

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.

*Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO,
 GRATIANO, SALANIO, and others.*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

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

Ant. I have heard
 Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
 His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
 And that no lawful means can carry me
 Out of his envy's 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.

Salan. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

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

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. 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?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
 And others, at the bagpipe; 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 render'd,
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
 Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
 Why he, a woollen bagpipe;
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty. 60

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:

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 70
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 fretten 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 farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will. 80

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats

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

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

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

You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you, 90
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?

Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer

'The slaves are ours': so do I answer you:

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 't is 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? 100

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.

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

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood. 110

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

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

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

[*Presenting a letter.*]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew, 120
Thou makest thy knife keen: but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

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

Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves 130
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

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

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend 140
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

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

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

Clerk. [Reads] Your grace shall understand that at the
receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that
your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a
young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted
him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and
Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together:
he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his
own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough com-
mend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your
grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of
years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation;
for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave
him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better
publish his commendation. 160

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws.

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.

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

Por. I am informed throughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name. 170

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

Yet in such rule that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven 180
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's 190
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond. 200

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;

Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,

I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er;

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:

If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,

Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong, 210
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:

'T will be recorded for a precedent,

And many an error by the same example

Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!

O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

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

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is. 220

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:

Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim

Amol

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.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
 It doth appear you are a worthy judge; 230
 You know the law, your exposition
 Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
 Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
 Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
 There is no power in the tongue of man
 To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
 To give the judgement.
Por. Why then, thus it is:
 You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man! 240
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
 Hath full relation to the penalty,
 Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
 How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast:
 So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
 'Nearest his heart': those are the very words.
Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
 The flesh? 250
Shy. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
 To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that?
 'T were good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.
Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?
Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
 Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
 Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you; 260
 For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
 Than is her custom: it is still her use
 To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
 To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
 An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
 Of such misery doth she cut me off.
 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 270
 Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
 Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
 And he repents not that he pays your debt;
 For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
 I'll pay it presently with all my heart.
Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
 Which is as dear to me as life itself;
 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 280
 Here to this devil, to deliver you.
Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
 If she were by, to hear you make the offer.
Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
 I would she were in heaven, so she could
 Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.
Ner. 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
 The wish would make else an unquiet house.
Shy. These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
 Would any of the stock of Barrabas 290
 Had been her husband rather than a Christian. [Aside.
 We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
 The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. Most rightful judge!
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
 The law allows it, and the court awards it.
Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!
Por. Tarry a little; there is something else.
 This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood; 300
 The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh':
 Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
 But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
 One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
 Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
 Unto the state of Venice.
Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!
Shy. Is that the law?
Por. Thyself shalt see the act:
 For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
 Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest. 310
Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Of the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

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

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

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

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he did contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life

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Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;

Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;

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

Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shy. 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.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

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

Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,

I am content,—so he will let me have

The other half in use,—to render it,

Upon his death, unto the gentleman

That lately stole his daughter:

Two things provided more, that, for this favour,

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd of

Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

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

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,

And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,

To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [Exit Shylock.]

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

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,

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And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman, 400
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.
[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*]

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

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

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied 410
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.

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

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield. 419
[*To Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Bass.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

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

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

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation: 430
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

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

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

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring, 440
She would not hold out enemy for ever,

For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*]

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

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste. [*Exit Gratiano.*]
Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both 450
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same. A street.*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

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

Enter GRATIANO.

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

Por. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore, 10
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

Gra. That will I do.

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

Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have 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.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house? 15
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA.

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

Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. 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.

Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

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

Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

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

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you,
friend?

Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lor. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lor. Who calls? 40

Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

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

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in? 50

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air. [Exit Stephano.

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

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

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

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music. [Music.]

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive: 70

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
 Which is the hot condition of their blood;
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
 By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods; 80
 Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
 But music for the time doth change his nature.
 The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night
 And his affections dark as Erebus:
 Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
 How far that little candle throws his beams!
 So shines a good deed in a naughty world. 90

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

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king
 Until a king be by, and then his state
 Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
 Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

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

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

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
 When neither is attended, and I think
 The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought
 No better a musician than the wren.
 How many things by season season'd are
 To their right praise and true perfection!
 Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
 And would not be awaked.

[*Music ceases.*

Lor. That is the voice,
 Or I am much deceived, of Portia. 110

Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
 By the bad voice.

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
 Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
 Are they return'd?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
 But there is come a messenger before,
 To signify their coming.

Por. Go in, Nerissa;
 Give order to my servants that they take
 No note at all of our being absent here; 120
 Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds.*]

Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
 We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
 It looks a little paler: 't is a day,
 Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
 If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
 For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
 And never be Bassanio so for me:
 But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
 This is the man, this is Antonio,
 To whom I am so infinitely bound.

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

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
 It must appear in other ways than words, 140
 Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

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

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

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

Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
 You swore to me, when I did give it you, 150

That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, 160
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.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And riveted with faith unto your flesh.

I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it 170
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An't were to me, I should be mad at it.

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

Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine; 180
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

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

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

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring, 190
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it 200
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away; 210
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;

For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. 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. 220

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself; 230
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

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

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this 240
And bid him keep it better than the other.

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

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

Por. I had it of him. 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 250
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.

Ant. I am dumb.

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

Ant. Sweet lady you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships 260
Are safely come to road.

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

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

There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

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

Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied 270
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

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

NOTES.

Act I.—Scene I.

How Bassanio, a scholar and a soldier, tells the merchant, Antonio, of his purpose to win Portia, the heiress of Belmont; and how Antonio undertakes to find the money to fit out a ship for him.

The early scenes of Shakespeare's plays serve both to introduce the foremost persons of the action, and to give a foretaste of the kind of tale that is to follow. Fine instances of his art in 'overture' are the beginnings of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

Here, we begin by making the acquaintance of the Merchant of Venice himself and of two of his friends, who appear to be courtiers or soldiers. Antonio is out of spirits, and his melancholy is ominous—

"By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
Ensuing dangers" (*Richard III.*, ii. 3. 42).

His anxious words, together with the description by the others of a merchant's risks, suggest the coming trouble. At the same time their solicitude and kindness are prompted by a touch of the same loyal friendship by which that trouble is to be remedied.

Later, we are also introduced to Bassanio and certain of his companions. Immediately upon this the threefold action of the plot begins with Bassanio's story of his hopes of Portia, with Lorenzo's agreement to meet Bassanio 'after dinner', and with Antonio's promise to raise money.

8. Scan this line, and note the word which has a different pronunciation from the modern. Compare 'óbscure', ii. 7. 51, 'aspéct', ii. 1. 8.

13. The little ships feel the motion of the waves, and seem to bob and curtsy to the big, steady galleys of Antonio.

15. had I such venture forth. Put this expression along with i. 1. 143, "to find the other forth", and ii. 5. 11, "I am bid forth to supper", and explain the meaning of the adverb.

16. affections in Shakespeare's time had a wider sense than in modern English, and included all feelings or emotions; so also in iv. 1. 49.