

3-2-1-1-3-6-1-1-3-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE DUKE OF VENICE  
 THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO } . . . . Suitors to Portia  
 THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON }  
 ANTONIO . . . . . A merchant of Venice  
 BASSANIO . . . . . His friend, suitor likewise to Portia  
 SALANIO }  
 SALARINO } . . . . Friends to Antonio and Bassanio  
 GRATIANO }  
 LORENZO . . . . . In love with Jessica  
 SHYLOCK . . . . . A rich Jew  
 TUBAL . . . . . A Jew, his friend  
 LAUNCELOT GOBBO . . . The clown, servant to Shylock  
 OLD GOBBO . . . . . Father to Launcelot  
 LEONARDO . . . . . Servant to Bassanio  
 BALTHASAR }  
 STEPHANO } . . . . . Servants to Portia  
 PORTIA . . . . . A rich heiress  
 NERISSA . . . . . Her waiting-maid  
 JESSICA . . . . . Daughter to Shylock

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice,  
 Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants

SCENE—Partly at VENICE, and partly at BELMONT,  
 the seat of Portia, on the Continent

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

SCENE I—*Venice. A street*

*Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

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

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

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*Salan.* Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,  
 The better part of my affections would  
 Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still  
 Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,  
 Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;  
 And every object that might make me fear  
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt  
 Would make me sad.

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*Salar.* My wind cooling my broth

Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
 What harm a wind too great at sea might do.  
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,  
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,  
 And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,  
 Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs  
 To kiss her burial. Should I go to church  
 And see the holy edifice of stone, 30  
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,  
 Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,  
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,  
 And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought  
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought  
 That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?  
 But tell not me; I know, Antonio  
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise. 40

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

*Salar.* Why, then you are in love.

*Ant.* Fie, fie!

*Salar.* Not in love neither? Then let us say  
 you are sad,

Because you are not merry: and 't were as easy  
 For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,  
 Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed  
 Janus, 50

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:

Some that will evermore peep through their eyes  
 And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,  
 And other of such vinegar aspect  
 That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,  
 Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

*Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO*

*Salar.* Here comes Bassanio, your most noble  
 kinsman,

Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:  
 We leave you now with better company.

*Salar.* I would have stay'd till I had made you  
 merry, 60

If worthier friends had not prevented me.

*Ant.* Your worth is very dear in my regard.

I take it, your own business calls on you  
 And you embrace the occasion to depart.

*Salar.* Good morrow, my good lords.

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

You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

*Salar.* We'll make our leisures to attend on  
 yours. [*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*]

*Lor.* My Lord Bassanio, since you have found  
 Antonio,

We two will leave you: but at dinner-time, 70  
 I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

*Bass.* I will not fail you.

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

*Ant.* I hold the world but as the world,  
Gratiano;

A stage where every man must play a part, x  
And mine a sad one.

*Gra.* Let me play the fool:  
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come, 80  
And let my liver rather heat with wine  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice  
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio —  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks —  
There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,  
And do a wilful stillness entertain, 90  
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,  
As who should say "I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"  
O my Antonio, I do know of these  
That therefore only are reputed wise  
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn those  
ears  
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers  
fools.

I'll tell thee more of this another time: 100  
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,  
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.  
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:  
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,  
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

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

*Ant.* Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear. 110

*Gra.* Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only com-  
mendable

In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*]

*Ant.* Is that any thing now?

*Bass.* Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of noth-  
ing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons  
are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of  
chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them,  
and when you have them, they are not worth the  
search.

*Ant.* Well, tell me now what lady is the same  
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage, 120  
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

*Bass.* 'T is not unknown to you, Antonio,  
How much I have disabled mine estate,  
By something showing a more swelling port  
Than my faint means would grant continuance:  
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged  
From such a noble rate; but my chief care  
Is to come fairly off from the great debts  
Wherein my time something too prodigal  
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio, 130  
I owe the most, in money and in love,  
And from your love I have a warranty

To unburden all my plots and purposes  
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

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

*Bass.* In my school-days, when I had lost one  
shaft,

I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
The self-same way with more advised watch,  
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both  
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,  
Because what follows is pure innocence.  
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,  
That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
To shoot another arrow that self way  
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
As I will watch the aim, or to find both  
Or bring your latter hazard back again  
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

*Ant.* You know me well, and herein spend but  
time

To wind about my love with circumstance;  
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong  
In making question of my uttermost  
Than if you had made waste of all I have:  
Then do but say to me what I should do  
That in your knowledge may by me be done,  
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

*Bass.* In Belmont is a lady richly left;  
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,

Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes  
I did receive fair speechless messages:  
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:  
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,  
For the four winds blow in from every coast  
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks  
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;  
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,  
And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
O my Antonio, had I but the means  
To hold a rival place with one of them,  
I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
That I should questionless be fortunate!

*Ant.* Thou know'st that all my fortunes are  
at sea;

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

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

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

*Por.* By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is  
awearry of this great world.

*Ner.* You would be, sweet madam, if your  
miseries were in the same abundance as your good

fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

*Por.* Good sentences and well pronounced.

*Ner.* They would be better, if well followed.

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

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

*Por.* I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

*Ner.* First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

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

*Ner.* Then there is the County Palatine.

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

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

*Por.* God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

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

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

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

*Por.* That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

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

*Por.* Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

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

*Por.* Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that

temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

*Ner.* You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with <sup>110</sup> their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

*Por.* If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and <sup>120</sup> I pray God grant them a fair departure.

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

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

*Ner.* True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best <sup>130</sup> deserving a fair lady.

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

*Enter a Serving-man*

How now! what news?

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

from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

*Por.* If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before. Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III — Venice. A public place

*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK*

*Shy.* Three thousand ducats; well.

*Bass.* Ay, sir, for three months.

*Shy.* For three months; well.

*Bass.* For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

*Shy.* Antonio shall become bound; well.

*Bass.* May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

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

*Bass.* Your answer to that.

*Shy.* Antonio is a good man.

*Bass.* Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

*Shy.* Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis,

another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

*Bass.* Be assured you may.

*Shy.* I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

*Bass.* If it please you to dine with us.

*Shy.* Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

40

*Enter ANTONIO*

*Bass.* This is Signior Antonio.

*Shy.* *[Aside]* How like a fawning publican he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian,  
But more for that in low simplicity  
He lends out money gratis and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.  
If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,  
Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,  
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,  
If I forgive him!

*Bass.* Shylock, do you hear?

*Shy.* I am debating of my present store,  
And, by the near guess of my memory,  
I cannot instantly raise up the gross  
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?  
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months  
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good  
signior;

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

*Ant.* Shylock, although I neither lend nor  
borrow

By taking nor by giving of excess,  
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd  
How much ye would?

*Shy.* Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

*Ant.* And for three months.

*Shy.* I had forgot; three months; you told  
me so.

Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear  
you;

Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow  
Upon advantage.

*Ant.* I do never use it.

*Shy.* When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's  
sheep —

This Jacob from our holy Abram was,  
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,  
The third possessor; ay, he was the third —

*Ant.* And what of him? did he take interest?

*Shy.* No, not take interest, not, as you would  
say,

Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.

When Laban and himself were compromised  
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied so  
Should fall as Jacob's hire,  
The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands  
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,  
Who then conceiving did in eaning time  
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.  
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest: 90  
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

*Ant.* This was a venture, sir, that Jacob  
served for;

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.  
Was this inserted to make interest good?  
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

*Shy.* I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:  
But note me, signior.

*Ant.* Mark you this, Bassanio,

\* The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.  
An evil soul producing holy witness  
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,  
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:  
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

*Shy.* Three thousand ducats; 't is a good round  
sum.



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

*Ant.* Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to  
you?

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

*Ant.* I am as like to call thee so again,  
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.  
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not  
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take

A breed for barren metal of his friend?  
But lend it rather to thine enemy,  
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face  
Exact the penalty.

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

*Bass.* This were kindness.

*Shy.* This kindness will I show.  
Go with me to a notary, seal me there  
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,  
If you repay me not on such a day,  
In such a place, such sum or sums as are  
Express’d in the condition, let the forfeit  
Be nominated for an equal pound  
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken  
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

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

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

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

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

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

*Ant.* Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

*Shy.* Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;  
 Give him direction for this merry bond,  
 And I will go and purse the ducats straight,  
 See to my house, left in the fearful guard  
 Of an unthrifty knave, and presently  
 I will be with you.

*Ant.* Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*  
 The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

*Bass.* [I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.]

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

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II

SCENE I—*Belmont.* A room in PORTIA'S house

*Flourish of cornets.* Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO  
 and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending

*Mor.* Mislike me not for my complexion,  
 The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,  
 To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.  
 Bring me the fairest creature northward born,  
 Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,

And let us make incision for your love,  
 To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.  
 I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine  
 Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear  
 The best-regarded virgins of our clime  
 Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,  
 Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

*Por.* In terms of choice I am not solely led  
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;  
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny  
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing!  
 But if my father had not scanted me  
 And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself  
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,  
 Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair  
 As any comer I have look'd on yet  
 For my affection.

*Mor.* Even for that I thank you:  
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets  
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar  
 That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince  
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,  
 I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,  
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,  
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,  
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,  
 To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!  
 If Hercules and Lichas play at dice  
 Which is the better man, the greater throw  
 May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:  
 So is Alcides beaten by his page;  
 And so may I, blind fortune leading me,