not sad.

BASSANIO enters with GRATIANO. They stand some way off and GRATIANO preens BASSANIO. Only ANTONIO notices their arrival but does nothing

SALERIO: Why then -
 you are in love

ANTONIO: Fie, fie!

SOLANIO: Look who comes here.

SALERIO: Bassanio
 your noble kinsman

As BASSANIO comes forward they greet him briefly

SOLANIO and SALERIO: Fare you well,
 We'll leave you now with better company

As they leave they pause by GRATIANO and watch with mild amusement the silent greeting between ANTONIO and BASSANIO. They leave the stage as GRATIANO impudently moves to ANTONIO

GRATIANO: Signior Antonio -
 you grow exceeding strange:
 must it be so?
 When shall we laugh,
 say when?

BASSANIO: Gratiano!

GRATIANO: Why should a man
whose blood is warm within
sit like his grandsire
cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes
and creep
into the jaundice
by being peevish

BASSANIO: Gratiano, thou

GRATIANO: Signior Antonio
I do know of those
that only are
reputed wise
for saying nothing

BASSANIO: Gratiano, thou speakest an infinite deal of nothing!

ANTONIO: Nay then,
I must be one of these
same dumb wise men,
Gratiano,
for you never let me speak.

GRATIANO: Well keep me in your company
a year or two,
you shall not know the sound
of your own tongue

BASSANIO: Hear thou - Gratiano:
thou art too wild
too rude
and bold of voice.
Take pains
I pray thee
to allay with some cold drops of modesty
thy skipping spirit.
Hold thee off awhile.

GRATIANO: (leaving) I'll end my exhortation after dinner

ANTONIO: Well -
tell me now,
tell me
what lady
is this same
to whom you swore
a secret pilgrimage?

BASSANIO is thrown a little off balance by this directness

BASSANIO: 'Tis not unknown to you,
Antonio,
how much I have
disabled my estate,
by showing a more swelling prt
than my faint means ...

ANTONIO: I pray you, let me know it

BASSANIO: To you Antonio
I owe the most
in money
and in love.
And from your love
I have a warranty ...

ANTONIO: You do me wrong.
You do me wrong Bassanio,
and spend but time to wind about my love
with circumstance.
My person,
all my means,
lies all unlocked to you.

BASSANIO: In Belmont,
lives the lady,
richly left.
Oh, she is fair,
and fairer than that word;
of wondrous virtues.

Sometimes from her eyes -
sometimes -
received I
fair speechless messages.

Her name is Portia.

Oh, her sunny locks
hang on her temples
like a golden fleece
and many Jasons
come in quest of her.

O, my Antonio,
had I but the means,
the means to hold
a rival place
with one of them!

ANTONIO: Thou knowest
that all my fortunes are at sea,
nor have I money
nor commodity
to raise a present sum

BASSANIO: O my Antonio ...

ANTONIO: Therefore
go forth.
Try what my credit
can in Venice do -
that shall be racked,
even to the uttermost,
to furnish thee
to Belmont
and fair Portia.

BASSANIO: O my Antonio!
I have a mind
pressages me
that questionless
I shall be fortunate.

ANTONIO leaves the stage immediately. BASSANIO moves over the bridge as the bustle of Venice life is briefly indicated again. As BASSANIO reaches SHYLOCK's house he looks round furtively to ensure that he is not being observed. He knocks on the door. The door is opened but BASSANIO is not let in. He is seen to be in whispered conversation with someone not yet visible. Then, forcing BASSANIO out onto the street, SHYLOCK comes out of the house and shuts the door. The conversation is now continued audibly

SHYLOCK: Three thousand ducats - well

BASSANIO: Aye, sir, for three months

SHYLOCK: For three months - well

BASSANIO: For which Antonio shall be bound

SHYLOCK: Shall be bound,
Antonio shall be bound - well, well

BASSANIO: Will you pleasure me?
Shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK: Three thousand ducats -
for three months -
Antonio bound.
Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO: Ho!

SHYLOCK: No, no, no!
My meaning is
he is sufficient.
Yet his means are
in supposition:
to Tripolis
and the Indies,
Mexico and England -
and other ventures he hath squandered -
squandered -
abroad.
Ships are but boards,
sailors are but men;
and there is the peril
of water,
winds
and rocks.

Yet -
yet I think
I will take his bond.

BASSANIO: Be assured you may

SHYLOCK I will be assured.
May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO: If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK: Yes, to smell pork -
to eat of the habitation
which is your prophet
the Nazarite
conjured the devil into!
I will buy with you,
talk with you,
and walk with you,
But I will not
eat with you,
drink with you,
nor pray with you.

BASSANIO: Ah, this is Signior Antonio!

He goes to join ANTONIO who has come onto the stage then paused on recognizing SHYLOCK with BASSANIO. They talk privately while SHYLOCK muses aloud

SHYLOCK: 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.

BASSANIO: Shylock (expecting SHYLOCK to come up to them)

SHYLOCK: He hates our sacred nation
and he rails on me,
my bargains
and my well-won thrift.
Cursed be my tribe
if I forgive him.

BASSANIO: Shylock?... (moving with ANTONIO towards SHYLOCK)

SHYLOCK: (as if he has just noticed ANTONIO)
Rest you fair,
good signior Antonio,
methought your worship
neither lent
nor borrowed
on advantage.

ANTONIO: Nor do I - Shylock.
Yet to supply the ripe wants
of my friend,
I'll break
a custom.

SHYLOCK: Signior Antonio -
many a time and oft
in the Rialto
you have rated me
about my moneys
and my usances ...

ANTONIO: Ay, what of that?

SHYLOCK: 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...

You spit
upon my Jewish gaberdine,
and for use of that
which is mine own.

ANTONIO: I am like to spit on thee again

SHYLOCK: Well then:
It now appears you need my help:
'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 dog
over your threshold.

ANTONIO: I'll spurn you still.

SHYLOCK: Moneys is your suit,
What shall 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,
with bated breath,
and whisp'ring humbleness,
say -
"Fair sir,
you spat on me
on Wednesday last,
you spurned me such a day,
another time
you called me dog:
and for these
courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys"?

ANTONIO: O most impenetrable cur!
If thou wilt lend this money,
lend it
not as to thy friends,
but to thine enemy,
who if he break,
thou mayst,
with better face
exact the penalty.

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

ANTONIO: This were kindness

SHYLOCK: This kindness
will I show.
Go with me to a notary,
and seal me there
your single bond -
I ask for no security -
and
in a merry sport,
if you repay me not
on such a day,
let forfeit be
an equal pound,
a pound of your fair flesh.

- BASSANIO: Never!
- SHYLOCK: (lightly, as if developing his jest)
A pound of your fair flesh
to be cut off and taken
in what part of your body
pleaseth me.
- ANTONIO: (confidently entering into the jest)
Content -
content -
I'll seal you such a bond,
and say there is much kindness
in the Jew
- BASSANIO: You shall not seal
to such a bond
for me;
I'll rather dwell
in my necessity
- SHYLOCK: (aside) O Father Abram!
What these Christians are,
whose own hard dealings
teach them to suspect
the thoughts of others!
- ANTONIO: Why, fear you not.
I will not forfeit it.
My ships return
a month before
- BASSANIO: You shall not seal this bond for me
- SHYLOCK: Pray tell me this -
if he should break his bond
what should I gain?
A pound of man's flesh
is not so estimable,
profitable neither,
as flesh of muttons,
beefs or goats.

If he will take it, so -
if not, adieu,
and for my love,
I pray you wrong me not. (Turns towards his house)
- ANTONIO: Yes, Shylock,
I will
seal
this bond.
- SHYLOCK: Then forthwith meet me at the notary's.
Give him direction
for this merry bond
and I will go and purse
the ducats straight (He goes into his house)

ANTONIO: Hie thee, gentle Jew...
The Hebrew will turn Christian -
he grows kind.

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

ANTONIO: Come man -
in this there's no dismay,
my ships come home
a month before the day.

ANTONIO and BASSANIO leave the stage by crossing over the bridge. The bond between them underlined perhaps by their walking arm in arm and ANTONIO being a little more demonstrative than he is anywhere else. As they leave the stage the light in the upstairs room of SHYLOCK's house brightens as the general lighting darkens to suggest a passage of time. A shadow is visible on the shutters as JESSICA gets up from a writing table and comes forward to open the shutters.....JESSICA opens the shutters onto the balcony above: she has been writing

JESSICA: Oh.....
Our house is hell-
barren and bound
its life;
so tedious.
(She takes up the letter she has been writing)
Lorenzo, O Lorenzo,
keep promise with me.
Help me to end this strife
and for thee
O for thee
I shall become a Christian
and thy loving wife

LORENZO comes quietly onto the stage and crosses over towards SHYLOCK's house. He joins JESSICA singing before she realises he is there

SHYLOCK: Jessica!

JESSICA: Lorenzo be but true
be true and bold
and we shall live

JESSICA and LORENZO: Shall live
within the music of our love;
that harmony
and sweet concord
that calms all rage
and gives to love
what's never bought and sold.

SHYLOCK: (from within the house)
Jessica
What, Jessica.

JESSICA: Oh, Oh Lorenzo
'tis my father calls.
Go, quickly love,
and here take this
(drops him the letter, and as he goes...)
O love be true

LORENZO slips round the side of the house to read the note, as SHYLOCK comes out of the house. SHYLOCK is in a different mood now. He is pre-occupied, his behaviour is less controlled. He is both in a hurry and loth to leave home

SHYLOCK: Jessica!

JESSICA: Call you, sir,
What is your will.

SHYLOCK: Jessica - I must go unto the Notary's.
From thence I am bid forth -
the prodigal Christian would flatter me.
Come down Jessica,
Come down

There is a sound of light hearted music

Devilry -
what, will there be masques!

JESSICA comes out of the house

Jessica my girl.

JESSICA: Father

SHYLOCK: I must go and seal this bond
with proud Antonio,
and they have pressed me to attend
their entertainments.

I am not bid for love -
they flatter me:
but I shall go in hate,
to feed upon the prodigal.

Jessica -
look to my house.
There is some ill a-brewing to my rest:
I am loath to go.

The sounds of masqueraders getting ready and moving nearer add to SHYLOCK'S unease

SHYLOCK: Hear you - Jessica,
 lock up my doors;
 and when you hear the drum
 and the vile squealing
 of the wry-necked fife,
 clamber not up to the casements then,
 nor thrust your head into the public street
 to gaze on Christian fools
 with varnished faces;
 but stop my house's ears -
 my sober house.
 By Jacob's staff,
 I have no mind for merriment tonight -
 but I will go

He goes back into the house to collect three small caskets of coins.
LORENZO flits across the bridge unnoticed

SHYLOCK: Jessica go in.
 Here are my keys.
 Perhaps I will return immediately.
 Do as I bid thee;
 fast bind, fast bind.
 Go in and shut the door.

SHYLOCK gives her a bunch of keys, but keeps the front door key. JESSICA goes in and SHYLOCK locks the door, pockets the key, takes the caskets and sets off across the bridge to the notary and ANTONIO. LORENZO comes on stage, still handling the letter from JESSICA. He is followed by GRATIANO SOLANIO and SALERIO

GRATIANO: Come friends,
 we must make haste.
 Why, Lorenzo,
 come.
 Bassanio would have all Venice
 dance tonight
 at his good fortune.
 For his dear sake
 Antonio hath bound himself to
 the harsh Jew.

LORENZO: Whose only gentle part's his daughter.

SOLANIO/SALERIO: Ha, ha, beware Lorenzo.

LORENZO: O whiter than the paper
 it is writ on
 is the hand that writ.

SOLANIO: Nay, what is this?

GRATIANO: I'll swear 'tis from the rich Jew's daughter

SALERIO: From Jessica I'll be sworn

LORENZO: I see that I must tell you all, my friends.
Jessica hath directed
how I shall take her from
her father's house,
what gold and jewels
she is furnished with,
what pages suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father came to heaven
it will be for his gentle daughter's sake

GRATIANO: And Shylock is away from home tonight

SOLANIO: Is't certain?

GRATIANO: Aye, he's gone,
but he may return anon.
Bassanio says he likes not entertainment

LORENZO: Go, Gratiano,
I pray you,
unto that house.
Tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her.
Bid her be ready
when the masquers
dance into the square.
You'll help me friends?

SOLANIO/SALERIO: Aye, marry.
Let's make haste
and find us torch-bearers.

LORENZO: Come - go with me.
Fair Jessica shall be my torch bearer.

SOLANIO, SALERIO and LORENZO run gaily off the stage. GRATIANO whistles,
runs across the stage, over the bridge and near SHYLOCK's house he picks up
a stone and flings it at the shutters of the balcony

GRATIANO: Aye-ya-aye, aye-ya-aye

JESSICA looks out nervously

GRATIANO: There will come a Christian by
will be worth a Jewess' eye

JESSICA: Nay mock me not

GRATIANO: When thou hear'st the merry flute
be thou ready in thy page's suit
(He has been dancing about the stage. He now stops
under the balcony and makes a deep mocking bow)
Most beautiful pagan,
most sweet Jew,
Adieu.
(Laughing, he runs over the bridge and off stage)

The stage gradually darkens, a lamp-lighter makes his way over the stage lighting a few lamps which hang from houses and on the bridge. The masquerade approaches. JESSICA, changing quickly into her page's suit, puts out the light in the house, and slips out onto the balcony as the masquers pour onto the stage carrying torches; singing and dancing, they swirl about the stage. Amongst them are LORENZO, SOLANIO, SALERIO in disguise and with torch bearers. During the singing and dancing of the chorus they separate from the crowd and move towards the house, with their torch bearers. The latter hand their torches to LORENZO, SOLANIO and SALERIO and climbing on each others shoulders help to hand JESSICA down after she has thrown down the casket.

CHORUS: Love is blind
and lovers cannot see
the pretty
follies
they themselves commit

LORENZO: Jessica, Jessica!
JESSICA: Who is't?
LORENZO: Lorenzo...
JESSICA: O Lorenzo...
LORENZO/ ...and my/thy love
JESSICA:

CHORUS: Love is blind and cannot see
the pretty follies,
the follies they commit!

JESSICA: Here catch this casket
it is worth thy pains
LORENZO: Descend, descend -
for you must be
my torch bearer.

As JESSICA is handed down

CHORUS: And if they could
Cupid himself
Cupid would blush
would blush to see her thus
transformed
to a boy.

LORENZO: Beshrew me,
but I love her
heartily.
She is wise if I can
judge her;
she is fair,
if that mine eyes be true;
and she is true
as she has proved herself.

As JESSICA comes to him

CHORUS: Away, away,
blind loves away
you dare not stay
lest Shylock
lest Shylock
come this way.

LORENZO: Ah! Sweet Jessica -

JESSICA: O, my Lorenzo
come away
sweet love away
we dare not stay
for the close night
doth play the runaway.

The lovers make their way through the revellers; as they leave the stage GRATIANO comes on, perhaps a little tipsy, and only realises that he has missed the fun as the masqueraders move off stage

GRATIANO: All things that are,
are with more spirit chased ha, ha, ha, ha.

ANTONIO comes onto the stage in obvious haste and concern

Signior Antonio!

ANTONIO:

Fie, Gratiano,
Where are all the rest?
I have sent twenty out to seek for you!

GRATIANO:

(giving a shrug, then seeming to find the explanation
for ANTONIO's impatience and abrupt manner -)
You look not well,
Signior Antonio!
You have too much respect
upon the world:
they lose it
that do buy it
with much care.

ANTONIO:

Gratiano...

GRATIANO:

Believe me sir,
you are
marvellously
changed.

ANTONIO:

No...
I held the world
but as the world,
Gratiano -
a stage
where everyman must play a part
(turns away as if speaking to himself)
and mine
a sad one.

GRATIANO:

Why then -
Love is...
(He is about to add a little something to what the
chorus have sung)

ANTONIO:

Gratiano - you are stayed for.
Bassanio presently will go abroad.

GRATIANO, at last realizing that he is being put in his place, moves off stage
as the masquers return with BASSANIO and his suite. A fleet of gondolas has
been drawn up at the back of the stage

CHORUS:

A Jason, a Jason
Good speed, good speed,
go find thy new Medea.

ANTONIO has moved onto the bridge - where he was at the beginning of the act -
and, when his retinue have moved into the boats, BASSANIO goes to ANTONIO.
They bid each other goodbye silently. BASSANIO returns to the boats as
GRATIANO arrives and the fleet of gondolas passes over the back of the stage
and the CHORUS leaves, singing

CHORUS: Jason, go find Thy love is blind
 go blind go find
 go find thou art blind
 thy new Medea find thy Medea

ANTONIO remains alone on the bridge; he stands there quite still until the end of the act. SHYLOCK comes onto the stage with a lantern and goes directly to his house. After a short pause he calls -

SHYLOCK: Jessica, Jessica!
 (then he bursts from the house into the street -
 he holds a note -)
 My daughter, my daughter!
 Two seal'd bags of ducats
 stol'n from me - Jessica!
 and jewels -
 two stones
 two rich and precious stones.
 Jessica -
 the curse ne'er fell upon our nation
 till now -
 I never felt it till now.
 Stolen -
 my daughter - fled with a Christian

 I would
 that 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.

 O thou loss
 upon loss -
 gone -
 and with so much -
 my daughter -
 my ducats.
 And no satisfaction -
 no revenge -
 my daughter!

As SHYLOCK pours out his rage and grief, the urchins who were seen playing in the area at the beginning of the act creep back onto the stage. At first very quietly, but with increasing volume and viciousness they mimic and mock SHYLOCK. Eventually, they laugh, flick stones, jeer and whistle

SHYLOCK: No ill luck stirring
 but what lights o'my shoulders,
 no sighs
 but o' my breathing
 no tears
 but o' my shedding

CHORUS OF URCHINS: My daughter, my ducats.
 Would she were dead,
 my daughter. My ducats.
 Would she were dead,
 would she were dead.
 Loss upon loss -
 to a Christian
 a Christian.
 Shylock's a Jew, a Jew,
 Shylock's a Jew....

As SHYLOCK exhausts himself, he becomes aware of the mocking children. He takes a stick from the house and drives them away - but not off stage. He moves towards the bridge, but finds his way blocked by ANTONIO, as at the beginning of the Act. SHYLOCK lets out a terrible sob - rage, hate, frustration, all in one - then focusing all his bitterness and hate on the solitary figure of ANTONIO, who remains totally oblivious

SHYLOCK: Let him look to his bond!

SHYLOCK staggers off stage, going back the way he came. After a pause there is a single long low whistle from one of the boys as the curtains slowly close, framing ANTONIO

END OF ACT ONE

Act II

Characters in Act II

Portia - a wealthy young heiress
Nerissa - her maid in waiting
Prince of Arragon
Prince of Morocco
Bassanio
Gratiano
Salerio
Lorenzo
Jessica
Chorus of Portia servants
Attendants on Arragon (dancers)
Attendants on Morocco (dancers)

The entire Act takes place at Belmont in a palatial hall. There is a grand doorway centre-back, several smaller doorways and alcoves and a doorway leading onto a garden terrace. Portia sits in one of the alcoves, privately, with Nerissa.

PORTIA: I cannot choose
O Nerissa, Nerissa,
is it not hard
that I may neither choose
who I would
nor refuse
whom I dislike?
Is it not hard?
Is it not hard that the will
of a living daughter
is curbed by the will
of her dead father?

NERISSA: O madam,
Your father was ever
virtuous and wise,

PORTIA: I cannot choose

NERISSA: and holy men
at their death
have good inspirations...

PORTIA: Not choose one

NERISSA: So in the lottery
of caskets
whereby you must be chosen

PORTIA: Chosen!
and refuse none.

NERISSA: No one will ever rightly choose
between the gold, the silver
and the lead...

PORTIA: Not choose one
nor refuse none.

NERISSA: No one will rightly choose
but one who rightly loves

PORTIA: I cannot choose

NERISSA: rightly loves....
But tell me madam:
these princely suitors
who daily now
attend upon you,
what warmth is there
in your affection
toward any?

PORTIA: There is not one
but I do dote
upon his absence!
O is it not hard, Nerissa!

NERISSA: Do you remember, lady,
do you remember,
in your father's time
a young Venetian,
a scholar and a soldier....?

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

NERISSA: True madam, he

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

A distant fanfare

NERISSA: It is the Prince of Arragon's arrived
(Looking to the garden)

PORTIA: Alas, and the Prince of Morocco
will be here tonight.
Stay Nerissa,
for the lottery prepare
while I yet again endure to hear
a hot suitor swear (she goes out)

NERISSA: (clapping her hands)
Quick, quick, I pray you:
in haste we must make ready....

CHORUS OF SERVANTS: (They appear promptly but are inured to this performance
and have another of their own)
What, more sport already?

NERISSA: Aye, by my troth,
the Prince of Arragon
goes to take his oath.

CHORUS:

(As they prepare the room, draw the curtains to show the caskets and arrange them on the stage, they immitate PORTIA and the various suitors whom they catalogue. This is a very deft and swift charade which flows all over the stage and is taken up by various individuals and groups)

Go draw the curtains straight.

Here the Neapolitan dolt
lost for love of his prancing colt.

Fool's head -

death's head -

The drunken young German
had done far better
to give half his wine
to the moody

unmannerly

County Palatine.

The hotch-potch

Englishman

who travelled abroad

bought his manners

as his clothes

along the road,

but of languages knew he

not a single word.

Who'd wed a dumb-show?

Here the capering Frenchman -

he lost the better match

While fencing with his shadow.

Hearts stuffed with gr
are dead,
or puffed up with vanity
a walking feather bed.

O, wits that are duller
than lead
duller than lead.

Fool's head,
death's head:

O, come a lover once
in their stead.

Hints of fanfares off stage

NERISSA:

Haste, o make haste,
the Prince hath ta'en his oath
and comes to his election.

CHORUS:

Come draw the curtains
(They click their fingers in unison: as if at their command fanfares sound, and they stand aside for a splendid procession as PORTIA enters with the PRINCE OF ARRAGON and his retinue)

PORTIA:

Behold the caskets,
noble prince;
and remember your oath:
never to unfold
which casket 'twas you chose;
and if you fail
in fortune of your choice
immediately to leave me
and no longer press your suit;
and never in your life
to woo anmaid
in way of marriage.
One of the caskets
contains my picture, prince;
if you choose that
then I am yours withal.

ARRAGON bows his consent and goes towards the caskets. There is a sudden spectacular fanfare: the PRINCE OF MORROCO and his retinue make an explosive and exotic entry. MOROCCO goes to PORTIA and in extravagant mime swears his oath and goes to the caskets. As if swept aside by a sword stroke ARRAGON, his pedantic elegance in disarray, hides for safety and is prevented from watching the proceedings. MOROCCO dances and chooses the golden casket, is momentarily dumbfounded, then departs even more explosively than he arrived. ARRAGON, gaining courage, comes from his hiding-place and dances an effetely elegant mime and chooses the silver casket. He pauses in amazement, then departs with a mocked dignity. The stage is left to PORTIA and NERISSA

PORTIA: With one fool's head
 you came to woo,
 but you go away
 with two!

A distant and faint fanfare, which seems to stir an echo in PORTIA

PORTIA: Hark!
 O Nerissa!
 Go quickly see
 who comes to seek
 his fortune
 now in me.

PORTIA is left on stage in growing agitation till NERISSA hurries back - she in her turn is agitated by excitement

PORTIA: Who is't Nerissa?

NERISSA: Ah! My lady -
 there is alighted
 at your gate
 a young Venetian....
 one that comes before
 to signify the approaching
 of his lord.

 Oh, I have never seen
 so likely an ambassador of love.
 A day in April
 never came so sweet
 to show how costly summer
 was at hand,
 as this fore-spurrer
 comes before his lord.

PORTIA has regained her calm by being amused at NERISSA'S fluttering heart

PORTIA: No more, I pray thee:
 I am half afeard
 thou wilt say anon
 he is some kin to thee
 thou spend'st such high-day wit
 in praising him.

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

They go out. The lights dim and the chorus, singing off stage, spread the news and speculate about the new arrival

CHORUS: (severally)
Can this be he?
Is this Bassanio?
Is't he she loves?
Bassanio? It is Bassanio.
I'll swear it is Bassanio.
Aye, 'tis Bassanio.

Bassanio. Bassanio.

Here is a goodly sight,
but will choose aright.

O lady what a plight
if him you love,
and he choose not aright.

Into this atmosphere of expectancy steps GRATIANO, from the garden. He is rather more splendidly dressed than in Act I, and perhaps not quite comfortable in his new habits but everything is to be carried off with a swagger. As he wanders about the hall, taking it all in, he hums or sings snatches from the song in Act I:

GRATIANO: "Why then let me
play the fool:
With mirth and laughter
let old wrinkles come...."

He comes upon the caskets and reads out the inscriptions

GRATIANO:

What says this dull
and leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath'
For lead!
hazard all for lead -
this casket threatens:
perhaps this silver
'with her virgin hue
promises the lover
more his due'
(perhaps affecting a love-lorn and 'poetic pose')
men do hazard most
in hope of fair advantage.
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves'
Ha! That's fair unto the fair,
but such as I
must play for something dearer.
Let's see this last that's
deeply 'graved in gold:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire'
Why that must be the lady -
for all the world desires her.....

NERISSA enters quietly, and immitating PORTIA's voice.....

NERISSA: How now, good sir,
 has found my picture there?

GRATIANO is startled but quickly recovers and joins in the game addressing
NERISSA - at least at first - as if she were PORTIA

GRATIANO: Alas, good lady,
 the caskets are locked
 and you most cruelly
 have the key.....
 the key to that which I would choose.

 As I hope to thrive,
 I'd rather my master
 hazard his all in this
 than I should be made to play
 at such a game as his.

 I could not win,
 for lady,
 your portrait
 is not within (he taps all three caskets)

NERISSA: Sir you are too bold:
 this would seem unmannerly
 should my mistress find you here....
 or, if this
 to her
 I told.

GRATIANO: Why then, I'll silence thee....
 (goes to kiss her, but is checked with studied civility)

NERISSA: Sir, you are full of tricks,
 but here is one for thee:
 I have sworn
 to keep my lady company -
 have sworn
 to put my trust
 where my mistress
 lies encas'd

GRATIANO: Nerissa, what folly!

NERISSA: Nay, in this am I wise

NERISSA/GRATIANO: So as we hope to thrive
 pray that thy/my master choose
 his casket well.
 Let him hazard all in love
 for all will lose,
 who do not rightly love
 none will choose
 over rightly choose
 who does not rightly love.

As they finish their duet they move towards the grand doorway. They open the doors just in time to hear PORTIA, and admit her and the impatient BASSANIO

PORTIA: I pray you tarry,
pause a day or two
before you hazard,
for in choosing wrong
I lose your company;
therefore
forbear a while

BASSANIO: O, Portia
let me choose.....

PORTIA: 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.....

PORTIA: O,
beshrew your eyes
they have O'er-looked me
and divided me:
one half of me is yours,
the other half yours -
mine own I would say:
but if mine then yours,
and so all yours.

BASSANIO: Let me choose
for as I am
I live upon the wrack...
O happy torment....
Promise me life
and I'll confess the truth

PORTIA: Confess and live

BASSANIO: 'Confess' and 'love'
is the sum of my confession.

PORTIA: Away then!
I am locked in one of them;
If you do love me,
you will find me out.
You will find me out.

BASSANIO: Promise me life.

PORTIA: Let music sound
while he doth
make his choice:
then if he lose,
he makes a swan-like end
fading in music.

All move away leaving BASSANIO alone by the caskets

PORTIA/NERISSA Live thou, I live (in a whisper)

BASSANIO:	So may the outward shows be least themselves, the world is still deceived by ornament: Therefore thou gaudy gold, hard food of Midas, I will none of thee; nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge 'tween man and man, But thou, thou meagre lead - thy paleness moves me more than eloquence! And here I choose.	<u>(While BASSANIO muses over the caskets this song)</u> Tell me where is fancy bred, or in the heart or in the head? How begot, how nourished? Reply, reply. It is engendered in the eyes, with gazing fed, and fancy dies in the cradle where it lies. Let us all ring fancy's knell, I'll begin it - Ding, dong, bell, ding, dong, bell.
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PORTIA: O love be moderate,
allay thy ecstasy;
in measure rain thy joy,
scant this excess -
I fee too much thy blessing:
make it less!

BASSANIO: (having received the key, opens the lead casket and
takes out a picture and scroll)
Fair Portia!
(He reads the scroll then moves to her)
Fair lady, by your leave (takes her hand)
I come by note to give and to receive;

I turn me where my lady is
and claim her with a loving kiss.

PORTIA: You see me lord Bassanio,
where I stand,
such as I am:
an unlesioned girl,
unschooled,
unpracticed;
happy in this,
she is not yet so old
but she may learn:
Happier in this,
she is not bred so dull
but she can learn:

Happiest of all
is that her gentle spirit
commits itself to yours
to be directed, as from her lord,
her governor,
her king.....(they kiss)
Myself and what is mine
to you and yours
is now converted.....

BASSANIO: Madam, you have bereft
me of all words.
Only my blood
speaks to you
in my veins.

PORTIA: This house, these servants,
and this same myself,
are yours - my lord's -
I give them with this ring,
which when you part from,
lose or give away,
let it presage the ruin
of your love.

BASSANIO: When this ring
parts from this finger,
then parts life from hence
O then be bold to say
Bassanio's dead.

Discreetly in the background NERISSA has been giving a ring to GRATIANO after watching BASSANIO choose the casket with a similar suspense to PORTIA's. During this scene more and more servants have crept quietly in to watch this out of the ordinary and impromptu "election"

NERISSA: (coming forward with GRATIANO, and leading a chorus)
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

- NERISSA/GRATIANO: And when your honours
mean to solemnize
the bargain of your faith,
I do beseech you, even at that time,
I may be married too.
- BASSANIO/PORTIA: With all my heart
so thou canst get a wife/husband
- NERISSA/GRATIANO: I thank your ladyship/lordship
you have got me one
- GRATIANO: My eyes, my lord
can look as swift as yours;
you saw the mistress,
I beheld the maid:
You loved, I loved
- NERISSA: Your fortune
stood upon the caskets
and so did mine:
You loved, I loved.
- PORTIA: Is this true, Nerissa?
- NERISSA: Madam, it is,
so you stand pleased
withal.
- BASSANIO/PORTIA: Our feast shall be much honoured
in your marriage.
- GRATIANO: But look who comes here
(Enter LORENZO and JESSICA, and SALERIO)
'Tis Lorenzo and his infidel.
- BASSANIO: And here is Salerio -
by your leave,
I bid my friends,
sweet Portia,
welcome.
- PORTIA: So do I, my lord,
they are entirely welcome.
- LORENZO: I thank your honour.
Salerio 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)
- GRATIANO: Nerissa, cheer yonder stranger,
and bid her welcome.
(NERISSA joins JESSICA and LORENZO)
Salerio -
What's the news from Venice?

- BASSANIO: (Reading the letter from ANTONIO)
"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:"
- PORTIA: (watching BASSANIO)
What steals the colour
from Bassanio's cheek -
some dear friend dead,
What, worse and worse!

O, Bassanio,
I am half yourself,
and I must freely have
the half of everything
this paper brings you.
- BASSANIO: O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the
unpleasantest words
that ever blotted paper
(Hands PORTIA the letter)
When I did first impart my love to you,
I told you
all the wealth I had
ran in my veins:
I should have told you then
that I was worse than nothing.
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
to feed my means.....
- JESSICA: My father!
- BASSANIO: Every word upon this paper
is a gaping wound
issuing my friend's blood.

But is it true, Salerio?
Have all his ventures failed?
- SALERIO: All, my lord,
and Shylock plies the Duke
at morning and at night
and doth impeach
the freedom of the state
if they deny him justice

JESSICA: O my father,
even so cruel for
justice.
I have heard him swear
that he would rather have
Antonio's flesh
than twenty times
the richest sum he's owed
If law, authority and power
deny it not
it will go hard
with poor Antonio.

BASSANIO: The dearest friend to me
the kindest man.

JESSICA/LORENZO/
GRATIANO/SALERIO: It will go hard
with poor Antonio.

CHORUS: The dearest friend,
the kindest man,
it will go hard
with poor Antonio.

PORTIA: (coming to the end of ANTONIO'S letter)
".....if your love do not persuade you to come
let not my letter"
O love, dispatch all business and be gone!
First go with me to church
and call me wife,
and then away to Venice to your friend.
You shall have gold,
nay twenty times that gold,
and when that debt is paid,
bring your true friend here.
Bid your friends welcome -
show a merry cheer.
Since you are dear bought,
I will love you dear.

BASSANIO: (To GRATIANO, SALERIO and LORENZO:)
Friends you are welcome
come join our marriage feast:
then 'twixt joy
and sadness we shall haste away
Antonio's debt to pay.

PORTIA: Come Nerissa,
I have work in hand.
Fetch Lorenzo hither
where I shall stand

NERISSA joins group with BASSANIO, Makes signs to LORENZO who goes to PORTIA
who is already with JESSICA

NERISSA/GRATIANO/
SALERIO/CHORUS:

Gladly we join your
marriage feast
then 'tween joy and sadness
you must haste away
we
Antonio's debt to pay.

PORTIA: Jessica and Lorenzo,
here you must stay
while my lord Bassanio
doth haste away,
Antonio's debt to pay

PORTIA:

Into your hands
I here commit
the husbandry
and manage of my house
until my lord return.

JESSICA/LORENZO:

Why madam, why?

PORTIA:

Nerissa and I, in secret and in prayer the while
shall live: there is a monastery, but two miles off,
and there will we abide until her husband's and my
lord's return.

LORENZO:

Madam, with all my heart I shall obey you:

JESSICA:

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend you:
We wish your ladyship all heart's content
(etc to the end)

BASSANIO:

The dearest friend, the kindest man
engaged unto his enemy.....

GRATIANO/NERISSA
SALERIO/CHORUS:

Make haste away
Antonio's debt to pay (etc.)

PORTIA:

(to NERISSA)
Nerissa we'll to Venice go
to plead for my husband's friend.
I'll send in haste to Padua,
to old Bellario,
and learn what can be done.

PORTIA/NERISSA:

We shall see our husbands
before they think of us,
and they shall see us,
but in such a habit
that they shall think
we are accomplished
with what we lack.

PORTIA:

Since you are dearly bought,
I will love you dear.
Come, come away.
It is our wedding day.

BASSANIO: Since I am dearly
bought I will love
you dear.

Act III

Characters in Act III:

Shylock
Antonio
Salerio
Bassanio
Gratiano
Solanio
The Duke of Venice
Portia (as a doctor of law)
Nerissa (as her clerk)
Chorus - magnificoes, lawyers,
court attendants

Venice : a court of Justice over which the Duke of Venice presides. For the early part of the Act only the front half of the stage is revealed: the interior of the court-room is hidden by a curtain or gauze which can be instantly withdrawn to effect a change of scene from an ante-room to the court itself. The curtain should suggest a sumptuous tapestry depicting the wealth, power and dignity of Venice.

Shylock stands alone, with his back to the audience, waiting for the court to assemble.

For the moment, in Shylock's mind Antonio and Venice are one.

SHYLOCK: Thou call'st me dog
 before thou hadst a cause,
 but since I am a dog
 beware,
 beware my fangs.

 I'll not be made a soft
 and dull-eyed fool;
 I'll not relent;
 I will not yield:
 not yield
 to Christian intercessors.

 Tell not me
 of mercy -
 not me.

Enter SOLANIO

SOLANIO: How now Shylock?
 Hast found thy daughter?

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

SOLANIO: That's certain -
 I knew the tailor
 that made the wings
 the wings she flew withal.

SHYLOCK: She's damned for it!

SOLANIO: That's certain, if the devil be her judge.....
 yet there was talk of her in Genoa.....

SHYLOCK: What, what?

SOLANIO: That she did spend
 in one night in Genoa
 four score ducats.

SHYLOCK: Fourscore! (turning away)
 I shall never see my gold again.
 Fourscore at a sitting.

SOLANIO: See Shylock,
 I have purchased me a ring

SHYLOCK: My turquoise!
 'Tis mine.

SOLANIO: Nay, Shylock mine.

SHYLOCK: Thou torturest me. How.....

SOLANIO: I had it of a man in Genoa
who had it of your daughter
your daughter for a monkey.

SHYLOCK: Thou stick'st a dagger in me.
It is my turquoise:
I had it of Leah
when I was a batchelor.
I would not have given it
for a wilderness of monkeys.

Enter ANTONIO and a gaoler

SHYLOCK: Ha!
This is the fool
that lent out money gratis.
(Turning to include SOLANIO in his remark)

SHYLOCK: The duke shall grant me justice,
I shall have my bond!

ANTONIO: Shylock, I pray thee hear me speak

SHYLOCK: I'll have no speaking:
I will have my bond. Gaoler, look to him

SOLANIO: Thou most impenetrable cur!

ANTONIO: Let him alone.
He seeks my life -
His reasons well I know.
These griefs and losses
have so baited me
that I shall easily spare
a pound of flesh
to this my bloody creditor

Pray God, Bassanio come -
come to see me pay my debt,
and then I care not.
He knows I only love the world for him.

SOLANIO: Fear not Antonio,
thou shalt be free:
the duke will never grant
this forfeiture to hold

ANTONIO: The duke cannot deny the course of Justice

SHYLOCK: Thou say'st it;
justice
(Enter BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO)
Aaaaaaah!

ANTONIO: Ah, sweet Bassanio!

BASSANIO: Antonio -
good cheer!
The Jew shall have my flesh,
blood, bones and all,
ere thou shalt lose for me
one drop of blood

ANTONIO: No Bassanio.
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 be better employed
Bassanio
than to live
and write mine epitaph

SALERIO, SOLANIO and GRATIANO have been talking apart

SOLANIO: 'Tis known abroad
Lorenzo and Jessica
have been prodigal.

SHYLOCK: I would that she were dead (aside)

SALERIO: I met them on the way
and brought them to Bassanio
to Belmont,
where we did leave them
with Bassanio's bride
the lady Portia

SHYLOCK: With these Christians! My own flesh!
My own flesh and blood
to rebel

SOLANIO: Out upon it old carrion!
Rebels it at these years?

GRATIANO: Speakest thou of flesh?

SHYLOCK: I say, my daughter is my own flesh....

GRATIANO: Then, Shylock say,
why wilt thou take his flesh -
Why Antonio's flesh?
What is that good for?

SHYLOCK: To bait fish withal.

A long shocked pause is interrupted by a trumpet announcing the arrival of the Duke. The curtain dividing the stage is opened to reveal the assembled court. The Duke stands beneath his throne

DUKE: Signior Antonio

ANTONIO: So please your grace

DUKE: I am sorry for thee;
thou art come to answer
a stony adversary.
On thy account
have I
sent unto Bellario,
that learned doctor of Padua
to determine this cause
'tween thee and Shylock

ANTONIO: Your grace hath ta'en great pains
to qualify his rigorous course;
but since he stands obdurate,
and since no lawful means
can carry me
out of his envy's reach,
I do oppose my patience
to his fury,
and am armed to suffer
with a quietness of spirit
the very tyranny and rage of his.

The DUKE goes up and takes his place

DUKE: Shylock

SHYLOCK: So please your grace

DUKE: Shylock,
the world thinks,
And I think so too,
That thou 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;
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew

SHYLOCK: I have possessed your grace of what I purpose,
and by our holy sabbath have I sworn
to have the due and forfeit of my bond

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

I am a Jew.
Hath not a Jew eyes?
hath not a Jew hands,
organs, dimensions,
senses, affections,
passions?
Fed with the same food,
hurt with the same weapons,
subject to the same diseases,
healed by the same means
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer,
as a Christian is?
If you prick us
do we not bleed?
If you tickle us
do we not laugh?
If you poison us
do we not die?
And if you wrong us,
shall we not revenge?
If we are like you in the rest,
we will resemble you in that.
If a Jew wrong a Christian,
what is his humility?
Revenge.
If a Christian wrong a Jew,
what should his sufferance be
by Christian example?
Why, revenge, Revenge.

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

SHYLOCK: What judgment should I dread,
doing no wrong?
The pound of flesh
which I demand of him
is dearly bought,
is mine
and I will have it.
If you deny me
fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
If you deny it,
let the danger light upon your charter
and the city's freedom

BASSANIO: For thy three thousand ducats
here is six.

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

ANTONIO: I pray you, think you
question with the Jew -
you may as well go stand upon the beach
and bid the main flood
bate his usual height;
you may as well use question
with the wolf
why he hath made the ewe
bleat for the lamb;
you may as well
forbid the mountain pines
to wag their high tops
and to make no noise
when they are fretted with
the gusts of heaven;
you may as well
do any thing most hard,
as seek to soften that
than which what's harder? -
his jewish heart.
Therefore I do beseech you
make no more offers,
use no further means:
let me have judgment
and the jew his will

SHYLOCK: I stand for judgment
Answer! Answer!
Shall I have it?

DUKE: Upon my power
I may dismiss this court.....

SALERIO: My lord, here stands without
a young doctor of law,
new come from Padua.

DUKE: Go, give him courteous conduct
to this place

A member of the court goes to fetch PORTIA into court

GRATIANO: Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK: To cut the forfeiture from that bankrout there

GRATIANO: No metan can -
no, not the hangman's axe
bear half the keenness
of thy sharp envy

SOLANIO: Can no prayers pierce thee?

SHYLOCK: No, none that you have wit enough to make

GRATIANO/SOLANIO/
SALERIO : O be thou damned!
inexorable dog!
For thy life let justice be accused!
Thy desires are wolvisish
bloody, starved and ravenous.

SHYLOCK: Till thou canst rail
the seal from off my bond
thou but offend'st thy
lungs to speak so loud
(to GRATIANO in particular)
repair thy wit, good youth,
or it will fall to cureless ruin

Enter PORTIA dressed as a doctor of law, with her NERISSA, as a clerk, with books etc.)

PORTIA: I stand here for law

DUKE: Give me your hand
Come you from old Bellario?

PORTIA: I did my lord.

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

PORTIA: I am fully informed 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 Venetian law cannot
impugn you
as you do proceed.
(to ANTONIO)
You stand within his danger,
do you not?

ANTONIO: Aye, so he says

PORTIA: Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO: I do

PORTIA: Then must the Jew be merciful

SHYLOCK: On what compulsion must I?
Tell me that

PORTIA: The quality of mercy is not strained -
It droppeth as the gentle rain
from heaven
upon the place beneath.
It is twice blest;
it blesseth him that gives
and him that takes.
It is an attribute to God himself,
and earthly power
doth then show likest God's
when mercy seasons justice
Though justice be thy plea,
consider, Jew,
that in the course of justice
none of us should see
salvation.

SHYLOCK: My deeps 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,
yes, twice the sum.
If that will not suffice
I will be bound to pay it ten times over.
If this will not suffice,
it must appear
that malice
bears down truth.
And I beseech you,
wrest once the law to your authority.
To do a great right
do a little wrong
and curb this cruel devil
of his will.

PORTIA: It must not be.
There is no power in Venice
can alter a decree established.
It cannot be.

SHYLOCK: A Daniel come to judgment!
O wise young judge,
how I do honour thee!

PORTIA: I pray you let me look upon the bond

SHYLOCK: Here 'til, most reverend doctor,
here it is.

PORTIA: Shylock, there's twice thy money offered thee

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

PORTIA: Why, this bond is forfeit;
and lawfully 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 him tear the bond.

SHYLOCK: When it is paid.
By my soul I swear
there is no power in the tongue of man
to alter me.
I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO: Most heartily I do beseech the court
to give the judgment

PORTIA: Why, then, thus it is;
you must prepare your bosom for the knife

SHYLOCK: O noble judge!
O excellent young man!

PORTIA: Therefore lay bear your bosom

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

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

SHYLOCK: I have them ready

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

SHYLOCK: Is it so nominated in the bond?

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

SHYLOCK: I cannot find it,
'Tis not in the bond

PORTIA: You,
merchant,
have you anything to say

ANTONIO: But little.
I am armed and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio;
Fare you well.
Grieve not that I am fallen
to this
for you.
Commend me
to your honourable wife.
Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
Say how I loved you;
speak me fair in death.
And when the tale is told,
bid her be judge
whether Bassanio had once a love.
Repent but you
that you shall lose your friend
and I repent not that I pay your debt;
with all my heart, with all my heart.

- BASSANIO: I am married to a wife
who is as dear to me as life itself;
but life itself,
my wife
and all the world
are not esteemed above thy life.
- PORTIA: Your wife would give you little thanks for that!
- BASSANIO: I would lose all,
aye sacrifice them all
here to this devil
to deliver you
- GRATIANO: I have a wife
whom I protest I love.
I would she were in heaven
so she could entreat
some power to change
this currish Jew
- NERISSA: 'Tis well you offer it
behind her back
- SHYLOCK: These be Christian husbands!
I have a daughter.....
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 the flesh from off his breast.
The law allows it,
and the court awards it.
- SHYLOCK: Most learned judge!
A sentence!
Come, prepare!
- PORTIA: Tarry a little;
there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here
no jot of blood;
the words expressly are 'a pound of flesh'
If thou doest shed
one drop of Christian blood
thy lands and goods
are confiscate.

- SHYLOCK: Is this the law?
- GRATIANO: O upright judge!
- PORTIA: Thyself shall see the act;
for as thou urgent justice.....
- SOLANIO: Mark, Jew!
- PORTIA: Be assured
thou shalt have justice
more than thou desir'st
- SALERIO: O mark, Jew, mark!
- GRATIANO: O learned judge!
- SHYLOCK: I take this offer, then.
Pay the bond thrice
and let the Christian go
- BASSANIO: Here is the money
- PORTIA: Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice
(GRATIANO, SOLANIO, SALERIO continue interjecting)
Soft, no haste;
He shall have nothing
but the penalty.
Therefore prepare thee
to cut off the flesh.
Shed thee no blood,
nor cut thou less nor more
but just a pound of flesh.
If thou tak'st more
or less than a just pound,
nay,
if the scales do turn
but in the estimation of a hair,
thou diest,
and all thy goods are confiscate.
- GRATIANO & OTHERS: A second Daniel!
A Daniel, Jew!
- PORTIA: Why doth the Jew pause?
Take thy forfeiture.
- SHYLOCK: Give me my principal
and let me go
- BASSANIO: I have it ready for thee;
here it is.

- PORTIA: He hath refused it
in the open court.
He shall have justice,
merely,
and his bond.
- SHYLOCK: Shall I have not barely my principal?
- PORTIA: Thou shalt have nothing
but thy forfeiture,
to be so taken at thy peril, Jew
- SHYLOCK: Why, then the devil
give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question
- PORTIA: Tarry Jew.
The law hath yet another hold on you.
If it be proved against an alien that
by direct
or indirect attempts
he seek the life
of any citizen,
the party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
shall seize one half his goods;
the other half
comes to the privy coffer of the state;
and the offender's life
lies in the mercy of the Duke
alone.
Down therefore,
and beg
beg mercy of the Duke.
- 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.
- SHYLOCK: Nay take my life an' 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
by which 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.....

SHYLOCK: You take my house.

ANTONIO: to render it
 upon his death
 unto the gentleman
 that lately stole his daughter

SHYLOCK: You take my life.

ANTONIO: Two things provided more:
 that for this favour
 he presently become a Christian

SHYLOCK: You take my life.

ANTONIO: 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
 I 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.
 (SHYLOCK leaves the stage)
 Antonio,
 gratify this gentleman,
 for in my mind
 you are much
 bound
 to him.

DUKE and officers of the court leave. There are a few moments of general congratulation. The curtain which divided the stage at the beginning of the act is again drawn so that PORTIA, NERISSA, left together in the ante-room of the court

BASSANIO/ANTONIO: Most worthy gentleman,
 I and my friend
 Have by your wisdom
 been this day acquitted
 of grievous penalties.
 Three thousand ducats
 due unto the Jew
 we freely cope
 your courteous pains withal.
 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.

 I pray you,
 know me,
 when we meet again.

BASSANIO to PORTIA/
GRATIANO to NERISSA Dear Sir,
 take some remembrance of us
 as a tribute,
 not a fee.
 I pray you
 do not deny me.

PORTIA: You press me far,
 and therefore I will yield.
 Give me your gloves;
 I'll wear them for your sake...
 (As BASSANIO removes his gloves revealing his ring.....)
 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.

NERISSA: And I from my husband
 shall try to get his ring

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

PORTIA/NERISSA: I will have nothing else,
but only this.

BASSANIO/GRATIANO: 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/NERISSA: That 'scuse serves
many men
to save their gifts

PORTIA: And if your wife be not a madwoman
and knew how well
I have deserved this ring,
she would not hold out enemy for ever.
Well, peace be with you!
(PORTIA and NERISSA move away)

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

BASSANIO: Gratiano,
go give the judge
this ring.....

PORTIA: Nerissa,
inquire the Jew's house
out,
give him this deed
and let him sign it.

GRATIANO: And I shall give mine.

BASSANIO: And bring him
if thou canst
unto Antonio's house

Come Antonio,
and in the morning
early shall we fly.

NERISSA: See, see,
we shall have the rings!

PORTIA: We'll away tonight
and a day before
our husbands will we be
in Belmont.

End of Act III

EPILOGUE

Characters in Epilogue:

LORENZO
JESSICA
PORTIA
BASSANIO
ANTONIO
GRATIANO
NERISSA

Stage Musicians

Belmont: The garden at night, with the moon rising. An entrance to the house is lit and musicians are playing within the house. LORENZO and JESSICA are wandering amorously through the garden.

LORENZO: The moon shines bright.
 In such a night as this.....

JESSICA: In such a night as this,
 when the sweet wind
 did gently kiss
 the trees
 and they did make
 no noise -

LORENZO: In such a night
 Troilus
 methinks
 mounted the Troyan wall,
 and sighed
 his soul
 toward the Grecian tents
 where Cressida lay that night.

JESSICA: In such a night
 stood Dido
 with a willow
 in her hand
 upon the wild sea banks,
 and waft her love
 to come again
 to Carthage.....

LORENZO: The sweet wind
 did gently kiss
 the trees
 and they did make
 no noise
 in such a night.....

JESSICA: In such a night
 Medea
 gathered
 the enchanted herbs
 that did renew
 old Aeson.

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

JESSICA: In such a night
 did young Lorenzo
 swear
 he loved her well,
 stealing her soul
 with vows
 and ne'er a true one.

LORENZO: In such a night
did pretty Jessica
like a little shrew
slander her love
and he forgave her.

LORENZO/JESSICA: How sweet the moonlight
sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit
and let the sounds
of music
creep
into our ears;
soft stillness and the night
become the touches of sweet harmony.

LORENZO: Look how the floor
of heaven
is thick inlaid
with patterns of bright gold;
there's not the smallest orb
but in his motion
like an angel sings,
such harmony is in immortal souls!

The MUSICIANS steal from the house and continue their playing among the trees

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

They listen for a while in silence to the music

JESSICA: I am never merry
when I hear sweet music

LORENZO: The reason is your spirits
are attentive:
the poet
did feign
that Orpheus drew trees,
stones, and floods,
since naught so stockish,
harsh,
and full of rage,
but music
for the time
doth change his nature.
Mark the music.

LORENZO and JESSICA, wrapt in the music and each other do not hear the approach of PORTIA and NERISSA, who come in quietly, wrapped in their travelling cloaks and carrying a bag of some sort to hold documents

PORTIA: That light we see
 is burning in my hall.
 How far that little candle
 throws his beams!
 Hark! Music!

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

PORTIA: Methinks it sounds
 much sweeter
 than by day

NERISSA: Silence
 bestows that virtue
 on it, madam.

PORTIA: Peace.
 The moon sleeps with Endymion
 and would not be awaked

She sees LORENZO and JESSICA, wishes them well, but in doing so, breaks the spell and establishes again wthe practical within the dream of Belmont.
Music on stage stops

LORENZO: That is the voice
 of Portia

PORTIA: He knows me as the blind man
 knows the cuckoo,
 by the bad voice

LORENZO/JESSICA: Dear lady, welcome home

PORTIA: We have been praying
 for our husbands' welfare.
 Are they returned?

LORENZO: Madam, they are not yet

PORTIA: Nerissa, go in -
 no word now
 of our being absent hence -
 nor you Lorenzo -
 Jessica, nor you

LORENZO/JESSICA: We are no tell-tales madam,
 fear you not

A tucket sounds

LORENZO: Your husband is at hand

NERISSA hastens back from the house, enter BASSANTIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO

PORTIA: You are welcome home my lord

GRATIANO and NERISSA move aside and talk privately

BASSANIO: I thank you madam.
Give welcome to my friend -
this is the man,
this is Antonio,
to whom I am
so infinitely bound.

PORTIA: Sir, you are very welcome
to our house:
it must appear
in other ways than words,
therefore I scant
this breathing courtesy.

GRATIANO: (suddenly erupting)
By yonder moon
I swear you do me wrong!

PORTIA: A quarrel, ho, already!

GRATIANO: In faith
I gave it to the judge's clerk

PORTIA: What's the matter?

GRATIANO: About a hoop of gold,
a paltry ring
that she did give me,
Whose posy
was for all the world
like cutler's poetry
upon a knife -
"Love me and leave me not"

NERISSA: What talk you of
the posy or the value?
You swore to me
that you would wear it
till your hour of death.
Though not for me
yet for your
vehement oaths
you should have kept it.

No, God's my judge,
the clerk will ne'er
wear hair
on's face that had it!

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

NERISSA: Aye, if a woman
 live to be a man

GRATIANO: Now by this hand,
 I gave it to a youth,
 a kind of boy,
 no higher than yourself,
 the Judge's clerk,
 a prating boy
 that begged it as a fee -
 I could not for my heart
 deny it him.

PORTIA: You were to blame
 to part so lightly
 with your wife's first gift
 In faith Gratiano
 you give your wife
 too unkind a cause
 for grief.
 And 'twere to me,
 I should be mad at it.

BASSANIO: I were best
 to cut my left hand off
 and swear I lost the
 ring defending it

GRATIANO: My lord Bassanio
 gave his ring
 unto the Judge
 that begged it,
 and deserved it, too.

PORTIA: What ring gave you my lord?
 Not that I hope
 which you received from 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
 into your bed
 until I see the ring!

NERISSA: Nor I in yours
till I again see mine!

GRATIANO: Nerissa!

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

PORTIA: If you had known
the virtues of the ring,
of half her worthiness
who gave the ring,
of your own honour
to contain the ring
you would not then
have parted with the ring -
you would not then have
parted with the ring

PORTIA: What man is there
that's so unreasonable,
if you with any terms of zeal
defends it,
would lack the modesty
to urge a thing
held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me
what to believe:
I'll die for it,
but some woman had the ring!

BASSANIO: No, by my honour madam! PORTIA: Yes, by heaven sir!

By my soul,
no woman had it,

By my soul,
a woman had it.

a civil doctor,
who did refuse
three thousand ducats
and begged the ring of me,
what should I say,
sweet lady?

PORTIA: Let not that doctor
come near my house,
since he has got the jewel
that I loved.

My honour would not let
ingratitude
besmear it.

Lie not a night from home,
watch me close

Pardon me, good lady!

For by these blessed
candles of the night,
had you been there,
you would have begged the ring
to give it the worthy doctor.

If I be left alone -
now by mine honour
which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor
for my bedfellow!

- NERISSA: Lie not a night from home,
watch me close -
for by mine honour
which is yet mine own,
if I be left alone,
I'll have that clerk
for my bedfellow
- GRATIANO: Well, do you so:
let me not take him then -
for if I do
I'll mar the young clerk's pen
- ANTONIO: I am the unhappy subject
of these quarrels
(He might sing this on several occasions during
the preceeding passages, unnoticed by the lovers)
- PORTIA: Sir, grieve you not:
you are welcome notwithstanding.
- BASSANIO
(echoed by GRATIANO): Portia, forgive me
this enforced wrong....
Nay, but hear me.
Pardon this fault,
and by my soul,
I swear
I never more
will break an oath with thee
- ANTONIO: I once did lend
my body
for his wealth,
which but for him
that had your husband's ring,
had quite miscarried.
I dare be bound again,
my soul,
my soul
upon the forfeit,
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 ring
- ANTONIO: Here, lord Bassanio,
swear to keep this ring

BASSANIO: It is the same I gave the doctor!

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

NERISSA: And pardon me,
my gentle Gratiano:
the same scrubbed boy,
the doctor's clerk,
in lieu of this,
last night did lie with
me
(returning ring to
GRATIANO)

GRATIANO: What, are we cuckolds
ere we have deserved?

PORTIA: Speak not so grossly!
You are all amazed.
Here is a letter:
read it at your leisure -
it comes from Padua,
from old Bellario,
there you shall find
that Portia was the doctor
Nerissa there her clerk
Antonio, you are welcome.
And here is better news
in store for you.
Unseal this letter soon.

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

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

PORTIA: Aye, the doctor,
and you knew me not.

NERISSA: Aye, but the clerk
that never means t 'o i

BASSANIO: Sweet doctor,
you shall be my bedfellow,
when I am absent,
then lie thou with my wife.

GRATIANO: A prating clerk,
shall be my bedfellow;
when I am absent,
then lie thou with my
wife.

ANTONIO: Sweet lady,
you have given me life
and living!
Here I read
three of my ships
have come safely to road

PORTIA: (to LORENZO and JESSICA who have moved away and slid from amusement at the quarrel to being absorbed in each other)

How now, Lorenzo?
My clerk hath some good comfort
too for you.

NERISSA: There, I do give to you
and Jessica
from the rich Jew
a special deed of gift.

LORENZO/JESSICA: Fair ladies,
you drop manna
in the way of starving people

PORTIA: You are welcome home, my lord.
You are welcome,
welcome, all.
Let us go in, and we will answer
all things faithfully.

Come, it is almost morning.

They go into the house; ANTONIO is left alone for a moment before the curtain falls

THE END

