DOVER · THRIFT · EDITIONS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Merchant of Venice



The RSC Shakespeare

Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen
Chief Associate Editors: Héloïse Sénéchal and Jan Sewell
Associate Editors: Trey Jansen, Eleanor Lowe, Lucy Munro,
Dee Anna Phares

The Merchant of Venice

Textual editing: Eric Rasmussen
Introduction and Shakespeare's Career in the Theater: Jonathan Bate
Commentary: Eleanor Lowe and Héloïse Sénéchal
Scene-by-Scene Analysis: Esme Miskimmin
In Performance: Karin Brown (RSC stagings), Peter Kirwan (overview)
The Director's Cut and Playing Shylock (interviews by Jonathan Bate and Kevin Wright):
David Thacker, Darko Tresnjak; Antony Sher, Henry Goodman

Editorial Advisory Board

Gregory Doran, Chief Associate Director,
Royal Shakespeare Company
Jim Davis, Professor of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick, UK
Charles Edelman, Senior Lecturer, Edith Cowan University,
Western Australia
Lukas Erne, Professor of Modern English Literature,
Université de Genève, Switzerland
Jacqui O'Hanlon, Director of Education, Royal Shakespeare Company
Akiko Kusunoki, Tokyo Woman's Christian University, Japan
Ron Rosenbaum, author and journalist, New York, USA
James Shapiro, Professor of English and Comparative Literature,
Columbia University, USA
Tiffany Stern, Professor and Tutor in English, University of Oxford, UK

The RSC Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

Introduction by Jonathan Bate



The Modern Library
New York

CONTENTS

Introduction
- "Which Is the Merchant Here?"
- "In Belmont Is a Lady Richly Left"
- "… And Which the Jew?"

About the Text

Key Facts

The Merchant of Venice

Textual Notes

Scene-by-Scene Analysis

***The Merchant of Venice* in Performance: The RSC and Beyond**
- Four Centuries of *The Merchant*: An Overview
- At the RSC
- The Director's Cut: Interviews with David Thacker and Darko Tresnjak
- Playing Shylock: Interviews with Antony Sher and Henry Goodman

Shakespeare's Career in the Theater
- Beginnings
- Playhouses
- The Ensemble at Work
- The King's Man

Shakespeare's Works: A Chronology

Further Reading and Viewing

References

Acknowledgments and Picture Credits

INTRODUCTION

"WHICH IS THE MERCHANT HERE?"

In the summer of 1598, Shakespeare's acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, registered their right to allow or disallow the printing of "a book of the Merchant of Venice or otherwise called the Jew of Venice." They seem to have been a little bit uncertain as to what they should call their new play. Or perhaps they were anxious to forestall any unauthorized publisher from producing a volume called "The Jew of Venice" and passing it off as their play. Christopher Marlowe's comi-tragic farce *The Jew of Malta* had been one of the biggest box-office hits of the age, so an echo of its title would have been an attractive proposition.

Fourteen comedies were collected by Shakespeare's fellow actors in the First Folio of his complete plays, published after his death. The majority of them had titles evocative of an idea (*All's Well That Ends Well*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) or a time of year (*Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Winter's Tale*). Two of them indicate a group of characters in a particular place: gentlemen of Verona in one case, merry wives of Windsor in the other. One suggests a character type: *The Taming of the Shrew*. In the light of these patterns, it would have been reasonable to name the comedy registered in 1598 after an idea—Bassanio's successful quest for Portia is a case of "Love's Labour's Won," Portia's judgment on Shylock metes out "Measure for Measure." It would also have been reasonable to indicate a group of characters in a particular place: "The Merchants of Venice" (Bassanio, Lorenzo, Gratiano, Salerio, and Solanio are all merchants of one kind or another). Or it would have been possible to suggest a character type: "The Taming of the Jew."

In 1600 the play was published with a title page intended to whet the prospective reader's appetite: *The most excellent History of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreme cruelty of Shylock the Jew towards the said*

Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh, and the obtaining of Portia by the choice of three chests. The character of Shylock and the courtship of Portia by Bassanio were clearly considered to be the play's principal selling points, and yet it is "the merchant," Antonio, who gets the top line of the title to himself, a unique distinction in the Folio corpus of Shakespearean comedy (his only rival in this regard is "the shrew" in her play, but "the taming" implicitly gives equal weight to her antagonist, the tamer). Given that Antonio has this unique distinction, one would have expected him to be the central focus of the action. Yet in no other Shakespearean play does the titular character have such a small role: Portia's is much the largest part, followed by Shylock and then Bassanio. Antonio is no more prominent in the dialogue than his friends Gratiano and Lorenzo. Ask a class of students "Who *is* the merchant of Venice?" and they will hesitate a moment—as they will not when asked who is the Prince of Denmark or the Moor of Venice.

The part almost seems to be deliberately underwritten. "In sooth I know not why I am so sad," says Antonio in the very first line of the play. His friends suggest some possible reasons: he is worried about his merchandise, or perhaps he is in love. Antonio denies both, proposing instead that to play the melancholy man is simply his given role in the theater of the world. Intriguingly, Shakespeare gives the name "Antonio" to discontented characters in two other plays. One is Sebastian's nautical companion in *Twelfth Night*, who keeps company with his friend day and night, even risks his own life for him, only to be ignored when Sebastian finds the love of a good woman. The other is Prospero's usurping brother in *The Tempest*, who has no wife or child of his own and who is again marginalized at the end of the play.

Some productions have explored the sense of exclusion associated with the Antonio figures by suggesting that they are made melancholy by unrequited homoerotic desire. Probably the first critic to identify this possibility as a hidden key to *The Merchant of Venice* was the (homosexual) poet W. H. Auden. In a dazzling essay called "Brothers and Others" (included in his volume of criticism *The Dyer's Hand*, 1962), Auden deftly identified Antonio as "a man whose emotional life, though his conduct may be chaste, is concentrated upon a member of his own sex." Auden wondered if Antonio's feelings for Bassanio were somewhat

akin to those suggested by the closing couplet of Shakespeare's twentieth sonnet, addressed to a beautiful young man: "But since she [Nature] pricked thee out for women's pleasure, / Mine be thy love, and my love's use their treasure." The idea that the love of man for man may have an unrivaled spiritual intensity, whereas the congress of man and woman is bound up with breeding and property, has a long history.

It is Antonio rather than Bassanio, Auden suggests, who embodies the words on Portia's leaden casket: "'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'" Antonio is prepared to give and hazard his own flesh as bond in the deal with Shylock that will provide Bassanio with the financial capital he needs in order to speculate on the marriage market. In Auden's view, this creates a strange correspondence between the merchant and the Jew: "Shylock, however unintentionally, did, in fact, hazard all for the sake of destroying the enemy he hated; and Antonio, however unthinkingly he signed the bond, hazarded all to secure the happiness of the man he loved." By setting Antonio's life as a forfeit, Antonio and Shylock enter into a bond that places them outside the normative rule of law that regulates society. Auden speculatively notes the "association of sodomy with usury" that can be traced back to Dante's *Inferno*.

Whether or not it is appropriate to invoke the idea of sexual transgression, Shakespeare often returned to a triangular structure of relationships in which close male friendship is placed at odds with desire for a woman. The pattern recurs not only in several of the plays but also as the implied narrative of the Sonnets. *The Merchant of Venice* begins with Bassanio seeking to borrow from his friend in order to finance the pursuit of a wealthy lover. He sets himself up as a figure from classical mythology: Jason in pursuit of the Golden Fleece. The analogy establishes Gratiano and Lorenzo as fellow Argonauts. Jason was renowned for being clever and brave, but also selfish and materialistic. His pattern of behavior was to gain the assistance of a woman—Ariadne, Medea—in realizing his ambitions, to become her lover and then to desert her and move on to a new adventure. With Jason as his role model, Bassanio has the potential to join the company of those other lovers in Shakespearean comedy—Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well*—who are not worthy of the women

they obtain.

To make such comparisons is to see that *The Merchant of Venice* is one of Shakespeare's darker comedies. The blurring of perspectives between the romantic and the sinister is especially apparent in the beautiful but ironic love-duet of Lorenzo and Jessica at the beginning of the final act. They compare themselves to some oft-sung partners from the world of classical mythology. But what kind of exemplary figures are these? Cressida, who was unfaithful to Troilus; Medea the poisoner; Thisbe, whose tragical fate, though comically represented in the Mechanicals' play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was identical to Juliet's; and Dido, whom Aeneas deserted in his quest for imperial glory. They are all figures in the pantheon of tragedy, not comedy.

The cleverness that Bassanio shares with the mythological figure of Jason is apparent from his choice of casket. Portia's late father has devised a simple test to find her the right husband: those suitors who choose the golden or silver caskets are clearly motivated by desire for wealth and must therefore want to marry her for her money. The man who chooses lead obviously does not care about cash, so he is likely to love Portia for herself alone. Bassanio, however, recognizes that appearances are not to be trusted. Venice, sixteenth-century Europe's preeminent city of commercial exchange and conspicuous consumption, has taught him that credit allows a man to display himself above his means. He does not want to look like a fortune hunter when wooing Portia, so he borrows from Antonio in order to dress like a wealthy man: "By something showing a more swelling port / Than my faint means would grant continuance." He chooses the lead casket because he knows from his own example that "outward shows" may be least themselves and that the world is easily deceived "with ornament." Gold, he reasons, is for greedy Midas, so he spurns it—this is what he imagines Portia wants to hear. He is, of course, assisted by the hint she drops for his benefit; whereas Morocco and Aragon had to make their choice in silence, Bassanio's is heralded by a song that warns against trusting what appears to "the eyes." And yet the fact remains that Bassanio is driven by the quest for a wealthy spouse. Antonio is the one who really cares about love more than money, about the "bond" of friendship more than the legal and financial bond, about what is "dear" to his heart more than

what is “dear” in the sense of expensive. For Shakespeare’s audience, the words “merchant” and “Venice” were both synonymous with the pursuit of money, but paradoxically, Antonio is, of all the characters in the play, the one who is least bound to material possessions.

“IN BELMONT IS A LADY RICHLY LEFT”

Shortly after the Second World War, the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye published a short essay that inaugurated the modern understanding that Shakespeare’s comedies, for all their lightness and play, are serious works of art, every bit as worthy of close attention as his tragedies. Entitled “The Argument of Comedy,” it proposed that the essential structure of Shakespearean comedy was ultimately derived from the “new comedy” of ancient Greece, which was mediated to the Renaissance via its Roman exponents Plautus and Terence. The “new comedy” pattern, described by Frye as “a comic Oedipus situation,” turned on “the successful effort of a young man to outwit an opponent and possess the girl of his choice.” The girl’s father, or some other authority figure of the older generation, resists the match, but is outflanked, often thanks to an ingenious scheme devised by a clever servant, perhaps involving disguise or flight (or both). Frye, writing during Hollywood’s golden age, saw an unbroken line from the classics to Shakespeare to modern romantic comedy: “The average movie of today is a rigidly conventionalized New Comedy proceeding toward an act which, like death in Greek tragedy, takes place offstage, and is symbolized by the final embrace.”

The union of the lovers brings “a renewed sense of social integration,” expressed by some kind of festival at the climax of the play—a marriage, a dance, or a feast. All right-thinking people come over to the side of the lovers, but there are others “who are in some kind of mental bondage, who are helplessly driven by ruling passions, neurotic compulsions, social rituals, and selfishness.” Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Jaques in *As You Like It*, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*: Shakespearean comedy frequently includes a party pooper, a figure who refuses to be assimilated into the harmony.

Frye’s “The Argument of Comedy” pinpoints a pervasive structure:

"the action of the comedy begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world." But for Shakespeare, the green world, the forest and its fairies, is no less real than the court. Frye, again, sums it up brilliantly:

> This world of fairies, dreams, disembodied souls, and pastoral lovers may not be a "real" world, but, if not, there is something equally illusory in the stumbling and blinded follies of the "normal" world, of Theseus' Athens with its idiotic marriage law, of Duke Frederick and his melancholy tyranny [in *As You Like It*], of Leontes and his mad jealousy [in *The Winter's Tale*], of the Court Party with their plots and intrigues. The famous speech of Prospero about the dream nature of reality applies equally to Milan and the enchanted island. We spend our lives partly in a waking world we call normal and partly in a dream world which we create out of our own desires. Shakespeare endows both worlds with equal imaginative power, brings them opposite one another, and makes each world seem unreal when seen by the light of the other.*

The Merchant of Venice offers an exceptionally interesting set of variations on this pattern. The "new comedy" pattern of the lover getting his girl against the will of her father is there in the Lorenzo and Jessica plot. There is a (not so clever) servant in the form of Lancelet Gobbo. And there is a striking structural movement between two worlds. However, instead of the usual court or paternal household, the normative world, represented by Venice, is that of money and commercial exchange. Portia's rural estate in "Belmont," which means "beautiful mountain," stands in for the "green" world of wood or forest or pastoral community. Productions often portray it as an Arcadian realm of ease, integrity, and self-discovery that stands in contrast to the hard-nosed commerce of the duplicitous city. But although Belmont has an aura of magic and of music, it is not really a dream world.

Portia has been attracted to Bassanio for some time: he has previously visited Belmont in the guise of "a scholar and a soldier" in the retinue of another suitor. But it is when he reasons against gold that love takes her over, banishing all other emotions. She responds with a beautifully

articulated self-revelation: ignore my riches, virtues, beauty, status, she says: “the full sum of me / Is sum of nothing, which to term in gross / Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractisèd.” Yet even in rejecting the notion that people should be measured by the size of their bank balances, she cannot avoid using the language of money that suffuses the whole play (“sum,” “gross”). The lesson of Belmont is actually a cynical one: choose wealth and you won’t get it, appear to reject it and it will be yours. The Prince of Morocco, who takes things at face value, is roundly rejected. It will not be the last time that Shakespeare pits an honest Moor against a world of Italian intrigue.

For all their fine words, both Bassanio and Portia are engaged in “practice,” a word that the Elizabethans associated with the figure of Machiavelli, archetypal Italianate schemer for self-advancement. Bassanio *is* the gold-digger he pretends not to be, while Portia has no intention of letting any man become “her lord, her governor, her king” in the way that she says she will. At the end of her submission speech, she gives Bassanio the ring (symbol of both wealth and marital union) that will later be the device whereby she tricks him and thus establishes her position as the dominant partner in the relationship. She may speak about giving him all her property—which is what marriage meant according to the law of the time—but when she returns from Venice to Belmont at the end of the play she continues to speak of “*my* house” and the light “burning in *my* hall.”

As for Portia’s claim that she is “unlessoned” and “unschooled,” this is wholly belied by her bravura performance in the cross-dressed role of Balthasar, interpreting the laws of Venice with forensic skill that reduces the duke and his magnificoes to amazement. On leaving Belmont, she says that she and Nerissa will remain in a nunnery, the ultimate place of female confinement, until Bassanio’s financial difficulties are resolved. She actually goes to the public arena of the Venetian court, moving from passive (the woman wooed) to active (the problem solver). In the robes of a lawyer instead of those of a nun, she excels in the art of debate, deploying a rhetorical art calculated to delight Queen Elizabeth, who loved nothing more than to outmaneuver courtiers, diplomats, and suitors in the finer points of jurisprudence and theology.

“The quality of mercy is not strained”: the quality of Portia’s argument

(and Shakespeare's writing) unfolds from the several meanings of "strained." Mercy is not constrained or forced, it must be freely given; nor is it partial or selective—it is a pure distillation like "the gentle rain from heaven," not the kind of liquid from which impure particles can be strained out. As in *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare explores the tension between justice and mercy, here interpreted in terms of the opposition between the Old Testament Jewish law of "an eye for an eye" and Christ's New Testament covenant of forgiveness. When Shylock refuses to show mercy and stands by the old covenant, Portia's art is to throw his legal literalism back in his face: the corollary of his demand for an exact pound of flesh is that he should not spill a drop of Venetian blood. But if the quality of mercy is not strained, then neither should be that of conversion: a bitter taste is left when Shylock is constrained to become a Christian.

"… AND WHICH THE JEW?"

Commerce, with which Venice was synonymous, depends on borrowing to raise capital. Christianity, however, disapproved of usury, the lending of money with interest. The Jewish moneylender was early modern Europe's way out of this impasse. Venice was famous for its ghetto in which the Jews were constrained to live, even as they oiled the wheels of the city's economy. Shakespeare does not mention the ghetto, but he reveals a clear understanding of how the system worked when Shylock refuses Antonio's invitation to dinner: "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." There is sociability and commerce between different ethnic and religious groups, but spiritual practices and customs are kept distinct. Shylock will not go to dinner because his religion prevents him from eating pork, but ultimately he regards questions of business as more important than those of faith: he hates Antonio "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."

The historical reality in the age of Shakespeare was that Christians did lend money to each other with interest, while Judaic law as well as

Christian frowned upon extortion. What one person regards as immoral exploitation another may regard as legitimate business practice. Shylock makes exactly this point when referring to "my bargains and my well-won thrift, / Which he [Antonio] calls interest." There are Christian usurers in other plays of the time. Besides, Shylock does *not* charge interest on the three thousand ducats he lends Antonio: instead, he takes out a bond, albeit of a rather unusual kind, as his insurance policy. One of the play's key puns, alongside those on terms that are both commercial and emotional such as "dear" and "bond," is "rate," which in the dialogue between Bassanio and Shylock about Antonio refers first to the question of interest rates and then to berating in the sense of abuse. The berating of Jew by Christian, and vice versa, is a screen for the real issue, which is the question of who has money and hence power (including the power to win a wealthy, clever, and beautiful wife).

We should therefore be wary of crude generalizations about the anti-Semitism of the play or of the age. It is often said that the original stage Shylock would have had a wig of red hair and a long bottle-like nose, making him into a stereotypical Jew. He was certainly represented thus when the play was revived after the theaters reopened following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, but there is no evidence that this is how he looked in Shakespeare's own theater. Portia's line on arriving in the courtroom, "Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?," suggests that in terms of superficial appearance Antonio and Shylock are not readily distinguishable. It is not easily compatible with a caricature Jew. Nor does the dialogue at any point allude to the anti-Semitic propaganda that has defiled the centuries. There are no allusions to the story of Hugh of Lincoln, to poisoning wells, desecrating the host, ritual murder, crucified children. Shylock speaks of his "sacred nation," but no one replies with the old anti-Semitic accusation that the Jews are to be hated because they murdered Christ. There are, then, different degrees of prejudice in the play, just as there were different degrees of respect and disrespect for Jews in Shakespeare's Europe. Some, but not all, of the Christians in the play spit upon Shylock simply because he is a Jew. They are the same Christians who don't spend much time going to church, giving money to the poor, or turning the other cheek.

Barabas, the Jew of Malta in the play written by Marlowe a few years

before, answers to the stereotype of the Jew in love with his moneybags (though he does also love his daughter), whereas Shylock famously appeals to a common humanity that extends across the ethnic divide:

> He hath disgraced me, and hindered 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 the 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?

In Elizabethan England the test for a witch was the pricking of her thumb: if it did not bleed, the woman was in league with the devil. Shylock's "If you prick us, do we not bleed" is a way of saying "do not demonize the Jews—we are not like witches." "The villainy you teach me I will execute," he continues: if you do demonize me, then I will behave diabolically. The alien, the oppressed minority, sees no alternative but to fight back: "And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" This is the point of parting between the Jewish law of "an eye for an eye" and the Christian notion of turning the other cheek and showing the quality of mercy. The consequence of Shylock's insistence on the law of revenge, his failure to show mercy when Portia gives him the opportunity to do so, is his forced conversion. This sticks in the throat of the modern audience because it shows a lack of respect for religious difference, but for most of Shakespeare's original audience it would have seemed like an act of mercy. Despite his willingness to murder Antonio, he is still given the opportunity of salvation.

The representation of Shylock as monstrous villain has played a part in the appalling history of European anti-Semitism. But such a representation necessarily occludes the subtler moments of Shakespeare's characterization. A ring is not only the device whereby Portia and Nerissa assert their moral and verbal superiority over their husbands, but also the means by which Shylock is humanized:

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

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

The role of Shylock has been a gift to great actors down the ages because it gives them the opportunity not only to rage and to be outrageous, but also to turn the mood in an instant, to be suddenly quiet and hurt and sorrowful. When Shylock gleefully whets his knife in the trial scene, he presents the very image of a torturer. But he is tortured himself, simply through the memory of a girl called Leah whom he loved and married, and who bore his daughter (who has deserted both him and his faith) and who died and of whom all that remained was a ring that he would not have given for a wilderness of monkeys.

* "The Argument of Comedy" originally appeared in *English Institute Essays 1948*, ed. D. A. Robertson (1949), and has often been reprinted in critical anthologies. Frye himself adapted it for inclusion in his classic study, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957).

ABOUT THE TEXT

Shakespeare endures through history. He illuminates later times as well as his own. He helps us to understand the human condition. But he cannot do this without a good text of the plays. Without editions there would be no Shakespeare. That is why every twenty years or so throughout the last three centuries there has been a major new edition of his complete works. One aspect of editing is the process of keeping the texts up to date—modernizing the spelling, punctuation, and typography (though not, of course, the actual words), providing explanatory notes in the light of changing educational practices (a generation ago, most of Shakespeare's classical and biblical allusions could be assumed to be generally understood, but now they can't).

Because Shakespeare did not personally oversee the publication of his plays, with some plays there are major editorial difficulties. Decisions have to be made as to the relative authority of the early printed editions, the pocket format "quartos" published in Shakespeare's lifetime and the elaborately produced "First Folio" text of 1623, the original "Complete Works" prepared for the press after his death by Shakespeare's fellow actors, the people who knew the plays better than anyone else.

The Merchant of Venice is one of three comedies where the Folio text was printed from a marked-up copy of a First Quarto (the others are *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing*). The standard procedure for the modern editor is to use the First Quarto as the copy text but to import stage directions, act divisions, and some corrections from Folio. Our Folio-led policy means that we follow the reverse procedure, using Folio as copy text, but deploying the First Quarto as a "control text" that offers assistance in the correction and identification of compositors' errors. Differences are for the most part minor.

The following notes highlight various aspects of the editorial process and indicate conventions used in the text of this edition:

Lists of Parts are supplied in the First Folio for only six plays, not

including *The Merchant of Venice*, so the list here is editorially supplied. Capitals indicate that part of the name which is used for speech headings in the script (thus "Prince of ARAGON, suitor to Portia").

Locations are provided by the Folio for only two plays, of which *The Merchant of Venice* is not one. Eighteenth-century editors, working in an age of elaborately realistic stage sets, were the first to provide detailed locations ("another part of the city"). Given that Shakespeare wrote for a bare stage and often an imprecise sense of place, we have relegated locations to the explanatory notes at the foot of the page, where they are given at the beginning of each scene where the imaginary location is different from the one before. In the case of *The Merchant of Venice*, the action is divided between Venice and Portia's country estate of Belmont.

Act and Scene Divisions were provided in the Folio in a much more thoroughgoing way than in the Quartos. Sometimes, however, they were erroneous or omitted; corrections and additions supplied by editorial tradition are indicated by square brackets. Five-act division is based on a classical model, and act breaks provided the opportunity to replace the candles in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse which the King's Men used after 1608, but Shakespeare did not necessarily think in terms of a five-part structure of dramatic composition. The Folio convention is that a scene ends when the stage is empty. Nowadays, partly under the influence of film, we tend to consider a scene to be a dramatic unit that ends with either a change of imaginary location or a significant passage of time within the narrative. Shakespeare's fluidity of composition accords well with this convention, so in addition to act and scene numbers we provide a ***running scene*** count in the right margin at the beginning of each new scene, in the typeface used for editorial directions. Where there is a scene break caused by a momentary bare stage, but the location does not change and extra time does not pass, we use the convention ***running scene continues***. There is inevitably a degree of editorial judgment in making such calls, but the system is very valuable in suggesting the pace of the plays.

Speakers' Names are often inconsistent in Folio. We have regularized speech headings, but retained an element of deliberate inconsistency in

entry directions, in order to give the flavor of Folio. Thus LANCELET is always so-called in his speech headings, but is "*Clown*" in entry directions.

Verse is indicated by lines that do not run to the right margin and by capitalization of each line. The Folio printers sometimes set verse as prose, and vice versa (either out of misunderstanding or for reasons of space). We have silently corrected in such cases, although in some instances there is ambiguity, in which case we have leaned toward the preservation of Folio layout. Folio sometimes uses contraction ("turnd" rather than "turned") to indicate whether or not the final "-ed" of a past participle is sounded, an area where there is variation for the sake of the five-beat iambic pentameter rhythm. We use the convention of a grave accent to indicate sounding (thus "turnèd" would be two syllables), but would urge actors not to overstress. In cases where one speaker ends with a verse half line and the next begins with the other half of the pentameter, editors since the late eighteenth century have indented the second line. We have abandoned this convention, since the Folio does not use it, nor did actors' cues in the Shakespearean theater. An exception is made when the second speaker actively interrupts or completes the first speaker's sentence.

Spelling is modernized, but older forms are very occasionally maintained where necessary for rhythm or aural effect.

Punctuation in Shakespeare's time was as much rhetorical as grammatical. "Colon" was originally a term for a unit of thought in an argument. The semicolon was a new unit of punctuation (some of the Quartos lack them altogether). We have modernized punctuation throughout, but have given more weight to Folio punctuation than many editors, since, though not Shakespearean, it reflects the usage of his period. In particular, we have used the colon far more than many editors: it is exceptionally useful as a way of indicating how many Shakespearean speeches unfold clause by clause in a developing argument that gives the illusion of enacting the process of thinking in the moment. We have also kept in mind the origin of punctuation in classical times as a way of assisting the actor and orator: the comma

suggests the briefest of pauses for breath, the colon a middling one, and a full stop or period a longer pause. Semi-colons, by contrast, belong to an era of punctuation that was only just coming in during Shakespeare's time and that is coming to an end now: we have accordingly only used them where they occur in our copy texts (and not always then). Dashes are sometimes used for parenthetical interjections where the Folio has brackets. They are also used for interruptions and changes in train of thought. Where a change of addressee occurs within a speech, we have used a dash preceded by a period (or occasionally another form of punctuation). Often the identity of the respective addressees is obvious from the context. When it is not, this has been indicated in a marginal stage direction.

Entrances and Exits are fairly thorough in Folio, which has accordingly been followed as faithfully as possible. Where characters are omitted or corrections are necessary, this is indicated by square brackets (e.g. "[*and Attendants*]"). *Exit* is sometimes silently normalized to *Exeunt* and *Manet* anglicized to "remains." We trust Folio positioning of entrances and exits to a greater degree than most editors.

Editorial Stage Directions such as stage business, asides, indications of addressee and of characters' position on the gallery stage are only used sparingly in Folio. Other editions mingle directions of this kind with original Folio and Quarto directions, sometimes marking them by means of square brackets. We have sought to distinguish what could be described as *directorial* interventions of this kind from Folio-style directions (either original or supplied) by placing them in the right margin in a different typeface. There is a degree of subjectivity about which directions are of which kind, but the procedure is intended as a reminder to the reader and the actor that Shakespearean stage directions are often dependent upon editorial inference alone and are not set in stone. We also depart from editorial tradition in sometimes admitting uncertainty and thus printing permissive stage directions, such as an ***Aside?*** (often a line may be equally effective as an aside or as a direct address—it is for each production or reading to make its own decision) or a ***may exit*** or a piece of business placed between arrows to indicate that it may occur at various different moments within a scene.

Line Numbers in the left margin are editorial, for reference and to key the explanatory and textual notes.

Explanatory Notes at the foot of each page explain allusions and gloss obsolete and difficult words, confusing phraseology, occasional major textual cruces, and so on. Particular attention is given to non-standard usage, bawdy innuendo, and technical terms (e.g. legal and military language). Where more than one sense is given, commas indicate shades of related meaning, slashes alternative or double meanings.

Textual Notes at the end of the play indicate major departures from the Folio. They take the following form: the reading of our text is given in bold and its source given after an equals sign, with "Q" indicating a Quarto reading, Q2 a reading from the Second Quarto of 1619, "F2" a reading from the Second Folio of 1632, and "Ed" one that derives from the subsequent editorial tradition. The rejected Folio ("F") reading is then given. Thus for Act 2 Scene 9 line 45: "**peasantry** = Q. F = pleasantry" means that the Folio text's "pleasantry" has been rejected in favor of the Quarto reading "peasantry," which seems to make better sense of the line.

KEY FACTS

MAJOR PARTS: (*with percentage of lines/number of speeches/scenes on stage*) Portia (22%/117/9), Shylock (13%/79/5), Bassanio (13%/73/6), Gratiano (7%/58/7), Lorenzo (7%/47/7), Antonio (7%/47/6), Lancelet Gobbo (6%/44/6), Salerio (5%/31/7), Morocco (4%/7/2), Nerissa (3%/36/7), Jessica (3%/26/7), Solanio (2%/20/5), Duke (2%/18/1), Aragon (2%/4/1), Old Gobbo (1%/19/1).

LINGUISTIC MEDIUM: 80% verse, 20% prose.

DATE: Registered for publication July 1598 and mentioned in Francis Meres' 1598 list of Shakespeare's comedies; reference to a ship called the *Andrew* suggests late 1596 or early 1597, when the Spanish vessel *St. Andrew*, which had been captured at Cadiz after running aground, was much in the news.

SOURCES: There are many ancient and medieval folk variations on the motif of a body part demanded as surety for a bond. The setting of the story in Venice, the pursuit of "the lady of Belmonte" as the reason the hero needs the money, the bond being made by a friend rather than the hero himself, the identification of the moneylender as a Jew, and the lady disguising herself as a male lawyer, coming to Venice and arguing that the bond does not allow for the shedding of blood all come from a tale in Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's collection *Il Pecorone* ("The Dunce," in Italian, published 1558—no English translation). A lost English play of the 1570s called *The Jew* may have been an intervening source. The character of Shylock and the elopement of his daughter with a Christian are strongly shaped by Christopher Marlowe's highly successful play *The Jew of Malta* (c.1590). The choice between three caskets as a device to identify a worthy marriage partner is another ancient motif; the closest surviving precedent is a story in the medieval *Gesta Romanorum* (translated by Richard Robinson, 1577, revised 1595 with use of the rare word "insculpt," which is echoed in Morocco's speech).

TEXT: Quarto 1600: a good quality text, apparently set from a fair copy of the dramatist's manuscript; reprinted 1619, with some errors and some corrections. Folio text was set from a copy of the first Quarto, making some corrections, introducing some errors, and apparently drawing on a theatrical manuscript for stage directions, including music cues. We follow Folio where it corrects or modernizes Quarto, but restore Quarto where Folio changes appear to be printers' errors. The only serious textual problem concerns the Venetian gentlemen known in the theatrical profession as the "Salads." They are initially identified in entry directions and speech headings as "Salarino" and "Solanio" (variously abbreviated, most commonly to "Sal." and "Sol."), but never named in the dialogue, so are unidentified from the point of view of a theater audience. Folio reverses their speech headings at the beginning of the opening scene, probably erroneously. In Act 3 Scene 2 "Salerio" arrives in Belmont as "a messenger from Venice"; he is named in the dialogue, so identifiable to the audience. Is this a third character, a composite of the first two, or—more probably—has Shakespeare forgotten that he began with "Salarino"? In the following scene, Quarto has "Salerio" back in Venice with Antonio and Shylock, which must be an error—he has only just exited from Belmont with Bassanio. Folio intelligently corrects the Act 3 Scene 3 entry direction to "Solanio." In Act 4 Scene 1, "Salerio" has returned with Bassanio. Some editions and productions have retained Salarino, Solanio, and Salerio, but it seems more likely that Salarino and Salerio are intended to be the same character: we have followed this assumption.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

LIST OF PARTS

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor to Portia

LORENZO, friend of Antonio and Bassanio, in love with Jessica

GRATIANO, friend of Antonio and Bassanio

Friends of Antonio and Bassanio:

- SALERIO
- SOLANIO

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio

PORTIA, an heiress

NERISSA, her gentlewoman-in-waiting

BALTHASAR, servant to Portia

STEPHANO, servant to Portia

Prince of ARAGON, suitor to Portia

Prince of MOROCCO, suitor to Portia

SHYLOCK, a Jew of Venice

JESSICA, his daughter

TUBAL, a Jew, Shylock's friend

LANCELET GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock and later Bassanio

OLD GOBBO, Lancelet's father

DUKE of Venice

Magnificoes of Venice

A Jailer, Attendants and Servants

Act 1 [Scene 1]

running scene 1

Location: Venice

Enter Antonio, Salerio and Solanio

ANTONIO In sooth[1] 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[4] 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn[5]:
And such a want-wit[6] sadness makes of me
That I have much ado[7] to know myself.

SALERIO Your mind is tossing on[8] the ocean,
There where your argosies[9] with portly sail
Like signiors[10] and rich burghers on the flood,
Or as it were the pageants[11] of the sea,
Do overpeer[12] the petty traffickers
That curtsy[13] to them, do them reverence,
As they fly[14] by them with their woven wings.

SOLANIO Believe me, sir, had I such venture[15] forth,
The better part[16] of my affections would
Be with my hopes[17] abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass to know where sits[18] the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads[19],
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALERIO My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague[24], when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should[26] not see the sandy hour-glass run,

But I should think of shallows and of flats[27],
And see my wealthy *Andrew*[28] docked in sand,
Vailing[29] her high top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial[30]; should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight[32] of dang'rous rocks,
Which touching but[33] my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream[34],
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks[35],
And in a word, but even[36] 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[39] would make me sad?
But tell not me, I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom[43] trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate[44]
Upon[45] the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SALERIO Why, then you are in love.

ANTONIO Fie[48], fie!

SOLANIO Not in love neither: then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus[52],
Nature hath framed[53] strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep[54] through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper[55],
And other[56] of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though[58] Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano

SOLANIO Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well,

We leave you now with better company.

SALERIO I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented[63] me.

ANTONIO Your worth is very dear[64] in my regard.
I take it your own business calls on you,
And you embrace[66] th'occasion to depart.

SALERIO Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO Good signiors both, when shall we laugh[68]? Say, when?
You grow exceeding strange[69]. Must it be so?

SALERIO We'll make our leisures to attend on yours[70].

Exeunt Salerio and Solanio

LORENZO My lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you, but at dinnertime
I pray you have in mind[73] where we must meet.

BASSANIO I will not fail you.

GRATIANO You look not well, Signior Antonio.
You have too much respect upon the world[76]:
They lose it[77] that do buy it with much care.
Believe me, you are marvellously[78] changed.

ANTONIO I hold[79] the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old[83] wrinkles come,
And let my liver[84] rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans[85].
Why should a man whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire[87] cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundices[88]
By being peevish[89]? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men whose visages[91]
Do cream and mantle[92] like a standing pond,

And do a wilful[93] stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion[94]
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit[95],
As who should say[96], 'I am, sir, an oracle,
And when I ope[97] 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[101].
I'll tell thee more of this another time.
But fish not with this melancholy bait[104]
For this fool[105] gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile,
I'll end my exhortation[107] after dinner.

LORENZO Well, we will leave you then till dinnertime.

To Antonio and Bassanio

I must be one of these same dumb[109] wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRATIANO Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

ANTONIO Fare you well, I'll grow[113] a talker for this gear.

GRATIANO Thanks, i'faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried[115] and a maid not vendible.

Exit [*Gratiano with Lorenzo*]

ANTONIO Is that anything now?[116]

BASSANIO Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons[118] are two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere[119] you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

ANTONIO Well, tell me now, what lady is the same[122]
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage
That you today promised to tell me of?

BASSANIO 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled[126] mine estate
By something[127] showing a more swelling port
Than my faint[128] means would grant continuance.
Nor do I now make moan[129] to be abridged
From such a noble rate[130], but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from[131] the great debts
Wherein my time[132] something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged[133]. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty[135]
To unburden[136] all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

ANTONIO I pray you good Bassanio, let me know it,
And if it stand as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour[140], be assured
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlocked to your occasions[142].

BASSANIO In my schooldays, when I had lost one shaft[143],
I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight[144]
The selfsame way with more advisèd[145] watch
To find the other forth[146], and by adventuring both
I oft found both. I urge[147] this childhood proof
Because what follows is pure innocence[148].
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[151] way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or[153] to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard[154] back again,
And thankfully rest[155] debtor for the first.

ANTONIO You know me well, and herein spend but[156] time
To wind about my love with circumstance[157],
And out of[158] doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost[159]

Than if you had made waste[160] of all I have.
Then do but[161] say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am pressed[163] unto it: therefore speak.

BASSANIO In Belmont is a lady richly left[164],
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes[166] from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To[168] Cato[169]'s daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renownèd suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece[173],
Which makes her seat[174] 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[178] me such thrift,
That I should questionless[179] be fortunate.

ANTONIO Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea,
Neither have I money, nor commodity[181]
To raise a present[182] sum: therefore go forth.
Try[183] what my credit can in Venice do,
That shall be racked[184], even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee[185] to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go presently[186] inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust[188] or for my sake.

Exeunt

[Act 1 Scene 2]

running scene 2

Location: Belmont

Enter Portia with her waiting woman, Nerissa

PORTIA By my troth[1], Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

NERISSA You would be[3], sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are, and yet, for aught[5] I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing; it is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean[7]. Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency[8] lives longer.

PORTIA Good sentences[9] and well pronounced.

NERISSA They would be better if well followed.

PORTIA If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine[13] 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[16], but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree[17]—such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes[18] of good counsel the cripple; but this reason is not in fashion[19] to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would[20], nor refuse whom I dislike, so is the will[21] of a living daughter curbed by the will[22] of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

NERISSA Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery[25] that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who[27] chooses his meaning chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly[28] but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

PORTIA I pray thee overname[31] them, and as thou namest

them, I will describe them, and according to my description level at[33] my affection.

NERISSA First, there is the Neapolitan[34] prince.

PORTIA Ay, that's a colt[35] indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse, and he makes it a great appropriation[36] to his own good parts[37] that he can shoe him himself. I am much afraid my lady his mother played false[38] with a smith.

NERISSA Then is there the County[39] Palatine.

PORTIA He doth nothing but frown, as who[40] should say, 'An you will not have me, choose[41].' He hears merry tales and smiles not. I fear he will prove[42] the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly[43] sadness in his youth. I had rather to be married to a death's-head[44] with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

NERISSA How[47] say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

PORTIA God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he! Why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad[50] habit of frowning than the Count Palatine. He is every man[51] in no man. If a throstle[52] 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[55] he love me to madness, I should never requite him.

NERISSA What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

PORTIA You know I say[59] 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[61] that I have a poor pennyworth in the[62] English. He is a proper man's picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumb show[63]? How oddly he is suited[64]. I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose[65] in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his

behaviour everywhere.

NERISSA What think you of the other lord, his neighbour?

PORTIA That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed[69] 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[71] and sealed under for another.

NERISSA How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony[73]'s nephew?

PORTIA Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast[77]. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift[78] to go without him.

NERISSA If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should[80] refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

PORTIA Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine[83] on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within, and that temptation without[84], I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge[86].

NERISSA You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations[88], which is indeed to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit[90], unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition[91], depending on the caskets.

PORTIA If I live to be as old as Sibylla[92], I will die as chaste as Diana[93], unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel[94] of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I wish them a fair departure.

NERISSA Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in

company of the Marquis of Montferrat[99]?

PORTIA Yes, yes, it was Bassanio, as I think, so was he called.

NERISSA True, madam. He, of all the men that ever my foolish[102] eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

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

Enter a Servingman

SERVANT The four strangers[105] seek you, madam, to take their leave. And there is a forerunner[106] come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here tonight.

PORTIA If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he have the condition[111] of a saint and the complexion of a devil[112], I had rather he should shrive me than wive[113] me. Come, Nerissa.—Sirrah, go before; whiles

To the Servingman

we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

Exeunt

[Act 1 Scene 3]

running scene 3

Location: Venice

Enter Bassanio with Shylock the Jew

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats[1], well.

BASSANIO Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK For three months, well.

BASSANIO For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound[5].

SHYLOCK Antonio shall become bound, well.

BASSANIO May you stead[7] me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO Your answer to that.

SHYLOCK Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO Have you heard any imputation[13] to the contrary?

SHYLOCK Ho, no, no, no, no! My meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient[15]. Yet his means are in supposition[16]: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis[17], another to the Indies, I understand moreover, upon the Rialto[18], he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered[19] abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves—I mean pirates[21]—and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding[23], sufficient. Three thousand ducats. I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK I will be assured[26] I may. And that I may be assured, I will bethink me[27]. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO If it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation[29] which your prophet the Nazarite[30] conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following[32], but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter Antonio

BASSANIO This is Signior Antonio.

SHYLOCK How like a fawning publican[36] he looks!

Aside

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more, for that in low simplicity[38]
He lends out money gratis[39] and brings down
The rate of usance[40] here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip[41],
I will feed fat[42] the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation[43], and he rails—
Even there where merchants most do congregate[44]—
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift[45],
Which he calls interest. Cursèd be my tribe[46],
If I forgive him!

BASSANIO Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK I am debating of my present store[49],
And by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross[51]
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal[53], a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish[54] me; but soft! How many months
Do you desire?—Rest you fair[55], good signior.

To Antonio

Your worship was the last man in our mouths[56].

ANTONIO Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess[58],
Yet to supply the ripe wants[59] of my friend,
I'll break a custom.—Is he yet possessed[60]

To Bassanio

How much ye would[61]?

SHYLOCK Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO And for three months.

SHYLOCK I had forgot—three months—you told me so.
Well then, your bond[65]. And let me see, but hear you,

Methoughts you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage[67].

ANTONIO I do never use[68] it.

SHYLOCK When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep[69]—
This Jacob from[70] our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought[71] in his behalf,
The third possessor[72]; ay, he was the third—

ANTONIO And what of him? Did he take interest?

SHYLOCK No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest. Mark[75] what Jacob did:
When Laban and himself were compromised[76]
That all the eanlings[77] which were streaked and pied
Should fall as[78] Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,
In end of autumn turnèd to the rams,
And, when the work of generation[80] was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skilful shepherd peeled me certain wands[82],
And in the doing of the deed of kind[83],
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes[84],
Who then conceiving, did in eaning[85] time
Fall[86] parti-coloured lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive[87], and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANTONIO This was a venture[89], sir, that Jacob served for,
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But swayed and fashioned[91] by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted[92] to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

SHYLOCK I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior—

ANTONIO 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[100] apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

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

ANTONIO Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding[104] to you?

SHYLOCK Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated[106] me
About my moneys and my usances.
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance[109] is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine[111],
And all for use[112] of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help.
Go to[114], then. You come to me and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys'—you say so,
You that did void[116] your rheum upon my beard,
And foot[117] me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold. Moneys is your suit[118].
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur should lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key[122],
With bated[123] breath and whisp'ring humbleness,
Say this: '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 I am as like[128] 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 of barren metal[132] of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break[134], thou mayst with better face

Exact the penalties.

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[139]
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind[141] I offer.

BASSANIO This were[142] kindness.

SHYLOCK This kindness will I show:
Go with me to a notary[144], seal me there
Your single[145] 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
Expressed in the condition[148], let the forfeit
Be nominated for[149] an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body it pleaseth me.

ANTONIO Content, in faith, I'll seal to 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[155] in my necessity.

ANTONIO 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.

SHYLOCK O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect[161]
The thoughts of others! Pray you tell me this:
If he should break his day[163], what should I gain
By the exaction[164] of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable[166], profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs or goats. I say
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:

If he will take it, so[169], if not, adieu.
And for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO Yes Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK Then meet me forthwith[172] at the notary's,
Give him direction[173] for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse[174] the ducats straight,
See[175] to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty[176] knave, and presently
I'll be with you.

ANTONIO Hie[178] thee, gentle Jew.

Exit

This Hebrew will turn Christian, he grows kind[179].

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

ANTONIO Come on, in this there can be no dismay.
My ships come home a month before the day.

Exeunt

Act 2 [Scene 1]

running scene 4

Location: Belmont

Enter Morocco, a tawny Moor, all in white, and three or four followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerissa and their train. Flourish cornets

MOROCCO Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery[2] of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred[3].
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus[5]' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision[6] for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest[7], his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect[8] of mine
Hath feared[9] the valiant. By my love I swear,
The best-regarded virgins of our clime[10]
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue[11],
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice[14] direction of a maiden's eyes.
Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
But if my father had not scanted[17] me,
And hedged[18] me by his wit to yield myself
His[19] wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renownèd prince, then[20] stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet
For[22] my affection.

MOROCCO Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar[25]
That slew the Sophy[26] and a Persian prince

That won three fields[27] of Sultan Solyman,
I would o'erstare[28] 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[33] and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides[36] beaten by his page,
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

PORTIA You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised[44].

MOROCCO Nor will not[45]. Come, bring me unto my chance.

PORTIA First, forward to the temple. After dinner
Your hazard[47] shall be made.

MOROCCO Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

Cornets [*and*] *exeunt*

[Act 2 Scene 2]

running scene 5

Location: Venice

Enter the Clown [*Lancelet*] *alone*

LANCELET Certainly my conscience will serve[1] me to run from

this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo[3], Lancelet Gobbo, good Lancelet', or 'Good Gobbo', or 'Good Lancelet Gobbo, use your legs, take the start[5], run away.' My conscience says, 'No; take heed, honest Lancelet, take heed, honest Gobbo', or, as aforesaid, 'Honest Lancelet Gobbo, do not run, scorn running with thy heels[7].' Well, the most courageous[8] fiend bids me pack: 'Fia!' says the fiend, 'Away!' says the fiend, 'For the heavens[9], rouse up a brave mind', says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Lancelet, being an honest[12] man's son', or rather an honest woman's son—for indeed my father did something[13] smack[14], something grow to, he had a kind of taste—well, my conscience says 'Lancelet, budge not.' 'Budge', says the fiend. 'Budge not', says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well.' 'Fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well.' To be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark[19], is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence[20], is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation[22], and in my conscience, my conscience is a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew; the fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend. My heels are at your commandment. I will run.

Enter Old Gobbo, with a basket

GOBBO Master young man, you, I pray you which is the way to Master Jew's?

LANCELET O heavens, this is my true-begotten[28] father,

Aside

who, being more than sand-blind[29], high-gravel-blind, knows me not. I will try confusions[30] with him.

GOBBO Master young gentleman, I pray you which is the way to Master Jew's?

LANCELET Turn upon your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very

next turning, turn of no hand[35], but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

GOBBO By God's sonties[37], 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Lancelet, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

LANCELET Talk you of young Master Lancelet?—

Aside

Mark me now, now will I raise the waters[41].—Talk you of young Master Lancelet?

GOBBO No master[43], sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say't, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live[45].

LANCELET Well, let his father be what a[46] will, we talk of young Master Lancelet.

GOBBO Your worship's friend and Lancelet[48].

LANCELET But I pray you *ergo*[49], old man, *ergo*, I beseech you talk you of young Master Lancelet?

GOBBO Of Lancelet, an't[51] please your mastership.

LANCELET *Ergo*, Master Lancelet. Talk not of Master Lancelet, father[53], for the young gentleman—according to fates and destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three[54] and such branches of learning—is indeed deceased, or as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

GOBBO Marry, God forbid! The boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

LANCELET Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post[59], a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

GOBBO Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman, but I pray you tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

LANCELET Do you not know me, father?

GOBBO Alack, sir, I am sand-blind. I know you not.

LANCELET Nay, indeed if you had your eyes you might fail of the knowing[66] me: it is a wise father that knows his own child[67].
Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. Give

He kneels

me your blessing. Truth will come to light, murder cannot be hid long, a man's son may, but in the end truth will out.

GOBBO Pray you, sir, stand up. I am sure you are not Lancelet, my boy.

LANCELET Pray you let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing. I am Lancelet, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be[74].

GOBBO I cannot think you are my son.

LANCELET I know not what I shall think of that. But I am Lancelet, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

GOBBO Her name is Margery[80], indeed. I'll be sworn, if thou be Lancelet, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! What a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse[83] has on his tail.

LANCELET It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail

He rises

grows backward[86]. I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

GOBBO Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree[89]? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

LANCELET Well, well. But for mine own part, as I have set up my rest[91] to run away, so I will not rest[92] till I have run some ground; my master's a very[93] Jew. Give him a present? Give him a halter[94]! I am famished in his service. You may tell every finger I have with my ribs[95]. Father, I am glad you are come.

Give me[96] your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare[97] new liveries. If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! Here comes the man. To him, father, for I am a Jew[99] if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter Bassanio, with a follower or two [*including Leonardo*]

BASSANIO You may do so, but let it be so hasted[100]

To a Servant

that supper be ready at the farthest[101] by five of the clock. See these letters delivered, put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon[103] to my lodging.

[*Exit a Servant*]

LANCELET To him, father.

GOBBO God bless your worship!

Comes forward

BASSANIO Gramercy[106]! Wouldst thou aught with me?

GOBBO Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

LANCELET Not a poor[108] boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man, that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

GOBBO He hath a great infection[110], sir, as one would say, to serve—

LANCELET Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

GOBBO His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce[115] cater-cousins—

LANCELET To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify[118] unto you—

GOBBO I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

LANCELET In very brief, the suit is impertinent[121] to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man, and though

I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

BASSANIO One speak for both. What would you?

LANCELET Serve you, sir.

GOBBO That is the very defect[126] of the matter, sir.

BASSANIO I know thee well, thou hast obtained thy suit.
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferred[129] thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

LANCELET The old proverb[132] is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

BASSANIO Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out[136].—Give him a livery

To a Servant

More guarded[138] than his fellows'. See it done.

LANCELET Father, in. I cannot get a service, no. I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a

Points to his palm

fairer table[141] which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple[142] line of life, here's a small trifle[143] of wives. Alas, fifteen wives is nothing! Eleven widows and nine maids is a simple[144] coming-in for one man, and then to scape[145] drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed[146]. Here are simple scapes[147]. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear[148]. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.

Exit Clown [*Lancelet with Old Gobbo*]

BASSANIO I pray thee good Leonardo, think on this.

Gives a list

These things being bought and orderly bestowed[151],

Return in haste, for I do feast[152] tonight
My best-esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go.

LEONARDO My best endeavours shall be done herein[154].

Enter Gratiano

GRATIANO Where's your master?

LEONARDO Yonder, sir, he walks.

Exit

GRATIANO Signior Bassanio!

BASSANIO Gratiano!

GRATIANO I have a suit to you.

BASSANIO You have obtained it[160].

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

BASSANIO Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano,
Thou art too wild, too rude[164] and bold of voice,
Parts[165] that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where they are not known, why, there they show[167]
Something too liberal[168]. Pray thee take pain
To allay[169] with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping[170] spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstered[171] in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

GRATIANO Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit[174],
Talk with respect and swear but[175] now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying[177], hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'Amen',

Covers his face

Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent[180]

To please his grandam[181], never trust me more.

BASSANIO Well, we shall see your bearing.

GRATIANO Nay, but I bar[183] tonight. You shall not gauge me
By what we do tonight.

BASSANIO No, that were pity.
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose[188] merriment. But fare you well.
I have some business.

GRATIANO And I must to Lorenzo and the rest,
But we will visit you at suppertime.

Exeunt

[Act 2 Scene 3]

running scene 6

Enter Jessica and the Clown [*Lancelet*]

JESSICA I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness;
But fare thee well. There is a ducat for thee.

Gives money

And, Lancelet, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter. Do it secretly.

Gives a letter

And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me talk with thee.

LANCELET Adieu! Tears exhibit[10] my tongue, most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian did not play the knave and get[12] thee, I am much deceived; but adieu. These foolish drops do somewhat drown my manly spirit. Adieu.

Exit

JESSICA Farewell, good Lancelet.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners[18]. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife[19],
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

Exit

[Act 2 Scene 4]

running scene 7

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salerio and Solanio

LORENZO Nay, we will slink away in[1] suppertime,
Disguise us at my lodging and return
All in an hour.

GRATIANO We have not made good preparation.

SALERIO We have not spoke us yet of[5] torchbearers.

SOLANIO 'Tis vile[6], unless it may be quaintly ordered,
And better in my mind not undertook.

LORENZO 'Tis now but four of clock. We have two hours
To furnish us[9].—Friend Lancelet, what's the news?

Enter Lancelet, with a letter

LANCELET An[10] it shall please you to break up this,

Gives him the letter

shall it seem to signify[11].

LORENZO I know the hand[12]. In faith, 'tis a fair hand,
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

GRATIANO Love-news, in faith.

LANCELET By your leave[16], sir.

Starts to leave

LORENZO Whither goest thou?

LANCELET Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup[18]
tonight with my new master the Christian.

LORENZO Hold here, take this. Tell gentle Jessica

Gives money

I will not fail her. Speak it privately.
Go[22], gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque[23] tonight?
I am provided of[24] a torchbearer.

Exit Clown [*Lancelet*]

SALERIO Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

SOLANIO And so will I.

LORENZO Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some[28] hour hence.

SALERIO 'Tis good we do so.

Exit [*Salerio with Solanio*]

GRATIANO Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO I must needs[31] tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle[36] daughter's sake;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot[37],
Unless she[38] do it under this excuse,
That she[39] is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me, peruse this as thou goest.

Gives the letter

Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.

Exeunt

[Act 2 Scene 5]

running scene 8

Enter [*Shylock the*] *Jew and* [*Lancelet,*] *his man that was, the Clown*

SHYLOCK Well, thou shall see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of[2] old Shylock and Bassanio.—
What, Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandize[3]
As thou hast done with me—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out[5]—
Why, Jessica, I say!

LANCELET Why, Jessica!

SHYLOCK Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

LANCELET Your worship was wont[9] to tell me
I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter Jessica

JESSICA Call you? What is your will?

SHYLOCK I am bid forth[12] to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys. But wherefore[13] should I go?
I am not bid for love, they flatter me.
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon[15]
The prodigal[16] Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to[17] my house. I am right loath to go.
There is some ill[18] a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags tonight[19].

LANCELET I beseech you, sir, go. My young master doth expect[20]
your reproach[21].

SHYLOCK So do I his.

LANCELET An they have conspired together. I will not say you
shall see a masque, but if you do, then it was not for nothing

that my nose fell a-bleeding[25] on Black Monday last at
six o'clock i'th'morning, falling out that year on Ash
Wednesday was four year, in th'afternoon.

SHYLOCK What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked[30] fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements[31] then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces[33],
But stop[34] my house's ears, I mean my casements.
Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry[35] enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff[36], I swear,
I have no mind of[37] feasting forth tonight,
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah,
Say I will come.

LANCELET I will go before, sir.—Mistress, look out

Aside to Jessica

at window, for[41] all this,
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewès eye[43].

[*Exit Lancelet*]

SHYLOCK What says that fool of Hagar's offspring[44], ha?

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

SHYLOCK The patch[46] is kind enough, but a huge feeder,
Snail-slow in profit[47], but he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat. Drones[48] hive not with me:
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in.
Perhaps I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you, shut doors after you.
Fast bind, fast find[54]—
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

Exit

JESSICA Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed[56],
I have a father, you a daughter lost.

Exit

[Act 2 Scene 6]

running scene 9

Enter the masquers, Gratiano and Salerio

GRATIANO This is the penthouse[1] under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make a stand[2].

SALERIO His hour is almost past[3].

GRATIANO And it is marvel[4] he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever[5] run before the clock.

SALERIO O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons[6] fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obligèd[8] faith unforfeited!

GRATIANO That ever[9] holds: who riseth from a feast
With that[10] keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread[11] again
His tedious measures[12] with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chasèd than enjoyed.
How like a younger[15] or a prodigal
The scarfèd bark[16] puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embracèd by the strumpet[17] wind!
How like a prodigal doth she return,
With over-withered ribs[19] and ragged sails,
Lean, rent[20] and beggared by the strumpet wind!

Enter Lorenzo

SALERIO Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter.

LORENZO Sweet friends, your[22] patience for my long abode:

Not I but my affairs have made you wait.
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch[25] as long for you then. Approach.
Here dwells my father[26] Jew. Ho! Who's within?

[*Enter*] *Jessica above* [*in boy's clothes*]

JESSICA Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue[28].

LORENZO Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

JESSICA Here, catch this casket, it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange[36].
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty[38] follies that themselves commit,
For if they could, Cupid[39] himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

LORENZO Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

JESSICA What, must I hold a candle to[42] my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth[43], are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery[44], love,
And I should be obscured.

LORENZO So you are, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish[47] of a boy.
But come at once,
For the close[49] night doth play the runaway,
And we are stayed for[50] at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA I will make fast[51] the doors and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[*Exit above*]

GRATIANO Now, by my hood, a gentle[53] and no Jew.

LORENZO Beshrew[54] me but I love her heartily.
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true[56],
And true[57] she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placèd in my constant soul.

Enter Jessica [*below*]

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

Exit [*with Jessica and Salerio*]

Enter Antonio

ANTONIO Who's there?

GRATIANO Signior Antonio?

ANTONIO Fie, fie, Gratiano! Where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay[65] for you.
No masque tonight, the wind is come about[66].
Bassanio presently will go aboard.
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO I am glad on't. I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone tonight.

Exeunt

[Act 2 Scene 7]

running scene 10

Location: Belmont

[*Flourish of cornets.*] *Enter Portia with* [*the Prince of*] *Morocco and both their trains*

PORTIA Go, draw aside the curtains and discover[1]
The several[2] caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.

The curtains are opened

MOROCCO The first, of gold, who[4] this inscription bears:
'Who[5] chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
This third, dull[8] lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

PORTIA The one of them contains my picture, prince.
If you choose that, then I am yours withal[12].

MOROCCO Some god direct my judgement! Let me see.
I will survey the inscriptions back[14] again.
What says this leaden casket?
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
Must give: for what? For lead? Hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross[20],
I'll then nor[21] give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue[22]?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
As much as he deserves; pause there, Morocco,
And weigh[25] thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated[26] by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough, and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady.
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling[30] of myself.
As much as I deserve? Why, that's the lady.
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding,
But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I strayed no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved[36] in gold:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why, that's the lady, all the world desires her.
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing[40] saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts[41] and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The watery kingdom[44], whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits[46], but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like[49] that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base[50] a thought, it were too gross
To rib[51] her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured[52],
Being ten times undervalued to[53] trièd gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set[55] in worse than gold! They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel[56]
Stamped in gold, but that's insculped[57] upon,
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

PORTIA There, take it, prince, and if my form[61] lie there,
Then I am yours.

He unlocks the gold casket

MOROCCO O hell! What have we here?
A carrion[64] Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll; I'll read the writing.
'All that glisters is not gold,

Reads

Often have you heard that told;
Many a man his life hath sold

But[69] my outside to behold.
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old[72],
Your answer had not been inscrolled[73]:
Fare you well, your suit is cold.'
Cold, indeed, and labour lost.
Then farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious[78] leave. Thus losers part.

Exit [*with his train. Flourish of cornets*]

PORTIA A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion[80] choose me so.

[*They close the curtains and*] *exeunt*

[Act 2 Scene 8]

running scene 11

Location: Venice

Enter Salerio and Solanio

SALERIO Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail.
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

SOLANIO The villain Jew with outcries raised[4] the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALERIO He comes too late, the ship was under sail;
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica. Besides,
Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

SOLANIO I never heard a passion[12] so confused,
So strange, outrageous[13], and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice, the law, my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats[19], stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones[20], two rich and precious stones,
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl,
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

SALERIO Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones[24], his daughter, and his ducats.

SOLANIO Let good Antonio look[25] he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

SALERIO Marry, well remembered.
I reasoned[28] with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English[29] there miscarried[30]
A vessel of our country richly fraught[31].
I thought upon[32] Antonio when he told me,
And wished in silence that it were not his.

SOLANIO You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

SALERIO A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return. He answered, 'Do not so,
Slubber[40] not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay[41] the very riping of the time.
And for[42] the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of[43] love.
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents[45] of love
As shall conveniently become you[46] there.'

And even there[47], his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible[49]
He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted.

SOLANIO I think he only loves the world for him[51].
I pray thee let us go and find him out,
And quicken[53] his embracèd heaviness
With some delight or other.

SALERIO Do we so.

Exeunt

[Act 2 Scene 9]

running scene 12

Location: Belmont

Enter Nerissa and a Servitor

NERISSA Quick, quick, I pray thee draw the curtain
straight[1].

The Servitor opens the curtains

The Prince of Aragon[2] hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election[3] presently.

Enter [*the Prince of*] *Aragon, his train and Portia. Flourish of cornets*

PORTIA Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince.
If you choose that wherein I am contained,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized.
But if thou fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

ARAGON I am enjoined[9] by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold[10] to anyone
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of[12] the right casket, never in my life

To woo a maid in way of marriage. Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

PORTIA To these injunctions everyone doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

ARAGON And so have I addressed me[18]. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? Ha? Let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire—that 'many' may be meant
By[25] the fool multitude that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond[26] eye doth teach,
Which pries[27] not to th'interior, but like the martlet
Builds in[28] the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force[29] and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump[31] with common spirits
And rank me with the barb'rous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house.
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
And well said too, for who shall go about
To cozen[37] fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservèd dignity.
O, that estates, degrees[40] and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear[41] honour
Were purchased[42] by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare[43]!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned[45]
From the true seed[46] of honour! And how much honour
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnished[48]! Well, but to my choice:

‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
I will assume desert[50]; give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

He opens the silver casket

PORTIA Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Aside?

ARAGON What’s here? The portrait of a blinking idiot
Presenting me a schedule[54]! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia.
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings.
‘Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.’
Did I deserve no more than a fool’s head?
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

PORTIA To offend and judge are distinct offices
And of opposèd natures[60].

ARAGON What is here?
‘The fire seven times tried this[63]:

Reads

Seven times tried that judgement[64] is
That did never choose amiss[65].
Some there be that shadows[66] kiss,
Such have but a shadow’s bliss.
There be fools alive, iwis[68],
Silvered o’er[69], and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I[71] will ever be your head.
So begone: you are sped[72].’
Still more fool I shall appear
By the time[74] I linger here.
With one fool’s head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I’ll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth[78].

[*Exeunt Aragon and train*]

PORTIA Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate[80] fools! When they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

NERISSA The ancient saying is no heresy:
Hanging and wiving[83] goes by destiny.

PORTIA Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Nerissa closes the curtains

Enter Messenger

MESSENGER Where is my lady?

PORTIA Here, what would my lord[86]?

MESSENGER Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify th'approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets[90]:
To wit[91], besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value; yet[92] I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
A day in April never came so sweet
To show how costly[95] summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer[96] comes before his lord.

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[99] wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post[101] that comes so mannerly.

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

Exeunt

Act 3 [Scene 1]

running scene 13

Location: Venice

Enter Solanio and Salerio

SOLANIO Now, what news on the Rialto?

SALERIO Why, yet it lives there unchecked[2] that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading[3] wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins[4], I think they call the place, a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall[5] ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip[6]'s report be an honest woman of her word.

SOLANIO I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped[9] ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity[10] or crossing[11] the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

SALERIO Come, the full stop[14].

SOLANIO Ha, what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

SALERIO I would it might prove[17] the end of his losses.

SOLANIO Let me say 'amen' betimes[18], lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew. How now, Shylock! What news among the merchants?

Enter Shylock

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

SALERIO That's certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor that

made the wings[24] she flew withal.

SOLANIO And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged[26], and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam[27].

SHYLOCK She is damned for it.

SOLANIO That's certain, if the devil[29] may be her judge.

SHYLOCK My own flesh and blood[30] to rebel!

SOLANIO Out upon it[31], old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

SHYLOCK I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

SALERIO There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory[34], more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

SHYLOCK There I have another bad match[37]: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto, a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart[39]. Let him look to[40] his bond. He was wont to call me usurer. Let him look to his bond. He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy[41]. Let him look to his bond.

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

SHYLOCK To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me[46] half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled[48] my friends, heated[49] mine enemies, and what's the reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions[51], 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[58]? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance[59] be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but[61] I will better the instruction[62].

Enter a man from Antonio

SERVANT Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

SALERIO We have been up and down[65] to seek him.

Enter Tubal

SOLANIO Here comes another of the tribe[66]. A third cannot be matched[67], unless the devil himself turn Jew.

Exeunt Gentlemen [*Solanio, Salerio and Servant*]

SHYLOCK How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa[68]? Hast thou found my daughter?

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

SHYLOCK Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt[73]! The curse never fell upon our nation till now, I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed[77] at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so—and I know not how much is spent in the search. Why, thou loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief, and no satisfaction[81], no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights[82] o'my shoulders, no sighs but o'my breathing, no tears but o'my shedding.

TUBAL Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

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

TUBAL —hath an argosy cast away[87], coming from Tripolis.

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

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

SHYLOCK I thank thee, good Tubal, good news, good news! Ha, ha, heard in Genoa?

TUBAL Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night fourscore[94] ducats.

SHYLOCK Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting[96], fourscore ducats!

TUBAL There came divers[97] of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break[98].

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

TUBAL One of[101] them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

SHYLOCK Out upon her![103] Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise, I had it of Leah[104] when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness[105] of monkeys.

TUBAL But Antonio is certainly undone[106].

SHYLOCK Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee[107] me an officer[108], bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit, for were he out of Venice I can make what[110] merchandise I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal, at our synagogue, Tubal.

Exeunt [*separately*]

[Act 3 Scene 2]

Location: Belmont

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, [*Nerissa*] *and all their trains*

PORTIA I pray you tarry[1]. Pause a day or two
Before you hazard, for in choosing[2] wrong
I lose your company: therefore forbear[3] awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you, and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality[6];
But lest you should not understand me well—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought[8]—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture[10] for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn[11].
So[12] will I never be. So may you miss me.
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlooked[15] me and divided me.
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would[17] say. But if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty[18] times
Puts bars[19] between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours[20]. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peise[22] the time,
To eke[23] it and to draw it out in length,
To stay[24] you from election.

BASSANIO Let me choose,
For as I am, I live upon the rack[26].

PORTIA Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASSANIO None but that ugly treason of mistrust[29],
Which makes me fear[30] the enjoying of my love.
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as[32] treason and my love.

PORTIA Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforcèd[34] do speak anything.

BASSANIO Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

PORTIA Well then, confess and live[36].

BASSANIO 'Confess and love'
Had been the very sum of my confession.
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance[40]!
But let me to[41] my fortune and the caskets.

PORTIA Away, then! I am locked in one of them.
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof[44].
Let music sound while he doth make his choice,
Then if he lose, he makes a swan-like end[46],
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And wat'ry death-bed for him. He may win,
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish[51] when true subjects bow
To a new-crownèd monarch. Such it is,
As are those dulcet[53] sounds in break of day,
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence[56], but with much more love,
Than young Alcides[57], when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling[58] Troy
To the sea-monster. I stand for[59] sacrifice,
The rest aloof are the Dardanian[60] wives,
With blearèd visages[61], come forth to view
The issue[62] of th'exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou[63], I live. With much, much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray[64].

Here music

A song the whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself

[SINGER] Tell me where is fancy[65] bred,
Or[66] in the heart, or in the head?
How begot[67], how nourishèd?
Reply, reply.
It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed, and fancy dies
In the cradle[71] where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell[72].
I'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.

ALL Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO So may the outward shows be least themselves[75],
The world is still[76] deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being seasoned with a gracious[78] voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnèd error, but some sober brow[80]
Will bless it and approve[81] it with a text,
Hiding the grossness[82] with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple[83] but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his[84] outward parts;
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars[87],
Who, inward searched[88], have livers white as milk.
And these assume but valour's excrement[89]
To render them redoubted[90]. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest[93] that wear most of it:
So are those crispèd[94] snaky golden locks
Which makes such wanton[95] gambols with the wind
Upon supposèd fairness[96], often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre[97].
Thus ornament is but the guilèd[99] shore
To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf

Veiling an Indian[101] beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, then, thou gaudy[103] gold,
Hard food for Midas[104], I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee[105], thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

PORTIA How all the other passions fleet[110] to air,

Aside

As[111] doubtful thoughts and rash-embraced despair
And shudd'ring fear and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,
In measure[114] rain thy joy, scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less,
For fear I surfeit[116].

BASSANIO What find I here?

He opens the lead casket

Fair Portia's counterfeit[118]! What demigod
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes[119]?
Or whether[120], riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are severed[121] lips,
Parted with sugar breath, so sweet a bar[122]
Should sunder[123] such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh t'entrap the hearts of men
Faster[126] than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
How could he see to do them? Having made one,
Methinks it[128] should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnished[129]. Yet look how far
The substance[130] of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent[133] and summary of my fortune.
'You that choose not by the view

Reads

Chance as fair[135] and choose as true.
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.'
A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave,
I come by note[143] to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize[144]
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his[148] or no,
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so,
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified[151] by you.

PORTIA You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am; though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better, yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich,
That only to stand high in your account[158],
I might in virtues, beauties, livings[159], friends,
Exceed account[160]. But the full sum of me
Is sum of nothing, which to term in gross[161]
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractisèd[162],
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn. Happier than 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.
Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours

Is now converted[170]. But now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself, and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord. I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose or give away,
Let it presage[176] the ruin of your love
And be my vantage[177] to exclaim on you.

Puts a ring on his finger

BASSANIO Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood[179] speaks to you in my veins,
And there is such confusion[180] in my powers,
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovèd prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleasèd multitude,
Where every something[184] being blent together,
Turns to a wild[185] of nothing, save of joy
Expressed[186] and not expressed. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.
O, then be bold[188] to say Bassanio's dead!

NERISSA My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That[190] have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

GRATIANO My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish,
For I am sure you can wish none[194] from me.
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith[196], I do beseech you,
Even[197] at that time I may be married too.

BASSANIO With all my heart, so[198] thou canst get a wife.

GRATIANO I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid[201].
You loved, I loved, for intermission[202]
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you;

Your fortune stood[204] upon the caskets there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls[205],
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof[207] was dry
With oaths of love, at last[208], if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

PORTIA Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA Madam, it is so[213], so you stand pleased withal.

BASSANIO And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRATIANO Yes, faith[215], my lord.

BASSANIO Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

GRATIANO We'll play with them the first boy[217] for a thousand ducats.

NERISSA What, and stake down[218]?

GRATIANO No, we shall ne'er win at that sport[219], and stake down.
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel[220]?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica and Salerio

BASSANIO Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither,
If that the youth[223] of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very[225] friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

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

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

SALERIO I did, my lord,
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him[235] to you.

Gives Bassanio a letter

BASSANIO Ere I ope[236] his letter,
I pray you tell me how my good friend doth.

SALERIO Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind,
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate[240].

[*Bassanio*] *opens the letter*

GRATIANO Nerissa, cheer[241] yond stranger, bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal[243] merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success,
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

SALERIO I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

PORTIA There are some shrewd[247] contents in yond same
paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek.
Some dear friend dead, else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution[250]
Of any constant[251] man. What, worse and worse?
With leave[252], Bassanio: I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

BASSANIO O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins. I was a gentleman,
And then I told you true. And yet, dear lady,
Rating[262] myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you

My state[264] was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing, for indeed,
I have engaged[266] myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere[267] enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,
The paper as[269] the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Hath all his ventures failed? What, not one hit[272]?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary[274] and India?
And not one vessel scape the dreadful[275] touch
Of merchant-marring[276] rocks?

SALERIO Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear[278], that if he had
The present[279] money to discharge the Jew,
He[280] would not take it. Never did I know
A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and greedy to confound[282] a man.
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach[284] the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The duke himself and the magnificoes[286]
Of greatest port[287] have all persuaded with him,
But none can drive him from the envious[288] plea
Of forfeiture[289], of justice and his bond.

JESSICA When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus[291], his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with[296] poor Antonio.

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

BASSANIO The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,

The best-conditioned[299] and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies[300], and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

PORTIA What sum owes he the Jew?

BASSANIO For me three thousand ducats.

PORTIA What, no more?
Pay him six thousand and deface[306] the bond.
Double six thousand and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend,
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence[318] upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer[319],
Since you are dear[320] bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASSANIO 'Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried,

Reads

my creditors grow cruel, my estate[323] 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 see you at my death. Notwithstanding[326], use your pleasure, if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.'

PORTIA O love! Dispatch[328] all business, and be gone!

BASSANIO Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste; but till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,

No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain[332].

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 3]

running scene 15

Location: Venice

Enter [*Shylock*] *the Jew and Solanio and Antonio and the Jailer*

SHYLOCK Jailer, look[1] to him, tell not me of mercy.
This is the fool that lends out money gratis[2].
Jailer, look to him.

ANTONIO Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHYLOCK I'll have my bond. Speak not against my bond,
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou calledst me dog before thou hadst a cause,
But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty[10] jailer, that thou art so fond
To come abroad[11] with him at his request.

ANTONIO I pray thee hear me speak.

SHYLOCK I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak.
I'll have my bond and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed[15] fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not,
I'll have no speaking. I will have my bond.

Exit Jew

SOLANIO It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept[20] with men.

ANTONIO Let him alone.

I'll follow him no more with bootless[22] prayers.
He seeks my life, his reason well I know;
I oft delivered from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan[25] to me:
Therefore he hates me.

SOLANIO I am sure the duke
Will never grant[28] this forfeiture to hold.

ANTONIO The duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity[30] that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state,
Since that[33] the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go.
These griefs and losses have so bated me[35],
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, jailer, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not.

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 4]

running scene 16

Location: Belmont

Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica and [*Balthasar*,] *a man of Portia's*

LORENZO Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit[2]
Of godlike amity[3], which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom[5] you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief[6],
How dear a lover[7] of my lord your husband,

I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you[9].

PORTIA I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now, for in companions
That do converse and waste[12] the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs[14] a like proportion
Of lineaments[15], of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover[17] of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
In purchasing the semblance[20] of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty!
This comes too near the praising of myself:
Therefore no more of it. Hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry[25] and manage of my house
Until my lord's return; for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return.
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide. I do desire you
Not to deny[33] this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

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

PORTIA My people[38] do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
So fare you well till we shall meet again.

LORENZO Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you.

JESSICA I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

PORTIA I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well Jessica.

Exeunt [*Jessica and Lorenzo*]

Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true[47],
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

Gives a letter

And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua. See thou render[50] this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario,
And look what[52] notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee with imagined[53] speed
Unto the traject[54], to the common ferry
Which trades[55] to Venice; waste no time in words,
But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

BALTHASAR Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

[*Exit*]

PORTIA Come on, Nerissa, I have work in hand
That you yet know not of; we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

NERISSA Shall they see us?

PORTIA They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit[62],
That they shall think we are accomplishèd[63]
With that we lack[64]. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred[65] like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver[67] grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice[68], and turn two mincing[69] steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays[70]
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint[71] lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died.

I could not do withal[74]. Then I'll repent,
And wish for all that, that I had not killed them;
And twenty of these puny[76] lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above[78] a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw[79] tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

NERISSA Why, shall we turn to[81] men?

PORTIA Fie, what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device[84]
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure[87] twenty miles today.

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 5]

running scene 17

Enter [*Lancelet the*] *Clown and Jessica*

LANCELET Yes, truly, for look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise[2] you, I fear you. I was always plain[3] with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good, and that is but a kind of bastard[6] hope neither.

JESSICA And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LANCELET Marry, you may partly hope that your father got[8] you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

JESSICA That were a kind of bastard hope indeed. So the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

LANCELET Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and

mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis[13], your mother; well, you are gone[14] both ways.

JESSICA I shall be saved by my husband[15]. He hath made me a Christian.

LANCELET Truly, the more to blame he. We were Christians enow[17] before, e'en as many as could well live one by[18] another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs[19]. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money[21].

Enter Lorenzo

JESSICA I'll tell my husband, Lancelet, what you say. Here he comes.

LORENZO I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Lancelet, if you thus get my wife into corners[25].

JESSICA Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo. Lancelet and I are[27] out. He tells me flatly there is no mercy for me in heaven because I am a Jew's daughter. And he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

LORENZO I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the negro's belly[32]. The Moor is with child by you, Lancelet.

LANCELET It is much[34] that the Moor should be more than reason, but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for[35].

LORENZO How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace[38] of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah, bid them[40] prepare for dinner.

LANCELET That is done, sir, they have all stomachs[41].

LORENZO Goodly lord, what a wit-snapper[42] are you? Then bid them prepare dinner.

LANCELET That is done too, sir, only 'cover'[44] is the word.

LORENZO Will you cover then, sir?

LANCELET Not so, sir, neither. I know my duty[46].

LORENZO Yet more quarrelling with occasion[47]! Wilt thou show
the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee,
understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy
fellows[50]; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we
will come in to dinner.

LANCELET For[52] the table, sir, it shall be served in: for the meat,
sir, it shall be covered[53]: for your coming in to dinner, sir, why,
let it be as humours and conceits[54] shall govern.

Exit Clown [*Lancelet*]

LORENZO O dear discretion[55], how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words, and I do know
A many[58] fools that stand in better place,
Garnished[59] like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter[60]. How cheerest thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the lord Bassanio's wife?

JESSICA Past all expressing[63]. It is very meet
The lord Bassanio live an upright life,
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth.
And if on earth he do not merit it,
In reason[68] he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heav'nly match
And on the wager lay[70] two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawned[72] with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow[73].

LORENZO Even[74] such a husband
Hast thou of[75] me as she is for a wife.

JESSICA Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

LORENZO I will anon. First, let us go to dinner.

JESSICA Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach[78].

LORENZO No, pray thee let it serve for table-talk,
Then, howsome'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest[81] it.

JESSICA Well, I'll set you forth[82].

Exeunt

Act 4 [Scene 1]

Location: Venice

Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio and Gratiano [*with Salerio and others*]

DUKE What, is Antonio here?

ANTONIO Ready, so please your grace.

DUKE I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer[3]
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From[6] any dram of mercy.

ANTONIO I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify[8]
His rigorous course, but since he stands obdurate[9]
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's[11] reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny[14] and rage of his.

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

SALERIO He is ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock

DUKE Make room, and let him stand before our[17] face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion[19] of thy malice
To the last hour of act[20], and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse[21] more strange
Than is thy strange[22] 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[25] the forfeiture,
But, touched with humane gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety[27] 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[30] down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms[32] and rough hearts of flints,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars[33], never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle[35] answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK I have possessed[36] your grace of what I purpose,
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due[38] and forfeit of my bond.
If you deny it, let the danger[39] light
Upon your charter[40] and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion[42] flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that,
But say it is my humour[44]; is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned[47]? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love[48] not a gaping pig,
Some that are mad if they behold a cat,
And others when the bagpipe sings i'th'nose[50]
Cannot contain their urine, for affection[51],
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 rendered,
Why he[55] cannot abide a gaping pig,
Why he[56], a harmless necessary cat,
Why he, a woollen bagpipe, but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended.

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged[61] hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow[62] thus
A losing[63] suit against him. Are you answered?

BASSANIO This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current[65] of thy cruelty.

SHYLOCK I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

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

SHYLOCK Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO Every offence is not a hate at first.

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

ANTONIO I pray you think[71] you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood[73] bate his usual height,
Or even as well use question[74] with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb.
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag[77] their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretted[78] with the gusts of heaven.
You may as well do anything most hard[79]
As seek to soften that—than[80] which what harder?—
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency[83]
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

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[88] them. I would have my bond!

DUKE How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring[89] none?

SHYLOCK What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong[90]?
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[93],
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be seasoned with such viands[98]? You will answer
'The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you:
The pound of flesh which I demand of him
Is dearly bought, 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for[104] judgement. Answer: shall I have it?

DUKE Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learnèd doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here today.

SALERIO My lord, here stays without[109]
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

DUKE Bring us the letters. Call the messenger.

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

ANTONIO I am a tainted[116] wether of the flock,
Meetest[117] for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me;
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter Nerissa [*dressed like a law clerk*]

DUKE Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

NERISSA From both. My lord Bellario greets your
grace.

She gives the Duke a letter while

Shylock whets his knife on his shoe

BASSANIO Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

SHYLOCK To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt
there.

GRATIANO Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen[126]. But no metal can,
No, not the hangman's[127] axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

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

GRATIANO O, be thou damned, inexecrable[130] dog!
And for thy life[131] let justice be accused.
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras[133],
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men. Thy currish[135] spirit
Governed a wolf who, hanged for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell[137] soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed[138] dam,
Infused itself in thee, for thy desires
Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

SHYLOCK Till thou canst rail[141] the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st[142] thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair[143] thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To endless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learnèd doctor in our court;
Where is he?

NERISSA He attendeth here hard[148] 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.

[*Exeunt some*]

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

‘Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of

Reads

your letter I am very sick, but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation[155] 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[159] with my opinion, which—bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend—comes with him, at my importunity[161], 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[163] estimation, for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial[165] shall better publish[166] his commendation.’

Enter Portia for Balthasar

Dressed like a lawyer

You hear the learnèd Bellario, what he writes,
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.
Give me your hand. Came you from old Bellario?

PORTIA I did, my lord.

DUKE You are welcome. Take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference[172]
That holds this present question[173] in the court?

PORTIA I am informèd throughly[174] of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

DUKE Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

PORTIA Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK Shylock is my name.

PORTIA Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,
Yet in such rule[180] that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn[181] you as you do proceed.—
You stand within his danger[182], do you not?

ANTONIO Ay, so he says.

PORTIA Do you confess[184] 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[188],
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest[190]:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows[194] the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread[196] and fear of kings.
But mercy is above this sceptred sway[197],
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest[200] God's
When mercy seasons[201] justice: therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice[203], none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render[205]
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

SHYLOCK My deeds upon my head![210] I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

PORTIA Is he not able to discharge[212] the money?

BASSANIO Yes, here I tender[213] 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[217]
That malice bears down truth[218]. And I beseech you
Wrest once[219] 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 establishèd.
'Twill be recorded for[224] a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

SHYLOCK A Daniel[227] come to judgement! Yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!

PORTIA I pray you let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Gives Portia the bond

PORTIA Shylock, there's thrice 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 by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful.
Take thrice thy money, bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK When it is paid according to the tenure[240].
It doth appear you are a worthy judge,
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement. By my soul I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

ANTONIO Most heartily I do beseech the court

To give the judgement.

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

SHYLOCK O noble judge! O excellent young man!

PORTIA For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to[254] the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

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

PORTIA Therefore lay bare your bosom.

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

PORTIA It is so. Are there balance[262] here to weigh
The flesh?

SHYLOCK I have them ready.

PORTIA Have by[265] some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop[266] his wounds, lest he should 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.

Looking at the bond

PORTIA Come, merchant, have you anything to say?

ANTONIO But little. I am armed[272] and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio. Fare you well.
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. It is still[276] her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow

An age of poverty, from which ling'ring penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife.
Tell her the process[282] of Antonio's end.
Say how I loved you; speak me fair in death[283].
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love[285].
Repent not 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 instantly with all my heart[289].

BASSANIO Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which[291] is as dear to me as life itself,
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteemed above thy life.
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver[295] you.

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

GRATIANO I have a wife, 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,
The wish would make else[302] an unquiet house.

SHYLOCK These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter.
Would[304] any of the stock of Barabbas

Aside?

Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
We trifle[306] time. I pray thee pursue sentence.

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

SHYLOCK Most rightful judge!

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

SHYLOCK Most learnèd 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'.
Then take thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are by the laws of Venice confiscate[319]
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO O upright judge! Mark[321], Jew. O learnèd judge!

SHYLOCK Is that the law?

PORTIA Thyself shalt see the act,
For as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

GRATIANO O learnèd judge! Mark, Jew: a learnèd judge!

SHYLOCK I take this offer, then. Pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

BASSANIO Here is the money.

PORTIA Soft![330]
The Jew shall have all[331] justice. Soft, no haste.
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO O Jew! An upright judge, a learnèd judge!

PORTIA 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 tak'st more
Or less than a just[337] pound, be it so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance[338],
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple[340], nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair[341],
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip[344].

PORTIA Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

SHYLOCK Give me my principal[346], 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 merely[349] justice and his bond.

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

SHYLOCK Shall I not have barely[352] my principal?

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

SHYLOCK Why, then the devil give him good[355] of it!
I'll stay[356] no longer question.

Starts to go

PORTIA 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[360]
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party gainst the which he doth contrive[363]
Shall seize[364] one half his goods, the other half
Comes to the privy coffer[365] of the state,
And the offender's life lies in[366] the mercy
Of the duke only, gainst all other voice[367].
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st,
For it appears, by manifest proceeding[369],
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred
The danger[373] formerly by me rehearsed.
Down[374] therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

GRATIANO 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[377]:
Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge[378].

DUKE That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For[381] half thy wealth, it is Antonio's,
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness[383] may drive unto a fine.

PORTIA Ay, for the state, not for Antonio[384].

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

PORTIA What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO A halter[390] gratis. Nothing else, for God's sake.

ANTONIO So[391] please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit[392] the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content, so[393] he will let me have
The other half in use[394], to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter.
Two things provided more: that for this favour
He presently[398] become a Christian.
The other, that he do record a gift
Here in the court of all he dies possessed[400]
Unto his son[401] Lorenzo and his daughter.

DUKE He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late[403] pronouncèd 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.

GRATIANO In christening thou shalt have two godfathers.
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more[412],
To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font[413].

Exit [*Shylock*]

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

To Portia

PORTIA I humbly do desire your grace of[415] pardon.
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet[417] I presently set forth.

DUKE I am sorry that your leisure serves you not[418].
Antonio, gratify[419] this gentleman,
For in my mind you are much bound to him.

Exit Duke and his train

BASSANIO Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof[423],
Three thousand ducats due unto the Jew
We freely cope[425] your courteous pains withal.

Offers money

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

PORTIA He is well paid that is well satisfied,
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account[430] myself well paid.
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you know[432] me when we meet again.
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Starts to leave

BASSANIO Dear sir, of force I must attempt[434] you further.
Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,

Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
Not to deny me, and to pardon me[437].

PORTIA You press[438] me far, and therefore I will yield.
Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake.

To Antonio

And, for your love[440], I'll take this ring from you.

To Bassanio

Do not draw back your hand, I'll take no more,
And you in[442] love shall not deny me this.

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

PORTIA I will have nothing else but only this,
And now methinks I have a mind to[446] it.

BASSANIO There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest[448] ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation.
Only for this, I pray you pardon me.

PORTIA I see, sir, you are liberal[451] in offers.
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

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

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

Exeunt [*Portia and Nerissa*]

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

BASSANIO Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him.

Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste!

Exit Gratiano

Come, you and I will thither presently,
And in the morning early will we both
Fly[470] toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

Exeunt

[Act 4 Scene 2]

running scene 19

Enter Portia and Nerissa

Still disguised

PORTIA Inquire the Jew's house out[1], give him this deed,
And let him sign it. We'll away tonight

Gives her a deed

And be[3] a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter Gratiano

GRATIANO Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en[5].
My lord Bassanio upon more advice[6]
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Gives her the ring

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

GRATIANO That will I do.

NERISSA Sir, I would speak with you.
I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,

Aside to Portia

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

PORTIA Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have
old[17] swearing

Aside to Nerissa

That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface[19] them, and outswear them too.—
Away, make haste! Thou know'st where I will tarry.

Aloud

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

Exeunt

Act 5 [Scene 1]

Location: Belmont

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica

LORENZO 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[4] methinks mounted the Trojan walls
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents
Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA In such a night
Did Thisbe[8] fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself[9],
And ran dismayed away.

LORENZO In such a night
Stood Dido[12] with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild[13] sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

JESSICA In such a night
Medea[16] gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew[17] old Aeson.

LORENZO In such a night
Did Jessica steal[19] from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift[20] love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA 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.

LORENZO In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew[27],
Slander her love[28], and he forgave it her.

JESSICA I would out-night you[29], did nobody come.
But hark, I hear the footing[30] of a man.

Enter [*Stephano, a*] *Messenger*

LORENZO Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

STEPHANO A friend.

LORENZO A friend? What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?

STEPHANO Stephano is my name, and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about[36]
By holy crosses[37], where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

LORENZO Who comes with her?

STEPHANO None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you is my master yet returned?

LORENZO 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 Clown [*Lancelet*]

LANCELET Sola[46], sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!

LORENZO Who calls?

LANCELET Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo?
And Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

LORENZO Leave hollowing[50], man! Here.

LANCELET Sola! Where, where?

LORENZO Here.

LANCELET Tell him there's a post[53] come from my master, with

his horn[54] full of good news: my master will be here ere morning.

[*Exit*]

LORENZO Sweet soul, let's in[56], and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter. Why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify[58], pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand,
And bring your music[60] 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[64] the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven[65]

They sit

Is thick inlaid with patens[66] of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb[67] which thou behold'st
But in his motion[68] like an angel sings,
Still choiring[69] to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay[71]
Doth grossly[72] close it in, we cannot hear it.

[*Enter Musicians*]

Come, ho, and wake Diana[73] with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

JESSICA I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Play music

LORENZO The reason is, your spirits[77] are attentive.
For do but note a wild and wanton[78] herd
Or race[79] of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching[80] mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition[81] of their blood.
If they but[82] hear perchance a trumpet sound,

Or any air[83] of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand[84],
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet[86]
Did feign[87] that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods,
Since nought so stockish[88], hard and full of rage,
But music for 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[92] and spoils.
The motions[93] of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections[94] dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter Portia and Nerissa

PORTIA 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[98] world.

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

PORTIA So doth the greater glory dim the less.
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by[102], and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters[104]. Music! Hark!

Music

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

PORTIA Nothing is good, I see, without respect[106].
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

NERISSA Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

PORTIA The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended[110], 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[114] seasoned are

To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion[116]
And would not be awaked.

Music ceases

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

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

LORENZO Dear lady, welcome home.

PORTIA We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed[124], we hope, the better for our words.
Are they returned?

LORENZO Madam, they are not yet,
But there is come a messenger before[127],
To signify their coming.

PORTIA Go in, Nerissa.
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence,
Nor you, Lorenzo, Jessica, nor you.

A tucket[132] sounds

LORENZO Your husband is at hand. I hear his trumpet.
We are no telltales, madam; fear you not.

PORTIA This night methinks is but the daylight sick.
It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano and their followers

BASSANIO We should hold day with the Antipodes[138],
If you would walk in absence of the sun[139].

PORTIA Let me give light, but let me not be light[140],
For a light wife doth make a heavy[141] husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me,
But God sort[143] all! You are welcome home, my lord.

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 You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound[148] for you.

ANTONIO No more than I am well acquitted of[149].

PORTIA Sir, you are very welcome to our house.
It must appear in other ways than words:
Therefore I scant[152] this breathing courtesy.

GRATIANO By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong.

To Nerissa

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.
Would he were gelt[155] that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at[156] heart.

PORTIA A quarrel, ho, already? What's the matter?

GRATIANO About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy[159] 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 when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till the hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though[166] not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective[167] and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! But well I know
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

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

GRATIANO Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbèd[173] boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating[175] boy, that begged it as a fee.

I could not for my heart deny it him.

PORTIA You were to blame—I must be plain with you—
To part so slightly[178] with your wife's first gift.
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted[180] with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it, and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters[185]. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
An 'twere to me, I should be mad[187] at it.

BASSANIO Why, I were best to cut my left hand off

Aside

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

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

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

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

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

NERISSA Nor I in yours till I again see mine.

BASSANIO Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive[208] for what I gave the ring,

And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

PORTIA If you had known the virtue[212] of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain[214] the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If[217] you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted[218] the modesty
To urge[219] the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASSANIO No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor[223],
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begged the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffered[226] him to go displeased away—
Even he that had held up[227] 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[232]. Pardon me, good lady!
And by these blessèd candles of the night[233],
Had you been there, I think you would have begged
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

PORTIA Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal[239] as you.
I'll not deny him anything I have,
No, not my body nor my husband's bed.
Know[242] him I shall, I am well sure of it.
Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus[243].
If you do not, if I be left alone,

Now, by mine honour[245], which is yet mine own,
I'll have the doctor for my bedfellow.

NERISSA And I his clerk: therefore be well advised[247]
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRATIANO Well, do you so. Let not me take[249] him, then.
For if I do, I'll mar[250] the young clerk's pen.

ANTONIO I am th'unhappy[251] subject of these quarrels.

PORTIA Sir, grieve not you. You are welcome
notwithstanding.

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

PORTIA Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself[258].
In each eye, one. Swear by your double[259] self,
And there's an oath of credit[260].

BASSANIO 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 thy wealth,—

To Bassanio

Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,

To Portia

Had quite miscarried[266]. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly[268].

PORTIA Then you shall be his surety[269]. Give him this

She gives Antonio the ring

And bid him keep it better than the other.

ANTONIO Here, Lord Bassanio. Swear to keep this ring.

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

PORTIA I had it of him. Pardon, Bassanio,
For, by this ring, the doctor lay with[274] me.

NERISSA And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbèd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of[277] this last night did lie with me.

Shows her ring

GRATIANO Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair[279] enough.
What, are we cuckolds[280] ere we have deserved it?

PORTIA Speak not so grossly[281]. You are all amazed.
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure.

She gives a letter

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 but e'en[287] now returned. I have not yet
Entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome,
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.

Gives him a letter

There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly[292] come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancèd on this letter.

ANTONIO I am dumb[295].

BASSANIO Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

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

NERISSA Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,
Unless he live until he be a man.

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

ANTONIO Sweet lady, you have given me life and living[302];

For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road[304].

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

NERISSA 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 possessed of.

LORENZO Fair ladies, you drop manna[311] in the way
Of starvèd people.

PORTIA It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full[314]. Let us go in,
And charge us there upon inter'gatories[316],
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRATIANO Let it be so. The first inter'gatory[318]
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on[319] is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay[320],
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,
Till I were couching[323] with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore[325] as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Exeunt

TEXTUAL NOTES

Q = First Quarto text of 1600

Q2 = Second Quarto text of 1619

F = First Folio text of 1623

F2 = a correction introduced in the Second Folio text of 1632

Ed = a correction introduced by a later editor

SD = stage direction

SH = speech heading (i.e. speaker's name)

List of parts = Ed

1.1.0 SD *Salerio and Solanio* = Ed. F = *Salarino, and Salanio* **8 SH SALERIO** = Ed. F = *Sal.* Q = *Salarino. SHs for first three speeches of Antonio's friends reversed in* F, *due to confusing SHs in* Q*: Salarino, Salanio, Salar.* **15 SH SOLANIO** = Q *(Salanio)*. F = *Salar*. **28 docked** = Ed. F = docks **62 SH SALERIO** = Ed. F = *Sala. (his next two speeches: Sal.)* **70 SD *Salerio*** = Ed. F = *Salarino* **116 Is** = Ed. F = It is **118 are two** = F. Q = are as two **158 do me now** = Q. F = doe

1.2.6 small = F. Q = meane **15 be one** = F. Q = to be one **19 reason is not in** = F. Q = reasoning is not in the **22 Is it** = Q. F = It is **39 Palatine** = Q2. F = Palentine **44 rather to be** = F. Q = rather be **47 Bon** = Ed. F = *Boune* **52 throstle** = Ed. F = Trassell **55 should** = F. Q = shall **67 other** = F. Q = Scottish. *Altered in* F *so as not to offend Scottish King James* **96 wish** = F. Q = pray God grant **105 seek you** = F. Q = seeke for you

1.3.33 Rialto = Ed. F = Ryalta **45 well-won** = Q. F = well-worne **61 ye** = Q. F = he **82 peeled** *spelled* pil'd *in* F **111 spit** *spelled* spet *in* F **121 should** = F. Q = can **124 spat** *spelled* spet *in* F **132 of barren** = F. Q = for barren **135 penalties** = F. Q = penaltie **151 it pleaseth** = F. Q = pleaseth **180 terms** = Q. F = teames

2.1.0 SD *Morocco* *spelled Morochus in* F **32 thee, lady** = Q. F = the Ladie **36 page** = Ed. F = rage

2.2.1 SH LANCELET = Ed. F = *Clo.* **3 Gobbo** = Q2. F = *Iobbe (throughout scene)* **22 a kind** = F. Q = but a kinde **48 Lancelet** = F. Q = Lancelet sir **87 last** = Q2. F = lost **156 SD *Exit*** *placed two lines earlier in* F **167 where they** = F. Q = where thou

2.3.9 talk = F. Q = in talk **11 did** = Ed. F = doe **13 somewhat** = F. Q = something

2.4.0 SD *Salerio* = Ed. F = *Slarino (Sal. for his SHs throughout this scene)* **11 shall it** = F. Q = it shall **14 Is** = Q. F = I

2.5.1 SH SHYLOCK = Q2. F = *Iew* **28 there** = Q. F = their **43 Jewès** = Ed. F = Iewes **47 but** = F. Q = and

2.6.0 SD *Salerio* = Ed. F = *Salino* **2 a stand** = F. Q = stand **7 seal** = Q. F = steale **18 a prodigal** = F. Q = the prodigal **46 you are** = F. Q = are you **60 gentlemen** = F. Q = gentleman

2.7.5 many men = Q. F = men *Line accidentally printed twice in* F **70 tombs** = Ed. F = *timber*

2.8.0 SD *Salerio* = Ed. F = *Salarino* **6 comes** = F. Q = came **8 gondola** *spelled* Gondilo *in* F **34 You** = Q. F = Yo

2.9.7 thou = F. Q = you **45 peasantry** = Q. F = pleasantry **102 Bassanio, Lord Love**, = Ed. F = *Bassanio* Lord, loue

3.1.0 SD *Salerio* = Ed. F = *Salarino* **6 gossip's** = F. Q = gossip **33 blood** = F. Q = my blood **50 what's the** = F. Q = what's his **64 SH SERVANT** = Ed. *Not in* F **71 of her** = Q. F = of ster **80 how much** = F. Q = whats **94 heard** = Ed. F = here **105 turquoise** = Ed. F = Turkies

3.2.0 SD *trains* = Q. F = *traine* **17 if** = Q. F = of **34 do** = Q. F = doth **44 aloof** = Q. F = aloose **63 much, much** = Q. F = much **69 eyes** = F. Q = eye **83 vice** = Ed. F = voice **152 me** = Q. F = my **161 nothing** = F. Q = something **174 lord** = F. Q = Lords **199 have** = Q. F = gaue **207 roof** = Q2. F = rough **213 is so** = F. Q = is **323 SH BASSANIO** = Ed. *Not in* F **326 might see** = F. Q = might but see **333 No** = Q. F = Nor

3.3.2 lends = F. Q = lent

3.4.13 equal *spelled* egal *in* F **50 Padua** = Ed. F = Mantua **51 hand** = F. Q = hands **54 traject** = Ed. F = Tranect

3.5.67–8 merit it, In = Ed. F = meane it, it Is. Q = meane it, it In **75 a wife** = F. Q = wife

4.1.52 Mistress = Ed. F = Masters **66 answer** = F. Q = answers **75 Why … made** = Q. *Not in* F **78 fretted** = F. Q = fretten **80 what** = F. Q = what's **112 messenger** = Q. F = Messengers **144 endless** = F. Q = cureless **169 Came** = F. Q = Come **208 court** = Q. F = course **228 do I** = F. Q = I do **234 No, not** = F. Q = Not not **266 should** = F. Q = doe **267 Is it so** = Q. F = It is not **271 Come** = F. Q = You **286 not** = F. Q = but **316 Then take** = F. Q = Take then **337 it so** = F. Q = it but so **344 thee** = F. Q = you **354 taken so** = F. Q = so taken **411 thou shalt** = F. Q = shalt thou **414 home with me** = Q. F = with me home

5.1.3 noise = Q. F = nnyse **32 SH STEPHANO** = Ed. F = *Mes.* **41 is** = Q. F = it **returned** = Q. F = rnturn'd **44 us** = Q. F = vs vs **56 Sweet soul** = Ed. F *prints as last words of Lancelet's speech* **58 Stephano** = Q2. F = *Stephen* **pray** = F. Q = I pray **72 it in** = Q. F = in it **89 time** = F. Q = the time **164 the hour** = F. Q = your hour **168 But … know** = F. Q = no God's my Iudge **233 And by** = F. Q = For by **264 thy** = F. Q = his **273 Pardon** = F. Q = Pardon me **287 but e'en now** = F. Q = even but now

SCENE-BY-SCENE ANALYSIS

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Lines 1–115: Antonio confesses he is sad but cannot explain the reason. Salerio suggests he is worried about his ships, currently at sea, but Antonio says that he is not concerned about his merchandise. Salerio therefore suggests that it is because Antonio is "in love," establishing a link between two main themes: commerce and love. They are interrupted by Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano. Solanio and Salerio take their leave, joking that some "worthier company" has arrived, introducing the motif of "worth" (both of goods and people). Gratiano observes that Antonio looks unwell and Antonio's meta-theatrical response is that the world is a "stage where every man must play a part" and that his is "a sad one." Gratiano urges him not to put on sadness merely to seem wise, establishing the themes of disguise/appearance versus reality.

Lines 116–188: Bassanio observes that Gratiano "speaks an infinite deal of nothing" and that "His reasons are two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff," images that reinforce the play's concerns with quantity and value. Antonio questions Bassanio about the lady he is in love with. Bassanio's response is elliptical, focusing instead on his lack of fortune and need to borrow money from Antonio, despite already being in debt to him "in money and in love," further reinforcing the link between these two themes. Bassanio describes Portia of Belmont, "a lady richly left," who has inherited a large fortune on her father's death, and who is "fair and, fairer than that word, / Of wondrous virtues." This raises the motif of "fairness," in terms of both beauty and justice. Bassanio needs money to court Portia. Antonio explains that his "fortunes are at sea" but will stand security if Bassanio borrows money.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

In Belmont, Portia is complaining of being “aweary of this great world,” echoing Antonio in the previous scene. Under the terms of her dead father’s will, she cannot choose her own husband, nor refuse one she dislikes if he passes the test set by her father. Each of Portia’s suitors must choose between three caskets: one gold, one silver, and one lead. Only the man who chooses correctly shall marry Portia. She and Nerissa list her recent admirers: a “Neapolitan prince,” a “French lord,” a “young baron of England,” and “the Duke of Saxony’s nephew,” emphasizing the competition that Bassanio faces, but also the play’s concerns with cultural identities and differences. Portia dismisses each one, showing her quick wit and ability to reason. Nerissa reminds her of “a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier” (Bassanio) who visited their household while Portia’s father was alive. The ladies agree he is “worthy” of praise. A servant announces that the four suitors have left, but that a fifth, “the Prince of Morocco,” will arrive that night. Portia is unimpressed, commenting that her new suitor will have “the complexion of a devil,” highlighting the racial/cultural boundaries that exist in the play.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

Bassanio and Shylock discuss a loan of “Three thousand ducats” for “three months.” Bassanio assures Shylock that “Antonio shall become bound” in guarantee, but Shylock is unsure: Antonio’s wealth is uncertain while his ships are still at sea. Antonio approaches and Shylock reveals his hatred in an aside: he hates Antonio “for he is a Christian,” but more importantly because Antonio makes loans without charging interest, damaging Shylock’s moneylending business. Finally, he points out that Antonio hates him because he is Jewish, and because he is a moneylender. This speech makes clear the opposing characters of Shylock and Antonio, contrasted throughout the play in terms of their faiths and characteristics.

When Antonio arrives, Shylock makes a show of civility. Antonio tells him that usually he does not “lend nor borrow,” but that he is making an exception for Bassanio. Shylock remembers all the times that Antonio has “rated” him over his moneylending, and insulted him on the grounds of his faith, calling him a “misbeliever.” He asks why he should lend

money to someone who has “spat on” him and called him a “dog.” Antonio replies that he is likely to do these things again and tells Shylock that he will be making a loan to his “enemy,” who it will be easier to “Exact the penalties” from if he fails to pay. Shylock claims that he wants to “be friends,” making the loan with no interest charges. He suggests, “in a merry sport,” that if Antonio fails to pay back the money on the day stipulated, he will take a “pound” of Antonio’s “fair flesh.” Antonio agrees, despite Bassanio’s protests. He points out that within two months he is expecting a return of “three times the value of this bond.” Shylock tells them to meet him “at the notary’s,” where they will put the bond in writing, and leaves. Antonio observes that Shylock “grows kind,” but Bassanio is less trusting, saying that Shylock has “a villain’s mind.” Antonio reiterates that his ships will come home “a month before the day,” one of many references to time that create pace and tension.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

The Prince of Morocco begs Portia not to “Mislike” him on account of his complexion. She politely reminds him that, under the terms of her father’s will, her marriage will be due to a “lott’ry” rather than her own choice. The prince’s speeches are lover-like, but he is self-absorbed and boastful. Portia reminds him that the penalty for choosing wrongly is that he must remain unmarried. He agrees, and they go to dinner.

ACT 2 SCENE 2

Lines 1–99: Lancelet, the Clown, is contemplating running away from his master, whom he characterizes as a “fiend” and a “devil,” recurring imagery used in conjunction with Shylock. As he finally decides to “run,” he meets Old Gobbo, his father. Gobbo is blind and does not recognize his son, who decides to pretend to be someone else, a situation that creates comedy, but which also reinforces the other instances of concealed/exchanged identity in the play. Gobbo reveals that he is looking for Shylock’s house and for his son, who Lancelet claims is dead, before revealing his true identity. Gobbo, however, will not believe that

he is Lancelet. The confusion is resolved and Gobbo explains that he has brought Shylock a present, but Lancelet announces that he has run away from his master. He informs Gobbo that he intends to serve Bassanio, who gives “rare new liveries,” and tells him to give Bassanio the present.

Lines 100–191: Bassanio enters, instructing a servant to have supper ready “by five of the clock,” and to ask Gratiano to come to his lodging. Lancelet urges his father to give him the present, and comic confusion is created as both men try to ask Bassanio if he will take Lancelet into service. Bassanio clarifies matters and agrees. Lancelet and Gobbo leave. Gratiano arrives and asks Bassanio if he may accompany him to Belmont. Bassanio agrees, but insists that Gratiano must be more modest in his behavior.

ACT 2 SCENE 3

Jessica regrets that Lancelet is leaving, as he has made life in Shylock’s house less tedious. She gives him money, and a letter to deliver to Lorenzo, a guest at Bassanio’s house. Alone, Jessica reveals her “heinous sin”: she is ashamed to be her “father’s child.” She declares that, although she is of Shylock’s blood, she is not of “his manners,” creating an important distinction between faith and character, explored throughout the play. She reveals her intention to “Become a Christian” and marry Lorenzo.

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Lorenzo and his friends prepare to disguise themselves as masquers and help Jessica escape from Shylock’s house that evening. Lancelet delivers her letter to Lorenzo and tells them that he is going to Shylock’s with an invitation to supper at Bassanio’s. Lorenzo gives him money and a message to Jessica that he will not fail her, and sends Salerio and Solanio to prepare. He tells Gratiano that Jessica will be waiting to elope with “gold and jewels” and will disguise herself as Lorenzo’s torchbearer and escape as part of the masque.

ACT 2 SCENE 5

Shylock warns Lancelet that his “eyes shall be thy judge” of the differences between himself and Bassanio, raising a motif of sight/ perception. He calls for Jessica and tells her that he is going out, although he is suspicious of Bassanio’s motives in inviting him, and fears some “ill a-brewing.” Lancelet tells him that there are to be masques that night, and Shylock warns Jessica to “Lock up” the house, and not to let the “sound of shallow fopp’ry enter / [His] sober house,” emphasizing his separation from the prevailing Venetian culture. As Lancelet goes, he whispers to Jessica to look out for “a Christian” (Lorenzo) during the masque. Shylock leaves, reminding Jessica to lock the doors, and she secretly bids him goodbye.

ACT 2 SCENE 6

Gratiano and Salerio wait for Lorenzo. They are worried that he is late, particularly as “lovers ever run before the clock,” but he joins them and calls for Jessica. She appears, above, disguised in boy’s clothes, and throws Lorenzo a casket of money and jewels. She is embarrassed by her disguise, but Lorenzo urges her to “come at once.” As they wait for her, Lorenzo tells Gratiano that Jessica is “wise, fair and true.” She arrives and they go to join the masque, leaving Gratiano behind. Antonio arrives to tell Gratiano that “the wind is come about” and he must join Bassanio to sail for Belmont.

ACT 2 SCENE 7

Portia shows the Prince of Morocco the three caskets. He reads the inscription on each: he has a choice between gaining “what many men desire” (the gold casket), getting “as much as he deserves” (silver), or to “give and hazard all he hath” (lead). Portia tells him that the correct casket contains her portrait. The prince makes a long speech explaining his reasoning, but also, unwittingly, revealing his self-importance. He chooses the gold casket, which contains a skull “within whose empty eye / There is a written scroll” telling him that “All that glisters is not gold”: he has judged by appearances, ironically given his request to Portia in

Act 2 Scene 1. In contrast to his earlier verbosity, he tells Portia that he is “too grieved” to “take a tedious leave,” and departs. Portia is pleased and expresses the wish that all of his “complexion” make a similar choice.

ACT 2 SCENE 8

Shylock has discovered the disappearance of Jessica and his money. We learn about his response through the biased, unsympathetic report of Salerio and Solanio. Shylock and the Duke of Venice went to search Bassanio’s ship, which had already sailed. Antonio assured them that Lorenzo and Jessica were not on it. Solanio jeeringly reports Shylock’s confused rage and shouts of “My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!,” suggesting that he values them equally. Solanio observes that unless Antonio can “keep his day” for repaying Shylock financially, he will pay for these events. Salerio has heard that one of Antonio’s ships may have been lost. They speak of Antonio’s kind and generous nature, in direct contrast with the characterization of Shylock.

ACT 2 SCENE 9

The Prince of Aragon has come to take the test for Portia’s hand. The process is repeated: the prince selects the silver casket and finds “The portrait of a blinking idiot,” holding another scroll. He protests. Portia’s observation that “To offend and judge are distinct offices / And of opposèd natures” emphasizes the theme of justice. The prince leaves, and Portia instructs Nerissa to “draw the curtain” on the caskets. A messenger brings news of the imminent arrival of a Venetian lord, who has sent greetings and gifts “of rich value.” Portia is eager to see the visitor, and Nerissa hopes it is Bassanio.

ACT 3 SCENE 1

In Venice, Solanio and Salerio discuss the reported loss of another of Antonio’s ships. Shylock approaches and Solanio observes that “the devil” “comes in the likeness of a Jew.” Shylock accuses them of having

a part in Jessica's elopement, and they torment him, before asking if he has heard about Antonio's losses at sea. Shylock recalls how "smug" Antonio has been in the past, and tells them that he must now "look to his bond." Salerio asks what good taking Antonio's flesh will do, to which Shylock replies "To bait fish," adding that it will "feed" his "revenge," showing his callousness. He argues that Antonio has "disgraced," "hindered" and "mocked" him, solely because he is Jewish. He makes an impassioned speech, pointing out that he is "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."

This plea for tolerance highlights the complexities of the play in terms of the representation of the Jewish faith and of Shylock, intrinsically and separately, and the degree of the audience's sympathies for various characters, complicated here by Salerio and Solanio's evident prejudice and Shylock's evident desire for "revenge." They are interrupted by Antonio's servant, who asks Salerio and Solanio to go to his master. As they leave, Tubal arrives. Shylock asks for news of Jessica, but Tubal has not found her, although he reports that she is spending Shylock's money. He also reports that Antonio has lost another ship, and Shylock wavers between pleasure at Antonio's misfortune, and rage at his own losses.

ACT 3 SCENE 2

Lines 1–222: Portia asks Bassanio to wait "a day or two" before undertaking the task, as she does not want to lose him but he wants to choose immediately. He confesses his love and Portia agrees, calling for music to play while Bassanio is making his decision. As a song is sung, Bassanio considers the three caskets. Unlike the other suitors, he recognizes that "the outward shows be least themselves." Rejecting gold as "food for Midas" and silver as the money that passes ""Tween man and man," Bassanio selects the lead casket. Portia's aside reveals her happiness as he opens it to reveal her portrait. Portia makes Bassanio "her lord, her governor, her king" and master of her estate and fortune. To seal this, she gives him a ring, which he must never "part from, lose or give away" as this would signal the "ruin" of his love for her. He promises to wear it until he dies, another "bond" which must be upheld.

Nerissa and Gratiano congratulate the couple and Gratiano reveals that he is in love with Nerissa, before asking permission to marry her. Bassanio and Portia agree. As they joke happily together, Lorenzo arrives, accompanied by Salerio and Jessica.

Lines 223–333: Bassanio and Portia welcome their visitors, and Salerio gives Bassanio a letter from Antonio. Gratiano says that Antonio will be pleased by the news of the betrothals, but Portia is watching Bassanio and comments that the letter "steals the color from Bassanio's cheek." Bassanio reveals the truth about the loan, and Antonio's bond, before questioning Salerio about the loss of Antonio's fortunes. Salerio tells him that even if Antonio could now find the money, Shylock is determined to have "forfeiture … justice and his bond." Jessica confirms that her father has often sworn that he would "rather have Antonio's flesh / Than twenty times the value of the sum." Bassanio describes Antonio to Portia as "the dearest friend" and "the kindest man." She says that Bassanio must pay as much as it takes to release Antonio, and offers him gold to "pay the petty debt twenty times over." She decides that they shall be married quickly, then Bassanio shall go back to Venice with Gratiano, while she and Nerissa "live as maids and widows" until their return. Bassanio reads Antonio's letter, which urges him to come and see him, as it is unlikely that he will live after paying the forfeit. Portia urges him to "be gone!" and Bassanio promises to return as soon as he can.

ACT 3 SCENE 3

Antonio is in jail. Shylock will not listen to requests for "mercy," and his bitterness seems to have driven him to the edges of sanity as he constantly repeats that he will "have [his] bond." He leaves, and Antonio resolves that he will stop begging, recognizing that Shylock wants him to die for the times he has helped people who owed him "forfeitures," although he does not acknowledge that the persecution of Shylock for his faith may have contributed to his desire for revenge. He knows that the duke cannot prevent Shylock from exacting the bond, because to do so would be to "impeach the justice of the state." Antonio sends Solanio away, hoping that Bassanio will come to see him "pay his debt."

ACT 3 SCENE 4

Lorenzo tells Portia that if she knew Antonio, she would be even "prouder" of her role in trying to save him. She replies that she sees saving Antonio as the same as saving Bassanio, and announces her intention to withdraw to a monastery with Nerissa, to live "in prayer and contemplation" while Bassanio is away. She asks Lorenzo and Jessica to take the place of Bassanio and herself until this time. Portia then hands Balthasar a letter to take to her cousin, Doctor Bellario in Padua, and instructs him to bring back "what notes and garments" the doctor gives him. Finally, alone with Nerissa, Portia reveals her plan for them to go to Venice, disguised as men.

ACT 3 SCENE 5

Lancelet tells Jessica that he fears for her soul because "the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children," but she argues that she has been "saved" by marriage to Lorenzo, who has made her a Christian. As they argue, Lorenzo arrives and Jessica repeats what Lancelet has said. Lorenzo, however, reports that Lancelet has got a Moorish servant pregnant. Lancelet merely responds with jokes until Lorenzo, annoyed, sends him to serve dinner. Lorenzo asks Jessica how she likes Portia, and she replies that the "world / Hath not her fellow." They go to dinner.

ACT 4 SCENE 1

Lines 1–166: In the courtroom, the duke sympathizes with Antonio, describing Shylock as "an inhuman wretch / Uncapable of pity." Antonio is resigned, declaring that he will "oppose" Shylock's "fury" with "patience," and his "rage" with "a quietness of spirit," emphasizing the deliberate contrasting of the two characters. Shylock is shown in and the duke tells him that he is sure he will "show mercy" to Antonio. Shylock is unmoved, maintaining that he will have the "weight of carrion flesh" he is entitled to. He refuses to take the three thousand ducats instead, citing his "hate" and "certain loathing" of Antonio. Bassanio tries to reason with him and offers him more money, but Antonio tells him that it is pointless. The duke asks Shylock how he expects to receive mercy

when he shows none. Shylock argues that he has no need of mercy when he is “doing no wrong”: he is asking for justice, which must be given to him according to “the decrees of Venice.” The duke has sent for “Bellario, a learnèd doctor” to determine the outcome, and Salerio reports that a messenger has arrived from Padua. Nerissa enters, disguised as a law clerk. As she hands the duke a letter, Shylock begins to sharpen his knife. The letter is from Bellario, who is unable to come but who has sent “A young and learnèd doctor,” Balthasar, in his place. Portia enters, disguised as Balthasar.

Lines 167–270: Portia, as Balthasar, questions both Shylock and Antonio, concluding that “the Jew” must “be merciful.” Shylock asks what “compulsion” there is to do so, and Portia responds that mercy cannot be forced: “It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven / Upon the place beneath.” Bassanio repeats that he now has the money to pay the bond “ten times o’er,” and asks that the law be changed. Portia says that there is “no power in Venice” that can alter the law. Shylock is delighted. Portia asks to look at the bond and concludes that Shylock may “lawfully” “claim / A pound of flesh.” Again, she urges Shylock to “be merciful” and again he refuses. He also declines to provide a surgeon to tend to Antonio afterward because “’tis not in the bond,” showing his determination to stick to the letter of the law.

Lines 271–356: Portia calls Antonio forward and he announces that he is “prepared.” He takes Bassanio’s hand and tells him to commend him to his “honourable wife” and tell her how much Antonio loved him. Bassanio declares that, although Portia is as “dear” to him “as life itself,” he would “sacrifice” her to save Antonio. Gratiano makes a similar declaration, and Portia and Nerissa are both unimpressed by their husbands’ claims. Portia announces that Shylock may cut the flesh from Antonio, but, as he goes to do so, she tells him to “Tarry.” Using Shylock’s own adherence to the wording of the bond against him, she reminds him that the “words” “expressly are ‘a pound of flesh’”; he may take no “blood,” and he must take exactly a pound. Anything else is against the law, and would result in Shylock having to surrender his “lands and goods” to the state. Shylock announces that he will take money instead, but Portia insists that he may only take his bond.

Shylock accepts defeat and prepares to leave the court, but Portia calls him back.

Lines 357–413: Portia reminds Shylock of the penalty against "an alien" who "seek[s] the life of any citizen": he must forfeit all of his "goods," to be divided between the state and Antonio, and, unless the duke shows "mercy," he will be executed. In contrast to Shylock's own refusals to show mercy, the duke pardons his life and reduces his fine. Antonio is similarly merciful, returning his share of Shylock's fortune on the condition that he converts to Christianity and leaves his money to Jessica and Lorenzo. Shylock agrees, and leaves the court.

Lines 414–470: The duke invites "Balthasar" to dinner, but Portia says she must return to Padua. The duke tells Antonio that he should reward the "young man." Bassanio still does not recognize his own wife, ironically forgetting his own words on "outward shows" in Act 3 Scene 2, and offers the three thousand ducats. Portia declines the money, but Bassanio insists on giving some form of payment. Portia asks him for his gloves and the ring he wears. Bassanio gives the gloves, but refuses to hand over the ring, explaining the "vow" he made to his wife. Portia accepts this explanation, although she is sure his "wife" would know that Balthasar deserved the ring. After she and Nerissa have left, Antonio urges Bassanio to give the ring to Balthasar, and Bassanio agrees. He removes the ring, and sends Gratiano to deliver it.

ACT 4 SCENE 2

Still disguised, Portia and Nerissa arrange the deed bequeathing Shylock's wealth to Jessica and Lorenzo. Gratiano enters and gives Portia the ring. She asks Gratiano to show Nerissa where Shylock's house is, and Gratiano, not recognizing his own wife, agrees. Nerissa tells Portia in an aside that she, too, will try to get the ring that she gave to Gratiano. They look forward to hearing their husbands' explanations.

ACT 5 SCENE 1

Lines 1–137: In Belmont, Lorenzo and Jessica are declaring their love

for each other, indicating the lighter, more comic tone of the final scene in comparison to the dark, complex emotions of the courtroom. They are interrupted by a messenger, who tells them that Portia and Nerissa will arrive soon. Lancelet brings the news that Bassanio and Gratiano will also be back before morning. Lorenzo calls for music to welcome Portia home, and as he and Jessica admire the stars, he muses that a man who cannot appreciate music is not to be trusted. Portia and Nerissa return, drawn by the light and the sounds of the music. Lorenzo greets them and tells them that Bassanio and Gratiano will soon be back. Portia asks that no one reveal that she and Nerissa have been away.

Lines 138–325: Bassanio and Gratiano return, accompanied by Antonio, and Portia welcomes them. As Portia speaks to Antonio, they are interrupted by Nerissa and Gratiano, quarreling. He is trying to explain that he gave her ring to "the judge's clerk," adding that it was only a "paltry" item. Nerissa argues that the value of the ring was not as important as his oath to always wear it, reminding us of the theme of "worth" and the various bonds entered into during the play. Portia claims that Bassanio would never have given away her ring, but Gratiano reveals that he did. Bassanio tries to explain, but both women accuse their husbands of giving the rings to other women, and claim their right to be unfaithful in their turn.

Antonio intervenes, blaming himself for the misunderstanding. He offers to be "bound again," and will forfeit his "soul" if Bassanio ever breaks faith with Portia. Portia gives Bassanio a ring, telling him to "keep it better than the other." He recognizes it, and Portia pretends that Balthasar gave it to her for sleeping with him. Nerissa produces her ring, and claims that the clerk gave it to her for the same reason. Before the men can respond, however, Portia reveals the truth: she was Balthasar and Nerissa the clerk. She produces a letter from Bellario to prove this, and another letter for Antonio, revealing that three of his ships "are richly come to harbour." Lorenzo and Jessica are informed of Shylock's new will. The play ends happily for the three sets of lovers, but Antonio remains a solitary figure despite his restored fortune, and the treatment of Shylock throughout creates an ambiguous sense of resolution.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE IN PERFORMANCE: THE RSC AND BEYOND

The best way to understand a Shakespeare play is to see it or ideally to participate in it. By examining a range of productions, we may gain a sense of the extraordinary variety of approaches and interpretations that are possible—a variety that gives Shakespeare his unique capacity to be reinvented and made "our contemporary" four centuries after his death.

We begin with a brief overview of the play's theatrical and cinematic life, offering historical perspectives on how it has been performed. We then analyze in more detail a series of productions staged over the last half century by the Royal Shakespeare Company. The sense of dialogue between productions that can only occur when a company is dedicated to the revival and investigation of the Shakespeare canon over a long period, together with the uniquely comprehensive archival resource of promptbooks, program notes, reviews, and interviews held on behalf of the RSC at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon, allows an "RSC stage history" to become a crucible in which the chemistry of the play can be explored.

Finally, we go to the horse's mouth. Modern theater is dominated by the figure of the director, who must hold together the whole play, whereas the actor must concentrate on his or her part. The director's viewpoint is therefore especially valuable. Shakespeare's plasticity is wonderfully revealed when we hear directors of highly successful productions answering the same questions in very different ways. For this play, it is also especially interesting to hear the voice of those who have been inside the part of Shylock: we accordingly also include interviews with two actors who created the role to high acclaim.

FOUR CENTURIES OF *THE MERCHANT*: AN OVERVIEW

The performance history of *The Merchant of Venice* has been dominated

by the figure of Shylock: no small feat for a character who appears in fewer scenes than almost any other named character and whose role is dwarfed in size by that of Portia. Nevertheless, tradition has it that Richard Burbage, leading player of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, originated the role of Shylock. Quite how the character of the Jewish moneylender was received on stage at the time has been the subject of much debate and controversy. The actor-manager William Poel, in his Elizabethan-practices production of 1898 at St. George's Hall in London, played the character in the red wig and beard, traditionally associated with Judas Iscariot, on the assumption that Shakespeare merely made use of an available stock type in order that the vice of greed may "be laughed at and defeated, not primarily because he is a Jew, but because he is a curmudgeon."[1]

While more recent history makes the idea of the Jew as stock villain uncomfortable for modern audiences, it must be remembered that, at the time of original performance, the Jewish people had been officially excluded from England for three hundred years and would not be readmitted until 1655. The play's original performances can therefore be seen in a context of folk legend and caricature, as had been recently perpetuated by Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, with its explicitly Machiavellian villain Barabas epitomizing the fashionable type of the cunning Jew. Barabas was one of the great tragedian Edward Alleyn's leading roles, and may have provided the incentive for Burbage, the other leading actor of the day, to take a more complex spin on the stock Jewish figure. As recently as 2006, New York's Theater for a New Audience played the two in repertory together, drawing out the links and influences between the plays.

The play includes a part for William Kempe, the company clown, as Lancelet Gobbo (the name interestingly referencing an earlier Kempe role, Launce of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) and, in Portia, his greatest challenge for a boy actor so far. Portia's role, comprising almost a quarter of the play's entire text, required tremendous skill and range from the young actor, and laid down the groundwork for the great breeches-clad heroines of the mature comedies, Viola and Rosalind.

The play was played twice at court in February 1605, suggesting a popularity that had kept the play in the company repertory for the best

part of a decade, but after this there is no record of the play being performed again in the seventeenth century. The play's history in the eighteenth century began, as with many of Shakespeare's works, as an adaptation, George Granville's *The Jew of Venice* (1701). While the title ostensibly shifts the focus from Antonio to Shylock, the company's leading actor, Thomas Betterton, took the role of Bassanio. Shylock, on the other hand, was played by Thomas Doggett, an actor best known for low comedy. The adapted play emphasized moral ideals: Shylock was a simple comic villain, Bassanio a heroic and romantic lover.

It was not until 1741 that Shakespeare's text was restored by Charles Macklin at Drury Lane. Macklin, like Doggett before him, was best known for his comic roles, but he deliberately set out to create a more serious interpretation of Shylock. John Doran, for example, notes that in the trial scene "Shylock was natural, calmly confident, and so terribly malignant, that when he whetted his knife … a shudder went round the house."[2] This Shylock posed a genuine threat that the earlier comic villains did not, and thus began the process of reimagining *The Merchant of Venice* as more than a straightforward comedy. Macklin performed Shylock until 1789 and redefined the role—and the play—for subsequent generations. To Alexander Pope is attributed the pithy tribute "This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew."[3]

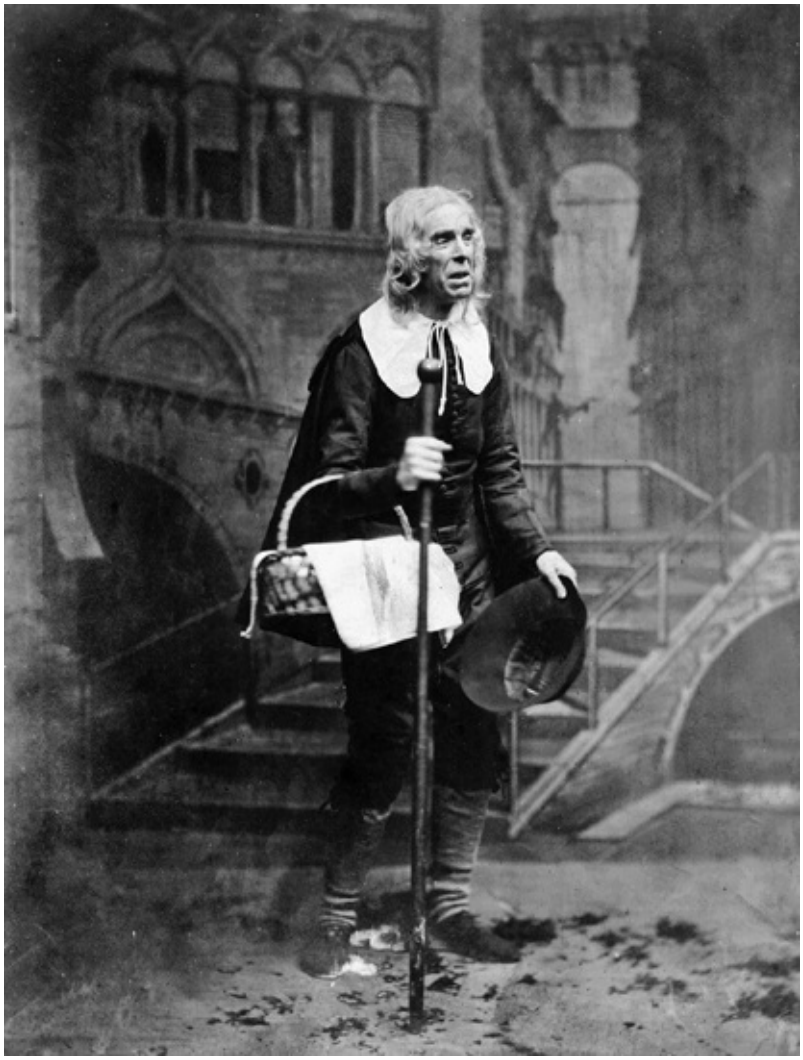
With the notable exception of David Garrick, most of the major actor-managers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries attempted Shylock, with varying degrees of success. In 1814, at the age of twenty-seven, the then-unknown Edmund Kean made his mark at Drury Lane in which he responded to the tradition laid down by Macklin with a new reading of Shylock. Toby Lelyveld tells us "he was willing to see in Shylock what no one but Shakespeare had seen—the tragedy of a man."[4] Heavily influenced by Garrick's acting style, Kean's performance took the Romantic preoccupation with individual passion and applied it to Shylock, allowing audiences to experience sympathy and pity for the antagonist, as William Hazlitt noted in the *Morning Chronicle*: "Our sympathies are much oftener with him than with his enemies."[5]

Henry Irving's production ran for over a thousand performances from 1879 to 1905 in London and America, and its influence is still felt. Irving's Shylock was a direct descendant of Macklin and Kean's,

consolidating and emphasizing the role as that of a tragic hero. The *Spectator* noted that "here is a man whom none can despise, who can raise emotions both of pity and of fear, and make us Christians thrill with a retrospective sense of shame."[6] The use of "us Christians" is revealing of audience responses to the play until this point: audiences expected to identify themselves with the Venetian Christians, and in opposition to the Jewish villain. Where Kean had begun to experiment with sympathy for the "other," Irving forced his audiences to take sides with Shylock and be outraged by his treatment.

Irving's production was additionally noted for the spectacle of its set, which followed the celebrated example of Charles Kean's 1858 staging by including a full-sized Venetian bridge and canal along which the masquers floated in a gondola. The historical locations of *The Merchant of Venice* have long held a deep fascination for directors and designers, and attempts to re-create elements of Venice have recurred throughout the play's performance history: even the production at Shakespeare's Globe in 2007 featured a miniature Bridge of Sighs extending into the yard. This fascination with the city reached its apogee in Michael Radford's 2005 film (see below).

Irving's Portia was Ellen Terry, the latest in a long line of prestigious Portias including Kitty Clive (1741), Sarah Siddons (1786), and Ellen Tree (1858, opposite her husband, Kean). However, the longstanding focus on Shylock had had the negative impact of restricting the opportunities available to even the better actresses. Act 5 was often cut during the nineteenth century in order to focus on Shylock's tragedy, along with the scenes featuring Morocco and Aragon, while much of the Bassanio and Portia plot was mercilessly pruned. Irving himself, in order to present the play as unambiguous tragedy, often replaced Act 5 with *Iolanthe*, a one-act vehicle for Terry which allowed her to finish the evening's entertainment without distracting from Shylock's tragedy.



1. Old Gobbo in Charles Kean's 1858 production, with stage set representing the real Venice.

Despite this, Terry's Portia set a precedent for imagining the heroine as independent and self-determining. Where Portia had usually been played as entirely subject to the fate dictated by her father, Terry gave reviewers the impression that she would take matters into her own hands if the man she loved failed to choose correctly. She also allowed Portia to spontaneously come up with the blood–flesh resolution to Shylock's demand in a last-minute moment of inspiration, demonstrating a greater presence of mind and inventiveness than usual for the character. With Portia's independence of spirit established, the character began to take control of her own story: Fabia Drake's Portia, at Stratford in 1932, began the tradition of giving clues to Bassanio by arranging the

emphasis of the “bred-head-nourishèd-fed” sounds in the song that is played as he chooses, thereby suggesting the rhyme with “lead,” and in doing so became manager of her own fate.

This 1932 production, directed by Theodore Komisarjevsky, subverted the established chain of actor-manager productions that had followed in Irving’s vein. Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s 1908 Stratford production was characterized primarily by its elaborate scenic effects, and Frank Benson continued the tradition of Victorian *Merchant*s as late as May 1932. Two months later, Komisarjevsky’s production turned the play into carnival. The acclaimed Russian director had been invited to mark the opening of the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and did so with a production that satirized the lovers, utilized eclectic surrealist sets and, in the words of the *Daily Herald*, “had the courage to show Shylock what I always thought him to be—a terrible old scoundrel.”[7] 1932 also saw John Gielgud direct the play at the Old Vic, with Malcolm Keen as Shylock and Peggy Ashcroft as Portia. *The Times* criticized both 1932 productions for not treating the play as “sacrosanct,” particularly disliking the “air of burlesque” that Gielgud gave to the Belmont scenes, designed to give greater tragic weight to the Shylock scenes.[8]

The play’s early twentieth-century history is unavoidably tainted by the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust. The oft-quoted belief that the play was appropriated as Nazi propaganda somewhat overstates the case: most pertinently, in Germany there were no major productions of the play for over thirty years after 1927, a production in which Fritz Kortner was not allowed to play the “inhuman” character he felt Shakespeare intended Shylock to be. However, productions of the play during the prewar and war years were inevitably political. In 1943, the Vienna Burgtheater presented Lotha Müthel’s fiercely anti-Semitic production, which made Jessica “acceptable” by turning her into the daughter of an affair between Shylock’s wife and a non-Jew. By contrast, Leopold Jessner’s Hebrew-language production of 1936 at the Habimah Theatre of Tel Aviv “occurred at an heroic moment, where national pathos was a standard theme.”[9] Jessner was a Jewish exile from Berlin, yet even this production was vigorously protested, culminating in a public mock trial that vindicated Shakespeare from accusations of anti-Semitism. Tel Aviv hosted subsequent productions of the play in 1953

(Tyrone Guthrie), 1972 (Yossi Yzraeli), and 1980 (Barry Kyle), the last aiming to explore how "Shylock easily falls prey to revenge in succumbing to the logic and mentality of terrorism."[10] The play retains its potential for controversial and insightful political comment.

Productions of the play in North America have been similarly overshadowed by the Holocaust, and new productions continue to draw complaints from Jewish groups and campaigners, meaning that the treatment of Shylock is rarely unsympathetic. Fears about the play's potential to negatively influence spectators were sensationalized: during a performance at the 1984 Stratford Ontario Festival, a group of schoolchildren threw pennies at Jewish students, an incident which resulted in calls for the play to be banned from the Festival. The play was not mounted by an American company between 1930 and 1953, but thereafter grew in popularity and was mounted regularly across the country for the remainder of the century, acting to reaffirm American ideals of racial equality. In 1957, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival staged an Elizabethan-practices production that revived the red-wigged Shylock of William Poel: here, however, it was deliberately intended to be repugnant. Six years later, George Tabori's adaptation at the Stockbridge Playhouse in Massachusetts turned the play into an entertainment put on by concentration camp prisoners for their Nazi guards. Alvin Epstein switched continually between his roles as Jewish prisoner-actor and Shylock, utilizing Shakespeare's lines to articulate the prisoner's anger at his guards. During the trial scene, he cast aside his assumed role and attacked a guard with a real knife substituted for the prop one, and was killed in retaliation by the guards, bringing both the inner play and Tabori's production crashing to a close.

The most high-profile American casting of the latter half of the twentieth century was Dustin Hoffman, appearing first in London and then transferring to Washington and New York in Peter Hall's 1989 staging. While Hoffman's presence resulted in the play breaking West End box-office records for a straight play, Hall's interpretation was found dull and lacking in insight, and the *National Review* felt that Hoffman's Shylock "seems to have wandered in from a different production."[11] Peter Sellars' mounting for the Goodman Theater in Chicago in 1994 set the play in Venice Beach, California, with Latino actors as the Venetians,

black actors in the Jewish roles, and Asian-Americans as the Belmont characters. This production lasted for over four hours and was unpopular with audiences, despite its laudable intentions.

The play maintained its popularity in Stratford-upon-Avon following Komisarjevsky's production, often opening the festival season; Iden Payne's stagings were revived frequently between 1935 and 1942. The star performances of Michael Redgrave and Peggy Ashcroft (still playing Portia twenty-one years after her Old Vic appearance) dominated coverage of Dennis Carey's 1953 production, with critics approving the contrast between Redgrave's "snarling and sneering and spitting old snake"[12] and Ashcroft's warm and dignified Portia.

Two more productions followed before the founding of the modern RSC: Margaret Webster (the first female director of the play in Stratford) with a poorly received Emlyn Williams as Shylock; and Michael Langham's 1960 production starring Peter O'Toole. O'Toole's Shylock was singled out for praise: passionate rather than intellectual, he "shows us a human being of stature, driven to breaking point by the inhumanity of others,"[13] while the *Evening News* saw him as "a dignified figure from the New rather than Old Testament—a Christ in torment."[14] The Old Vic staged the play less successfully in the same season. While Barbara Leigh-Hunt's Portia was singled out for praise, Robert Speaight criticized the director's pandering to "the vogue for an eighteenth century *Merchant*."[15] Speaight's remark is symptomatic of the increasing preference for productions that demonstrated the contemporary resonances of the play, as opposed to the historical recreations of the Victorian era.



2. Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1953: a snarling and spitting Michael Redgrave as Shylock with a warm and dignified Peggy Ashcroft as Portia.

London's National Theatre mounted two critically acclaimed productions in the later twentieth century, directed by Jonathan Miller (1970) and Trevor Nunn (1999), both subsequently televised. The two were closely related, both featuring a dignified Shylock integrated into a capitalist mercantile culture: other than his yarmulke, his costume in both identified him as a member of the Venetian community. This allowed the idea of his "outsider" status to be explored more subtly: Miller noted that by "allowing Shylock to appear as one among many businessmen, scarcely distinguishable from them, it made sense of his claim that, apart from his customs, a Jew is like everyone else."[16] Nunn followed this logic, as have many twenty-first-century directors of the play, such as Darko Tresnjak (Theater for a New Audience, 2007) and Tim Carroll (RSC, 2008).

Miller's production starred Laurence Olivier, whose key inspiration for his performance was Benjamin Disraeli. He dramatized the trials of an alien attempting to integrate himself into a new society, his abuses at Christian hands eventually unleashing a dignified and righteous rage. Henry Goodman's Shylock in Nunn's production was in a similar position, and emphasized the genial and fatherly aspects of the

character: this was a good-natured and often humorous Shylock, whose trials were undeserved. For both Miller and Nunn, the key to demonstrating the insidiousness of racial prejudice was in setting the production in history recent enough to be uncomfortably familiar, but distant enough to provide a semblance of objectivity. Miller hearkened back to the late nineteenth century, while Nunn set his production in the 1930s. Both, too, used the character of Jessica to unsettle the harmony of Act 5. Miller made her "melancholy, not at all the giddy, venturesome girl one might expect,"[17] and at the end she could be heard singing the Kaddish offstage as a lament to her lost father. Gabrielle Jourdan's Jessica in the 1999 production was similarly discontented and closed the play by singing the same Yiddish prayer in a direct reference. Where the eighteenth-century star vehicles had relied on a tremendous Act 4 exit from Shylock to cast a pallor over the remaining scenes, Miller and Nunn's use of Jessica established a quieter and more universal epitaph for cultures violently subsumed.

A more recent trend in performance is to use the play as an exploration of male sexuality, often with the result of refocusing a production on the Merchant. Academics may argue that early modern platonic homosocial modes of behavior are easily confused with more modern understandings of homosexuality, but onstage it has become increasingly customary to explain Antonio's melancholy through feelings of unrequited (or once-requited) love for Bassanio, often with the suggestion that his sexuality makes him as much of an outsider as Shylock's religion does his. Bill Alexander's 1987 RSC production (discussed below) extended the homosexual theme to include most of the Venetian characters, and Michael Dobson notes that in Nunn's 1999 production David Bamber's Antonio's melancholy was occasioned by his "forlorn sexual yearnings for Bassanio [that] had long since been repressed."[18] Edward Hall's 2008 production with his all-male company Propeller relocated the play to the fictional Venice Prison, an exclusively male environment where the "female" characters were drag queens. Hall's production utilized Shakespeare's text to explore various incarnations of male–male relationships, from the negotiation of power and control to the simply romantic.

Despite Charles Edelman's assertion in 2002 that "given the sensitivity

of the play's subject matter, it is very unlikely that [a major feature film] will ever be made,"[19] a full-scale film emerged only three years later, directed by Michael Radford and featuring an all-star cast including Al Pacino (Shylock), Jeremy Irons (Antonio), and Joseph Fiennes (Bassanio). Where the larger-scale Victorian stage productions had attempted to recreate the splendor of Venice onstage, Radford filmed on location in Venice itself, using dark alleys, open promenades, and claustrophobic courtrooms to impressive effect. Setting the production in the Venice of Shakespeare's time, Radford re-created the historical realities of Jewish life in the city, with Jews forced to wear red caps and live in ghettos. On television, as well as the screened versions of Miller and Nunn's National productions, the 1980 version for the BBC Shakespeare series directed by Jack Gold offered a very human, but not entirely sympathetic, Shylock in the Jewish actor Warren Mitchell, and drew attention for the uninhibited sexuality of Lorenzo and Jessica.

AT THE RSC

> If ever there was a time when we should be asking the questions about humanity, greed, the outsider's place in society that are in this play it is now, in a time of decay.[20]

Race, Bigotry, and Alienation

> The wrong question—"is it anti-Semitic?"—is always asked of *The Merchant of Venice*. The answer is: "only as far as is strictly necessary." Ask another question—"is it offensive?"—and the answer is an unequivocal "yes."[21]

Whatever their race or religion, Jewish or Christian, Muslim or Hindu, a member of the audience watching *The Merchant of Venice* in modern times is going to feel slightly uncomfortable in their seat. There is no doubt that Shakespeare's Jew is based on a stereotype, a vicious caricature of a little understood and much maligned race. How does a post–Second World War director tackle a play that links villainy with religion without being accused of racism? The answer, more often than not, has been to make the Christian characters equally, if not more, horrible than the Jew who decides their fate. Is this an imposition of modern times? Does it distort the nature of Shakespeare's original

intention? The questions surrounding these issues have made *The Merchant of Venice* the real "problem play" of our times.

The playwright Arnold Wesker was compelled to give his opinion after going to see the RSC's 1993 production directed by David Thacker, which proved one too many *Merchant*s for him:

> The strongest evidence offered in support of the view that Shakespeare did not create a stereotype are those widely trumpeted lines which he gives to Shylock as special pleading for his humanity: "Hath not a Jew eyes? …" For [John] Gross, as for many others, it is a noble piece of writing. Not for me! Far from vindicating the play, the sentiments betray it—self-pitying, patronising, and deeply offensive. Implied within them is medieval Christian arrogance, which assumed the right to confer or withdraw humanity as it saw fit.[22]

However, Shylock's statement of common "humanity" is delivered with the express purpose of pleading his right to revenge, by very inhumane means. Taken out of context both this speech and Portia's speech on mercy are wonderful statements of humanity; taken in the context of the play, however, they both echo with hypocrisy.

Shylock, unlike the Christian characters in the play, stands as an embodiment of his race. Common Elizabethan myths about Jews, which interestingly included the use of human sacrifice, of Christian blood, in their rituals,* have directly influenced Shakespeare's characterization. The true offensiveness of this negative stereotype is evidenced when real Jewish beliefs are taken into consideration:

> Jewish law includes within it a blueprint for a just and ethical society, where no one takes from another or harms another or takes advantage of another, but everyone gives to one another and helps one another and protects one another … We are commanded not to leave a condition that may cause harm, to construct our homes in ways that will prevent people from being harmed, and to help a person whose life is in danger. These commandments regarding the preservation of life are so important in Judaism that they override all of the ritual observances that people think are the most

important part of Judaism.[23]

The difficulty for any actor playing Shylock today therefore resides in the portrayal of the character's Jewishness:

> A photograph in *The Observer* shows that Eric Porter's Shylock [1965] was given bags under the eyes and a long hooked nose, while Emrys James [1971] depended for his repulsiveness less upon make-up than saliva. Described by one critic as "… barefoot, robed in old curtains, with a mouthful of spittle …," James was "a medieval Jewish stereotype in a large, baggy kaftan, with grey ringlets spilling from beneath his skull cap." The same reviewer went on:
>
> > This is a Jew straight out of the Penny Dreadful magazines, literally salivating at the thought of his pound of Christian flesh.[24]

His individuality, his isolation from other Jewish characters in the play has also been emphasized to indicate that he is not the embodiment of a race but an individual aberration. In 1978 Patrick Stewart portrayed him as "a sour, loveless man, corroded by avarice, mutilated by money. Even his friend Tubal finds him faintly appalling."[25]

David Calder, in David Thacker's 1993 modern dress production, had played Shylock as a fully assimilated Jew, indistinguishable from the Christians by his mode of dress. He wore a business suit right up to the crucial scene where he discovered Jessica's elopement:

> Wishing Jessica, "hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin" [3.1.86], Shylock tore open his shirt to reveal the Star of David underneath (as Antonio's open shirt in the trial scene revealed a crucifix). By the trial scene, Shylock had turned himself into the image of a religious Jew, with skullcap and gabardine and with the Star of David now worn outside his collarless shirt. His use of the symbols of religion was now demonstrably an abuse of religion and race, becoming a Jew only because it focused his traumatised existence. It was Shylock himself who now appeared the anti-Semite

> … When Shylock announced "I will have the heart of him if he forfeit" [3.1.122–3], he put his hand firmly on an open book, a prayer book I presume, on his desk and Tubal registered horror at this abuse of religion.[26]

Some critics worried that overt Jewishness was being once again linked with villainy, but the majority of them believed that Shylock's change of costume signaled not only the character's anger at, but acceptance of, his alienation, his exclusion from a culture which had only been tolerating and patronizing him. Calder stated: "He believes that any attempt to alleviate racial intolerance is actually a mockery and what he must do is to become more Jewish and assert himself in that clear way."[27]

Part of the attraction of Shylock as a character is the fact that he is an "outsider." Like Othello, the question of whether he is a Jew or has black skin is important to a modern audience only in as much as it exposes the society from which he is estranged:

> Racism is as much part of our world as it was [Shakespeare's]. The goal is not to sanitise or rehabilitate Shylock, but to see him as part of a society whose workings lead to cruel and outrageous acts.[28]

In 1978 Patrick Stewart made a conscious decision to tone down Shylock's Jewishness:

> Apart from the yarmulke, the only other distinctive garment was a yellow sash, twisted round the waist and only just visible beneath the waistcoat. The ritual-like garment and its wearing was an invention of the designer's, though based on photographs of Russian Jews in the nineteenth century, who wore a yellow sash over a long frock coat. We wanted to avoid any excessive sense of Jewishness or foreignness in appearance but this detail, almost unnoticed in the earlier scenes could, in the court, be boldly worn over the frock coat as a proud demonstration of Shylock's racial difference. In the early scenes, however, I was anxious to minimize the impression of Shylock's Jewishness. Whenever I had seen either a very ethnic or detailedly Jewish Shylock I felt that something was lost. Jewishness could become a smoke-screen which might conceal both the

> particular and the universal in the role. See him as a Jew first and foremost and he is in danger of becoming only a symbol, although a symbol that has changed over the centuries as society's attitudes have changed.[29]

Stewart's Shylock was in effect a "bad Jew," totally motivated by money with little regard to the ethics of his religion. In this production the words "Jew" and "Christian" were merely labels, with neither set of characters demonstrating any of the traits of their creeds. Set in the late nineteenth century,

> The Christians are, on the whole, a spoiled, boorish bunch, much given to throwing bread-rolls, shooting off cap-pistols, and other types of horseplay; and the shock provoked by their deep, instinctive prejudice is the shock of recognition, because they wear the suits some of our generation's grandfathers wore at public school or Oxbridge. The upper crust yob Gratiano, whose pet idiocy is dog-imitations, represents this faction at its most gruesome. And yet behind the witty, teasing front displayed by Patrick Stewart's Shylock, there festers a no less nasty temperament …[30]

One of the RSC's most controversial productions, directed by Bill Alexander in 1987,



3. Patrick Stewart as Shylock: not so obviously Jewish in appearance, but unashamedly motivated by money.

> grappled with the play's offensive subject matter more daringly than any production in recent memory. Refusing to either rehabilitate Shylock as the play's moral standard-bearer … or to treat him from a safe historical distance as a comic "Elizabethan" Jew … Alexander courted controversy, seeming almost to invite accusations of racism. The controversy sprang in part from his refusal to honour the distinctions between romance and realism, comedy and tragedy, sympathy for and aversion to Shylock, from which stage interpreters have traditionally felt they had to choose. By intensifying the problematic nature of the text, Alexander modulated the dynamics of audience response: he goaded audiences with stereotypes only to probe the nature of their own prejudices; he confronted them with alienation in different guises in order to reveal the motives of scapegoatism. His Shylock was grotesque—at once comic, repulsive, and vengeful. Yet he was made so in part by those Venetians who need someone on whom to project their own alienation; Venetians who, in their anxiety over sexual, religious, and mercantile values, were crucial to the transaction Alexander worked out between

> Shakespeare's text and contemporary racial tensions.[31]

Antony Sher, who played Shylock as a very exotic and very foreign-looking Jew, stated:

> There have been a lot of productions set in the turn of the century—or in the last century—where he's dressed in a frock coat like everybody else and is an assimilated Jew. To me, that is nonsense, because clearly he sticks out like a sore thumb in society … We chose to make him a Turkish Jew using a Turkish accent. What we were doing with that was trying to extend the racism and by just making him a very unassimilated foreigner, very foreign, rather than very Jewish, we hoped to slightly broaden the theme of racism. We also wanted to make the racism as explicit and as brutal as described in the text, but never normally done. You don't normally see Christians spitting at him or kicking him or doing all the things that he says they do.[32]

The first appearance of Sher's Shylock was of him

> turbaned, baggy-panted and first seen squatting cross legged on an ottoman in his black tent … Mr Sher's Shylock also is tremendously volatile: when he describes "the work of generation" among Laban's sheep, he pummels his left palm with his right fist in mimic procreation. When Antonio makes the fateful bargain, Mr Sher runs his hand over the outline of his body like a butcher sizing-up a carcass. There is nothing sentimental about this Shylock: he is out for blood. But you understand why, when Antonio picks up his abacus, hurls it to the floor and spits at his departing figure on "Hie thee, gentle Jew." Too much? Not if you look at the text, which tells us that Antonio publicly calls Shylock a misbeliever and cut-throat dog at every opportunity. The trial scene is more exciting than I ever remember it. The appearance of this Shylock almost provokes a race-riot, with the Christians indulging in anti-Semitic chants. Tubal has even providentially brought a cloth with which his colleague can wipe the spit from his face. As Mr Sher prepares to extract the pound of flesh, he intones a Hebrew sacrificial prayer specially

invented for this production.[33]

In this volatile setting Shylock's defiance almost represented "a perverted act of courage."[34] Nevertheless, Shylock was "not a tragic hero: he is proof that racism breeds revenge."[35] According to the critics, there was more spit in this production than in any other before, or since. The spit directed at the Jew was an important symbol of hatred and returned in the trial scene in which

> Shylock is seen whetting his knife *with his own spit*. This image might well be the visual equivalent of his line: "The villainy you teach me I will execute."[36]

Kit Surrey's design ensured that the audience did not at any stage forget the racial tensions affecting the behavior of the play's characters:

> The back wall was crumbling plaster broken away to reveal the brickwork beneath, and on that wall were two images of religious conflict: an ornate shrine for the Madonna and a Star of David daubed in yellow paint. The Venice scenes were dimly lit through smoke to suggest danger and decay. By contrast Belmont was lit brilliantly … [however], the image of Belmont was marred by the presence of the back wall: by not having the two warring images removed, there could never be a true sense of peace.[37]

Portia offered no redemption from this brutality, racism, and underlying sense of conflict:

> Deborah Findlay's intriguing Portia is a tart, astringent figure constantly boxing people's ears and guilty, to put it mildly, of social tactlessness, in dismissing Morocco with "Let all of his complexion choose me so" in front of her own black servant.[38]

> [She] has nothing of the healer, or seer, or Desdemona in her. She wants her husband white, bright, and speaking the right Latin tongue … Even if the blood beneath everyone's skin is red, her father could surely not have wanted all her elegant curls, flounced dresses and milky looks to be married to a black face. She cuffs her

> Negro servant with a relish which looks customary, and she keeps a polite but distinguishing distance from Lorenzo's new bride.[39]

Findlay found this too harsh a reading of the character and after the play transferred to London, changed her performance to what she believed was more in line with Shakespeare's original conception:

> As an experienced actress she felt that she had a right to the part, that it had an essence which she had intuited: "Portia is never mean. Any choice you make about motivation for this character has to be made with all the generosity of spirit that you can muster. She is as loving, as intelligent, as witty, as brave, as compassionate, as everything as you can make her." Who is right here? The actress who with all her talent, training, and experience undertakes the part and inhabits it as it makes sense to her, or the director whose vision of the whole play necessitates a re-vision of the heroine? There is of course no simple answer, though the problem is peculiar to the twentieth century and the age of the director.[40]

Mercy and Love

Bill Alexander's brutal reading of the play left the audience without a redeeming character. Most other modern productions have been less clear-cut in their depictions, but have opted for psychological depth and elements of sympathy to be found in key love relationships. Both Portia and Jessica's lives are governed by overprotective and domineering fathers—the decree of one and the finances of the other act as the catalyst for the action of the play. Are Portia and Jessica viewed as commodities by their fathers, or are they genuinely concerned about their welfare? What effect does this have on the characters of their daughters?

When playing Shylock, David Suchet described the importance of the one domestic scene Shakespeare gives us of his home life:

> Shakespeare gives us the shortest scene in the play, which is the domestic relationship between Shylock and Jessica and none of it suggests her life is hell. It is equally wrong to impose such an

> interpretation of Jessica, and it is also wrong to show a great deal of love because that is not there either. But because of there being a third person present all the time, Gobbo, it is not anyway just a straight scene between father and daughter, it is elevated by the presence of the third person. You see Shylock hesitating as to whether or not to go to dinner, disciplining Jessica over not looking on the Masques, shutting the windows and doors and so on and leaving Jessica to look after the house. She is, for him, both wife and daughter … There are thousands of boys and girls today who want to run away from home and live with someone with whom they've fallen in love. Your sympathies can lie either way. He has met these men in the street who, he realizes, asked him to dinner so his daughter could be taken away. I don't think this is the moment for a great speech of sympathy about the race. He lets out a great stream of bitterness, anger and disillusion about mankind … This is not the same Shylock we have seen before.[41]

Does Shakespeare give us enough evidence to judge Shylock's emotional capabilities? Patrick Stewart believed that with regards to Jessica,

> The real, natural warm, human, affectionate, loving responses have been cauterised in the man and she is a victim of it. So it is impossible for him to show the undoubted love that lies there underneath. It's so far down it can never be tapped. In our production … we had a controversial moment when I struck her very hard. After the blow I made some attempt at reconciliation … But by then the damage had been done and she was bound to reject him.[42]

In Gregory Doran's 1997 production, actor Philip Voss

> had come to excuse Shylock's behaviour towards Jessica as deriving from the absence of a mother's moderating influence … [We've] decided—that Shylock's wife died about five years before—making Jessica, I think, about thirteen. To explain how Jessica has come to loathe her father so much, you need a certain amount of time for his

> oppressive behaviour to have affected her to that degree. Because, I mean, I see Shylock as a perfectly nice man … The reason that Jessica hates him, I think, is because he is oppressive, because he is a widower, because he has lost his wife, and that she is the woman in the house and he has just demanded too much of her, both in her religion and domestically. And then in every way he has absolutely fed off her, I think. And, if she's that age, she just wants to get away —the house is hell, because it's no fun …[43]

Voss's Shylock was destroyed by the loss of his daughter (rather than his ducats). Doran intensified the audience's awareness of Shylock's pain by having him witness her elopement:

> Shylock ran into the raucous and nightmarish carnival which had modulated grotesquely from the same masque that he had watched as an entertainment laid on for his meal with Bassanio and Antonio. Apparently coming home after leaving the Christians, Voss's Shylock stumbled unwittingly into the obscene and drunken cavorting of the Christians' street party. Attempting without success to avoid the lunging pigs' heads, the old man was jostled and pushed around on the stage, until, at a point when the goading was at its height, the music stopped and he suddenly saw his daughter, dressed improperly in boy's clothes and carried high on her lover's shoulders. Screaming her name, he was dragged into his house and spun around as it revolved in a nightmare sequence which saw him thrown from one wall to another as his daughter made her escape.[44]



4. Emma Handy as Jessica, “who has come to loathe her father,” an “oppressive” Philip Voss as Shylock, in Gregory Doran’s 1997 production.

In David Thacker’s 1993 modern dress production, he included an extra scene in which Shylock was seen looking lovingly at his wife’s picture while listening to classical music. Shylock’s grief and loneliness at the loss of his wife signaled his capacity for love and heightened the audience’s sympathy for him. It also threw “an enormous light on the bond between Jessica and her father”:[45]

> His private world contains touchstones—Jessica his daughter being the most important. His love of his daughter is tainted by over protectiveness, which is endemic to many societies … When his daughter is stolen from him by a Christian the profound pain, insult and shame push him onto a road from which there is no return.[46]

As a reminder to the audience in the trial scene, “a sob escapes this Shylock as he recalls his daughter”:[47] “and when he is finally tricked of justice, Calder’s hollow laughter and sudden physical frailty leave no doubt that here is a man with a broken heart with nothing left to live for.”[48]

Sinead Cusack (1981) played Portia as a woman in a state of grief over the death of her father. She even wore her father’s shabby raincoat in order to relate herself to “the wise and ‘ever virtuous’ old man who understood the law and money and marriage.”[49] The casket test was put

in place in order to stop her from marrying someone who would treat her as a commodity, to weed out opportunist fortune hunters (ironically, like Bassanio). However, even here Portia's father's test succeeds, as Bassanio finds his own true worth in this match:

> Receiving her suitors almost in a melancholic trance, Sinead Cusack invests Portia with translucent intelligence. The caskets are simple boxes thrown vigorously aside as Bassanio picks the right one. At last this Portia comes alive, dropping her inhibitions with her grey cloak and, turning on Bassanio, blossoming as an ecstatic vision in primrose. The liberation of Portia continues through the court scene, where Miss Cusack's lawyer is less an impersonation than a revelation of her true crop-haired self. In the exchanging of the rings she asserts her independence, for Bassanio now sees he is married to a woman of wit, steadfastness and resource.[50]

Other Portias have been less fortunate, with their Bassanios' sexual ambiguity becoming one hurdle too far to happiness. Of Clifford Williams' 1965 production, one critic commented on the treatment of Antonio and Bassanio:

> in this production it's clear from the start that between him and Bassanio there is what is euphemistically described as a romantic friendship. Brewster Mason's heavy, ageing Antonio is the counterpart of today's wealthy bachelor stockbroker with a big house in Surrey and aberrations so tidily exercised that only his more intimate friends know about them … Even in imminent danger from Shylock's knife, he keeps his eyes affectionately fixed on the boyfriend whose extravagance has brought him to this situation. Peter McEnery, a graceful, handsome, very young Bassanio, fond of his old protector, who has given him so much—fonder, in fact, than he is of Portia. I suspect he's not really very fond of Portia at all; but she's a rich and "with it" girl, and marrying her will be a smart thing to do. So when he is with her, when he is actually professing his love for her, his eyes wander round the company to see what kind of impression he's making. There is a lot of Lord Alfred Douglas* in this Bassanio …[51]

Despite his centrality to the plot, Antonio comes across as a despicable racist to a modern audience. Again to redress the balance and find elements of sympathy, directors have emphasized the character's loneliness, also making him an outsider by dint of his sexuality. In 1987 John Carlisle's Antonio "became agitated as Portia became a threat to his homoerotic love for Bassanio. Carlisle remained on stage as the scene changed from Belmont and fixed Portia with a confrontational glare."[52] His moroseness was attributed to his unrequited love for Bassanio; like Orlando at the start of *Twelfth Night*, he was lovesick to the point of suicide:

> But the strength of the production … is that the action springs from a precise social and psychological context; and one of the undoubted beneficiaries is John Carlisle's excellent Antonio, presented as a tormented closet-gay.
>
> That is not especially original. What is new is the idea that in such a rabidly conformist world Antonio would actually prefer death to restricted life; and Mr Carlisle greets his salvation with sullen, angry resentment.[53]

In these interpretations the genuineness of Bassanio's feelings is called into question, leaving the audience to ponder whether Portia will receive the expected happiness at their union. In 1971:

> [As] Tony Church plays him there is no question of his love for Bassanio, but it is a melancholy undemanding love with no physical expression; thus it becomes acceptable within the production's romantic terms … in scenes like that following the trial, where he tries to hold polite conversation while on the brink of nervous collapse, he makes old situations brand new … [Michael Williams' Bassanio] makes an opening display of smothering Antonio in grateful kisses, but after that he reverts to the perfect lover: while [Judi] Dench turns her radiant resources on Portia so as to burn up personal characteristics in the sheer experience of love.[54]

Due to the inherent doubts over Bassanio's motivations—he makes it clear that he is initially out for a wealthy match, and at the trial states

that his love for Antonio is greater than his love for his new bride—the portrayal of the wooing of Portia has also become a means of differentiating Bassanio from her other suitors. In Barton's 1978 production:

> The first two suitors approached her from behind, avoiding eye contact, whereas Bassanio knelt in front and addressed her directly over the caskets … creating a silent moment of human contact … The exchange of lovers' rings occurred underneath a central spotlight emphasising the importance of the exchange and creating a strong image that would later prove significant … an important learning process …
>
> Antonio rejoined the lovers' hands, reconciling the worlds of Belmont and Venice, and the rings were once again held in the central light used during the betrothal scene. This was evidence of a greater understanding gained through experience, and as Portia pronounced, "It is almost morning" [5.1.313] it promised an understanding that would develop and mature in future.[55]

Deborah Findlay (1987) pointed out that in the wooing scenes:

> Both Morocco and Aragon want to dominate Portia, Morocco by machismo and Aragon by a patronizing approach. We felt that Morocco would treat a wife as his property, appropriate her physically, so there was a bit of manhandling in the scene which Portia reacted against. This may have been seen as reacting against his colour but it is much more to do with being treated as a sexual object—an interesting conundrum: who is the oppressor?[56]

In this production both Jew and woman were the oppressed races, at the mercy of the charity of the white Christian male. This was driven home by a very startling final image of Antonio and Jessica, two characters who themselves will always remain outsiders because of sexuality and race. However, Antonio, being a man and a Christian, powerfully demonstrated which sex and which religion remained on top. Jessica was left

> … half kneeling before Antonio, trying to get back the long chain and cross she has dropped in her haste to keep up with Lorenzo. Antonio draws it from her, mastering for a moment a victim who is still nothing but a Jew and a woman. And then there is darkness.[57]

The link between Portia and Shylock has been emphasized in many productions. Of John Barton's 1981 revival of his 1978 production, Sinead Cusack explained:

> A lot of people ask why then does Portia put everyone through all that misery and why does she play cat-and-mouse with Shylock. The reason is that she doesn't go into the courtroom to save Antonio (that's easy) but to save Shylock, to redeem him—she is passionate to do that. She gives him opportunity after opportunity to relent and to exercise his humanity … It is only when he shows himself totally ruthless and intractable (refusing even to allow a surgeon to stand by) that she offers him more justice than he desires.[58]

One critic commented:

> Besides her apt resemblance to a fairytale princess Miss Cusack is one of the rare Portias who can stay in character while enlarging on the quality of mercy (which she plays as a strictly forensic argument) … There is no trace of the bitch or the boss lady. All the essential characteristics are there, but for once human accuracy does not disfigure the fable.[59]

Portia's reaction to Antonio's demand that Shylock renounce his faith can also be a key moment in which to demonstrate her innate decency. In David Thacker's 1993 production, Penny Downie played her "with glowing intelligence, as a decent woman visibly upset by Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity."[60]

This reaction again came from an empathy with Shylock's plight as a victimized section of society: "[She] subtly and generously portrays a Portia who is both imperious and victimised, a woman who knows she has been made into a bargaining counter and clings to her dignity as to a lifebelt."[61]

The actor playing Portia has the difficulty of creating a character that a modern audience can believe has an immense capacity for love and generosity of spirit, despite the many dubious lines Shakespeare has given her. As a result, it is often Portia herself who is on trial in the courtroom, as she will be judged by her actions and reactions to the bigoted Venetian mentality. Surely Shakespeare's intention was to have us believe that "Belmont becomes the soul which Venice has lost."[62] As director David Thacker explained: "Belmont offers us something that can renew and reform. It allows the quality of mercy to spread throughout the whole civilization and heal."[63]

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT: INTERVIEWS WITH DAVID THACKER AND DARKO TRESNJAK

David Thacker's directing career spans more than thirty years, during which time he has directed over a hundred productions. He is particularly known for his close working relationship with the American playwright Arthur Miller, directing the British premieres of four of his plays. He has been artistic director of the Young Vic and Lancaster's Dukes theater as well as director in residence at the RSC, for whom he has directed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice* (discussed here), *Coriolanus*, and *Pericles*, which won the Olivier Awards for Best Director and Best Revival. At the Young Vic he directed *An Enemy of the People*, *Ghosts*, *Some Kind of Hero* by Les Smith, *A Touch of the Poet* by Eugene O'Neill, and *Comedians* by Trevor Griffiths. He also works prolifically in television, having directed more than thirty TV productions. In 2008 he was appointed artistic director of the Octagon Theatre in Bolton.

Darko Tresnjak is a prominent American theater director. He has received the Alan Schneider Award for Directing Excellence and several other awards. Born in the city of Zemun, Yugoslavia (now Serbia), he emigrated to the United States with his mother when he was ten years old. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1988, then attended the Columbia University School of the Arts MFA theater directing program. From 2004 to 2007 he was artistic director of the Old Globe Shakespeare Festival in San Diego, California, where he is now resident artistic

director. His productions there have included *Pericles, The Winter's Tale, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Titus Andronicus, The Comedy of Errors, The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. He talks here about his modern dress (Wall Street–style) production of *The Merchant of Venice* with Theater for a New Audience in New York, which transferred to Stratford-upon-Avon in 2007 as part of the RSC Complete Works Festival. Shylock was F. Murray Abraham, winner of an Oscar for his role as Salieri in the movie *Amadeus*.

***The Merchant of Venice* is the play that has changed in our common estimation and viewpoint probably more than any other, because of twentieth-century history. What implications did that have for your production? Does the play demand that you take a particular line on it?**

THACKER: It had very profound implications for the production. I'm not sure I'd ever describe it as a particular "line," but I think that you have particular responsibilities in directing that play. Your primary responsibility is to William Shakespeare. When you do any production of a Shakespeare play you have a profound responsibility to try to understand the play and to try to express it as richly and as powerfully as you can. Having said that, I think every play is responsive not only to the time in which it was written, but also the time in which you perform it. And certain things that are acceptable to one generation are not acceptable when time moves on. Because of the extent of anti-Semitism in our society, and because of what Jewish people have had to suffer historically, coming to a terrible climax in the Holocaust, I think it is vital that you approach this play with enormous care and sensitivity.

When I'm directing any play by Shakespeare I try to approach it as if William Shakespeare was in the rehearsal room with us. If I was working with a living playwright I would be in constant dialogue about the meaning of the play and what the playwright was trying to achieve, and how we might express that most effectively. With Shakespeare, self-evidently, you can't speak to him or conjure him up, so all you can do is proceed honestly and with integrity in relation to that play. I believe that if Shakespeare were alive now he would not give permission for the play to be performed uncut—I'm certain that he would rewrite it. It's the

only Shakespeare play I've ever directed where I said at the beginning of the rehearsal period, "I'm going to make some cuts." The context has changed so drastically that I think that the play needs delicate *attention*. I think that does affect the meaning of the play, and so I was very clear in my own mind that this was a conscious decision I would take. These weren't massive changes and to a lot of people might have been totally imperceptible. It was partly, for example, a number of judicious prunings of the word "Jew," particularly when uttered by Portia. Although it's fashionable to turn Portia into a kind of rich bitch, she is clearly the life force at the heart of the play. She is the person who argues passionately for redemption, for the classic Shakespearean themes—particularly as his achievement grew to full maturity in the Late Plays—of mercy, redemption, forgiveness. But in that scene I don't know how many times we cut the word "Jew." It becomes like a hammer banging on a nail, "Jew," "Jew," "Jew," "Jew," all with a slight pejorative edge to it. It inevitably affects what one's sensitivities are in relation to the character, so there was a slight pruning there.

People might think we were oversensitive to the use of "Jew," but if you look at the rest of Shakespeare's canon, leaving *The Merchant of Venice* out, there are only six other uses of the word "Jew," and every one is pejorative. Launce's wonderful comic speech in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, telling the audience about his dog, says "A Jew would have wept!"—but not the dog. Even a Jew would have wept, therefore this dog is even worse than a Jew—that is the joke. This is the stuff of normal comedy within Shakespeare—you can't hide from the fact that the rest of his work regards the word "Jew" and therefore being Jewish in a negative light. Having said that, it indicates what a fantastic achievement *The Merchant of Venice* is, because Shakespeare makes Shylock, in so many senses, so sympathetic. "Hath not a Jew eyes?" It's almost like Shakespeare, because of his own humanity, is digging as deep as he could possibly dig to show us a Jewish person in a sympathetic light, but even within that context he couldn't quite rid himself of his own culture and the limitations of his own society, his personal history, all the rest of it. Therefore I would say the proper responsibility of an artist in relation to that is to make a personal decision that says "I really don't believe that Shakespeare would want

this." You might think that is a terribly arrogant thing to say, but any choice you make about any Shakespeare production is an assumption about what you believe he would have wanted. Nothing is neutral, you make crucial interpretive decisions all the way along, so it's essentially only a decision of that kind to say, "I just don't think Shakespeare would want this."

I found it an utterly delightful experience doing the play and I was proud of it and proud of the work that everybody did. I was blessed with an exceptional cast, in particular to have David Calder playing Shylock, because what David brings to the table is not just his skill as an actor but his intelligence, something Penny Downie [who played Portia] shares as well. They helped me enormously in the developing conception of the show. It was the collective endeavor, I think, of that group of actors, that turned it into something that I think we all thoroughly believed in, and believed was very special.



5. "[I]t became even clearer why Shylock, a devout, sensitive, and serious man, would have such difficulty with drunken lager-louts and Christians"—David Thacker production, 1993.

TRESNJAK: It had enormous implications, especially in New York, where our production originated and where staging the play is still far more controversial than staging it in England. From the earliest planning phases to the opening night we worked extensively with James Shapiro, the author of *Shakespeare and the Jews.* His insights were invaluable—not just about the text but about the entire production history of the play. In

many discussions, the word that we kept coming back to was *exclusion.* How are the characters in *The Merchant of Venice* marginalized or excluded—because of their religion, gender, age, race, sexuality, or economic status? In a workshop that took place six months before the actual production, I got to play around with the ways in which the text could support various forms of exclusion, and I found that this approach nourished both the tragic and the comic aspects of the play. (Granted, much of the humor was rather cruel.) Most of all, it helped me see Shylock as a part of the universe that Shakespeare creates in *The Merchant of Venice.* And, directing the play in 2007, that seemed to me like a worthwhile goal, to reincorporate Shylock into the general fabric of the play.

How did you and your designer represent the contrasting settings of Venice and Belmont?

THACKER: I had the inspiration to do *Merchant* on Black Wednesday, because, like the events of that day, things happen in the play so rapidly. That's when the idea of setting it in a modern London came. We modeled the world of Venice on the Lloyd's building, so it was the world of the stock exchange, big business, suits, money, computers, mobile phones, all that sort of stuff. The challenge with all of Shakespeare is to invent a world that you believe is the world of the play. With Belmont, which is always tricky, what we most wanted the audience to focus on was the caskets. So if there was a criticism of the production in retrospect, I'd say I think Venice was, in design terms, very powerful and persuasive, and Belmont might not have resonated so powerfully.

TRESNJAK: According to the critic Marjorie Garber, *The Merchant of Venice* presents us with "the opposites that are increasingly similar" during the course of the play. One of those seeming opposites is Venice versus Belmont. Both worlds are ultimately ruled by financial considerations. So for me, the most important practical concern was to move swiftly from one setting to the other, because I did not want the textual similarities and the thematic connections to get obliterated by long and elaborate scenic changes.

The constant in John Lee Beatty's set design for the play were three

sleek desks with three Apple PowerBooks on top of them. Above each desk was a flatscreen monitor. In Venice, we projected stock market quotes on the monitors. I was inspired by the Internet cafés of New York City and by the trading floor down on Wall Street. The characters would tune out of conversations to check their e-mail or to answer their cell phones. (Today, technology is another way that we exclude and marginalize each other on a moment-to-moment basis.) The bulk of our fourteen-member cast was featured in these scenes. The characters smashed into each other throughout. I wanted to create a rude and congested urban setting. In Belmont, the three PowerBooks represented the three caskets and we projected Shakespeare's riddles on the monitors above them. Working on an off-Broadway budget, I had to turn our own financial considerations into a dramatic statement. So Portia's entire household staff consisted of Nerissa and Balthasar, who we thought of as Portia's IT guy. I imagined Belmont as a hi-tech haven that Portia's father had left her, isolated, under-populated, and eerie.



6. F. Murray Abraham as Shylock and Tom Nelis as Antonio in Darko Tresnjak's 2007 production, set in a modern financial center, with flatscreen monitors and Apple PowerBooks.

Bassanio sometimes seems like a gold-digger rather than a romantic lead. Are there *any* social relations in this play that aren't dependent on money?

THACKER: I think he is a gold-digger, but I also think he falls in love! I

don't think that if he wasn't massively attracted to Portia to begin with he'd ask Antonio to lend him the money. I think he can't believe his luck really. There's nothing that I remember from directing the play that implies he doesn't love her. I think Bassanio is a really tough part because he has some very difficult speeches to handle, like the speech when he chooses the lead casket. Technically that's a very difficult speech to get the hang of. But I felt that he became more and more attractive and charismatic as the play develops. I think we grow to like Bassanio very much by the end, and I think because Portia loves him we forgive him a lot. I don't think he's one of Shakespeare's greatest creations: if you asked me to list all the male hero leads in order of preference, he'd be way down the list somewhere. He can't compare with Romeo, Hamlet, and God knows how many other young men that Shakespeare created, but I think he works in this play.

TRESNJAK: Our production ended with the three couples swaying to the Rosemary Clooney recording of "How Am I to Know?" The lyrics of the Dorothy Parker/Jack King song struck me as rather appropriate:

Oh
How am I to know
If it's really love
That found its way here?
Oh
How am I to know
Will it linger on
And leave me then?
I'll dare not guess
At this strange happiness
But oh
How am I to know
Can it be that love
Has come to stay here?

So I think that not being able to answer your question is, for me, the whole point of the play. The characters themselves are not in the position to answer it. Along the way, they all make compromising

choices, choices that haunt even the most innocent relationships. I am thinking especially of Lorenzo and Jessica. They always struck me as the youngest, the most innocent characters in the play. We certainly cast the roles in our production that way. The decision to steal Shylock's possessions haunts them, and I think that the unease that it creates between them is right under the surface of the famous "In such a night as this" exchange at the top of the last scene.

As for Bassanio, he reminds me of Chance Wayne, the male lead in Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth*—a tarnished angel, still appealing yet also somewhat pathetic. Frayed. I think that the last train is about to leave the station and he needs to catch it however he can. The moment in the first scene when Bassanio is about to ask Antonio for money—when he talks about his school days and uses the analogy of the lost arrow—it always made me squirm in the best possible way. It's wonderfully icky—an innocent, youthful appeal by someone who's neither innocent nor all that youthful.

The play is called *The Merchant of Venice,* and yet Antonio has a smaller part than Portia, Shylock, Bassanio, and even by some counts Gratiano and Lorenzo! Why is that, and does it present peculiar problems for casting (and for the actor playing the merchant)?

THACKER: We had a much older actor playing Antonio and it was very clear that this was in that tradition of gay men who love young men, but would never dream of being sexual with them, or indeed of imposing upon the young man anything that would be discomforting. There's a pattern that as a heterosexual man I've been quite familiar with in my life, of older gay men having wonderfully respectful relationships with young heterosexual men, whom they perhaps do desire but would never risk allowing anything sexual to spoil that relationship. That's how I imagined Antonio's relationship with the younger men. I think he's very sad that he doesn't have his own partner; probably he can't confess his own homosexuality anyway in the society in which he lives. But he also has his own serious failings, like the nature of his aggression toward Shylock at the beginning and his overt anti-Semitism, which I think was clear enough just by playing it straight down the line. There didn't strike

me as being any problem about the casting of him or carrying through the logic of the relationships.

TRESNJAK: I don't think that the size of the role is problematic since any actor playing Antonio has to deal with the mystery of his sadness, the nature of his relationship with Bassanio, and the source of his hatred for Shylock. At this stage in my career, I am increasingly intrigued by Shakespeare's shorthand, by those moments where something seems to be withheld from the audience. Antonio's reticence—what it implies about his position in the Venetian society, his relationship with Bassanio, and his hatred for Shylock—is rather intriguing.

In casting the roles of Antonio and Bassanio, I decided that I had to be completely honest about the fact that we were going to explore the sexual ambiguity of their relationship. Acknowledging that dimension of *The Merchant of Venice* is an essential part of how I see the play, just as much a part of it as Shylock's Jewishness.

The "choice of casket" motif is like something out of a fairy tale, but Portia is a flesh-and-blood woman, no fairy-tale princess: is that tough to reconcile stylistically?

THACKER: In the context of a modern dress production set in the city of London, Portia has got to be an intelligent modern woman. She is clearly the most intelligent person in the play anyway: she thinks on her feet, she's quick-witted, she's intelligent, but most important, she is the moral center of the play. It is through Portia that we understand how to consider everybody else's behavior and actions. She's yet another of those wonderful Shakespearean women who are warm, kind, passionate, sexy, intelligent, and have such integrity that it is through them that we understand how human beings should behave. I'm very positive about Portia. I think she's meant to be a young woman, imprisoned by an obsessive father who has tried to trap her in a way that, certainly in lots of cultures, is very easy for us to understand now. So, no, I didn't find it difficult to reconcile, I found it a pretty straightforward choice.

TRESNJAK: I believe that, regardless of how one chooses to stage *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia herself has a choice from the very beginning

of the play. To stay in Belmont, accept her father's will, keep her fortune, and potentially end up with a jackass of a husband. Or to leave Belmont, get disinherited, and discover her own path in the world at large. (That, too, is a common fairy-tale motif.) So, in my opinion, for all her moping in the first scene, Portia is a compromised, complicated character from the outset, and not exactly a fairy-tale princess. In our production, I tried to highlight this by making it clear that Nerissa was a working girl, mostly supportive but at times bewildered and infuriated by Portia—especially after her racist remark about the Prince of Morocco.

It's sometimes said that whereas Barabas in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is the stereotypical villainous Jew, Shylock is humanized, for example by "Hath not a Jew eyes?" and the reference to Leah's ring which he would not have given away for "a wilderness of monkeys." But you can't get much more stereotypically villainous than threatening to cut off a pound of someone's flesh. How did you and your Shylock reconcile this?

THACKER: I think it's very clear that for a large part of the play Shakespeare is reasonably hostile in his attitude to Shylock: "I hate him for he is a Christian" (Act 1 Scene 3). If someone said in a play, "I hate him because he is a Muslim," for example, you'd think that was a pretty unpleasant line for anyone to utter. Also, "If I can catch him once upon the hip." These things are unquestionably there in the play, so either you let them flourish or you slightly adjust them. I was enormously influenced when I directed the play by the fact that at the time I'd just directed the British premiere of Arthur Miller's play *Broken Glass*. *Broken Glass* is essentially about a Jewish person who's subjected to a degree of what we would now call institutional racism, and responds by trying to assimilate himself totally into New York business society by completely *denying* his Jewishness. Arthur Miller creates a counterpoint Jewish character, the doctor, who's so completely well adjusted about his own Jewishness that at the end of the play when they come together it's a bit of a debate on whether you assimilate or whether you don't. That was one of the inspirations for our production, which was to allow Shylock to assimilate, or to need or want to assimilate as fully as possible within

the Christian world, so that he would be able to be successful. That seemed to be a truthful way of approaching the play given where we set it. Therefore Shylock inevitably became a modern businessman, and so it all sat very comfortably.

In the play there is a suggestion that Shylock doesn't like music, which would be very unlikely for a modern Jewish person, particularly an educated person. That's another element of Shylock being unsympathetic, because later in the play Lorenzo says, "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons." In our production we saw Shylock, when safely in his home, listening to music, and clearly very devout in his culture privately. At home the trappings of his own culture were present, therefore it became even clearer why Shylock, a devout, sensitive, and serious man, would have such difficulty with drunken lager-louts and Christians, and, just like there were in the 1980s, serious money-type city slickers, and why he would not want his daughter to be involved in any of that.

When Shylock finds out about his daughter having eloped, it's very clear and it would be very difficult to avoid if you played the complete text, that he is more worried about losing his money than losing his daughter. Therefore we had some judicious pruning which actually addressed that balance and made clear he was more worried the other way around. David Calder played it that the realization that his daughter had left him was the most terrible thing that had happened to him; for example, he ripped his clothes, as Jewish people do when someone is dead. She was effectively dead to him, it was the worst possible kind of betrayal.

In a post-Holocaust world, one of the things that I think was very powerful and very successful about the production was that it worked almost as an analogy for the state of Israel, and the fact that after the Holocaust one could almost forgive any mistake of Israel. But in the course of doing that, what happens is the oppressed becomes the oppressor. So the bombing of Gaza, for example, isn't a valid response to the Holocaust. In a similar kind of way it became very clear in our production that Shylock was oppressed. The costume design was absolutely crucial here because he started off by trying to assimilate as

much as possible into the Venetian world, but after his daughter was taken away he became more and more orthodox. He went from being a man in a suit and there being no trace of his Jewishness, to, by the end of the play, being dressed almost like an orthodox Jew, and being guilty of very, very cold-hearted savagery. David Calder had a wonderful idea, which was to actually mark out the place, with a felt-tip pen, on Antonio's heart, where he was going to cut the flesh. By this time this was an act of such cold-hearted revenge that I now think what the production successfully revealed—and I'm not sure I believe it to be true in its intention, but the production made it very clear—was that Shylock, having been oppressed so terribly, gets to breaking point and then becomes a man whose actions have to be stopped. There has to be another way, and that way is the quality of mercy, the quality of forgiveness. I think you get from Portia this wonderful, very passionate plea for mercy in a modern world. The production was very highly rated in Israel, because they felt it was a truthful demonstration of how the oppressed becomes the oppressor.

TRESNJAK: The only answer that I can give is a theatrical one and not a bit rational. But if it all came down to being rational we certainly would not need theater, and I think that Shakespeare understood the appeal of the irrational gesture on stage more than any playwright before or since. I think that Shylock unleashes a hurt, isolated, and vengeful part inside of all of us, and I can't say that either F. Murray Abraham or I tried to soften his jagged edges. It is one of those strange paradoxical roles where you gain the audience's sympathy by not asking for it. The worst thing to do is try to be ingratiating. In the universe of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's quest for the pound of flesh cuts through the layers of hypocrisy. Theatrically, it is as potent and as irrational as the statue of Hermione coming to life at the end of *The Winter's Tale*. But it connects to a different, darker side of our fantasy life, the desire to maim as opposed to heal.

"The quality of mercy" is one of the great speeches in Shakespeare, but does Portia's (cross-dressed) courtroom performance come from the same place in her as her behavior and language in Belmont?

TRESNJAK: I don't think that Portia could have uttered "The quality of mercy" speech before meeting Bassanio. The first moment that we see them together on stage, she speaks her other famous monologue ("I pray you tarry. Pause a day or two …"). I think that Shakespeare is telling us something about the transformative power of love. It makes Portia more eloquent. It gives her courage to go on a big adventure, travel to Venice, put on a disguise, and save the day. But the irony is that she knows so little about Venice, Shylock, Antonio, and even her new husband. And by the end of the scene, her plea for mercy will seem rather perverse.

In *Shakespeare After All*, Marjorie Garber writes: "on the level of sheer beauty of language and power of dramaturgy, the play is disturbingly appealing, just at those moments when one might wish it to be unappealing. The most magnificent of its speeches are also, in some ways, the most wrongheaded." I thought about this notion throughout the rehearsal process, especially during the trial scene, where we see Portia at her most eloquent and her most ignorant.

Lancelet Gobbo is not Shakespeare's most memorable clown, but he at the very least has an important structural role, doesn't he?

THACKER: I was very lucky indeed to have a wonderfully gifted comic actor, Chris Luscombe, who's now a director, playing Lancelet Gobbo. I did think, "How am I going to make this work in a modern dress production?" It was one of the things I just couldn't see working. We did cut quite a lot to help it along, but he made it work brilliantly, he was so funny and so real, and I have to say all the credit has to go to him. He solved the problem for me, and he was utterly credible within the context of this play. I was a very lucky director to find someone who made a very tricky situation not only not difficult, but effortlessly real and funny.

TRESNJAK: I find him intriguing because he seems like a rather ambitious young clown. From Shylock to Bassanio to Belmont, he pops up all over the place. He is both literally and upwardly mobile. He'll do well.

Lorenzo and Jessica: why does Shakespeare take them to Belmont

and give them that poetic and musical exchange at the beginning of the fifth act?

THACKER: Bear in mind this is quite an early play in Shakespeare's development as a playwright. As he got older he was able to bring things to a harmonious conclusion in a way that came completely organically out of the play. I think Act 5 has fundamentally a healing function. That's why it is so beautiful and so poetic and should be, I think, very real and very moving. It's hard to get right, but it should be a transition into healing. But of course there are two characters in it who are uncomfortable: one is Jessica, because of her betrayal of her roots and her father, and the other is Antonio, because of the trauma he's just been through and his being left on the stage by himself when everyone else is paired up. He is the only man left there, the gay man when all the couples have gone off and happily got married, so there's a bittersweet moment there, but I think these are subtle nuances that should be allowed to be there without banging them into people's faces.

TRESNJAK: I find that this is the hardest scene to write about and the most intriguing scene to stage. One can interpret it and stage it a hundred different ways, all of them equally valid. But regardless of the staging, there is something genuinely startling and heartbreaking about hearing such gorgeous poetry after the appalling ending of the trial scene. The radical shift in tone is its own reward. Near the end of their exchange, Lorenzo speaks three lines that, to me, were the thesis statement for our production:

> Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Is there a risk of the final act, with the business of exchanging rings, sagging after the drama of the courtroom scene, particularly as audiences who aren't familiar with the play might expect the courtroom scene to represent its climax?

THACKER: I think that Shakespeare's imagination probably ran away

with him: that he loved so much the writing of Shylock, and he turns out to be such a wonderful character, that you might think that in one sense the play is unbalanced in terms of what was probably the original impulse to write it. How the audience reacts to Shylock being made a Christian is pretty crucial. I think Shakespeare probably thought of it as a good thing, a gift. It's very difficult for our modern sensibilities to accept that and the natural consequence of that action was for the audience to be shocked at that point. I was very happy for them to be shocked, but we tried to make it clear that Portia was herself shocked at the outcome. Portia gives Shylock every possible chance. We tried to make that completely clear in the play—she gives him so many opportunities to be forgiving that he doesn't take.

TRESNJAK: I think that the effectiveness of the final act depends entirely on the choices that are made during the trial scene. At the very least, Portia and Nerissa are going to hear Bassanio and Gratiano profess that their esteem for Antonio is greater than their love for their new wives. In addition to that, Shakespeare gives Gratiano the most vicious attacks on Shylock. Add to that the possibility that Portia notices some homoerotic overtones in Bassanio's interactions with Antonio. Then there is also the possibility that Nerissa may not approve of Portia's actions during the trial. And the result is a fifth act that's brimming with tensions: between Portia and Nerissa; Portia and Bassanio; Nerissa and Gratiano; and Portia and Antonio. (The moment when Portia welcomes Antonio to Belmont strikes me as wonderfully curt and cryptic.) In our production, I thought of the last act as a brief reversal of *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *The Shaping of the Husbands*, as I like to call it. I think the audience truly enjoyed watching Bassanio and Gratiano squirm when Portia and Nerissa went after them.

At the end of our *Merchant*, the three couples went off to party and Antonio was left alone, contemplating Shylock's yarmulke that, earlier in the scene, fell out of Portia's pocket. I wanted to show that, by the end of the play, both Shylock and Antonio are outsiders.

PLAYING SHYLOCK: INTERVIEWS WITH ANTONY SHER AND HENRY GOODMAN

Sir Antony Sher was born in Cape Town in 1949, and trained as an actor at the Webber Douglas academy in London. He joined the Liverpool Everyman theater in the 1970s, working with a group of gifted young actors and writers which included Willy Russell, Alan Bleasdale, Julie Walters, Trevor Eve, and Jonathan Pryce. He joined the RSC in 1982 and played the title role in *Tartuffe* and the Fool in *King Lear*. In 1984 he won both the Evening Standard and Laurence Olivier awards for his performance in the RSC's *Richard III*. Since then he has played numerous leading roles in the theater as well as on film and television, including *Stanley* and *Primo* at the National Theatre and on Broadway (*Stanley* winning him a second Olivier Award, and *Primo* two New York Awards), and, at the RSC, *Tamburlaine*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *Macbeth*, as well as Prospero in *The Tempest*, Iago in *Othello*, and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Bill Alexander, which he discusses here. He also writes books and plays, including the theatrical memoirs *Year of the King* (1985), *Woza Shakespeare: Titus Andronicus in South Africa* (1997, cowritten with his partner Gregory Doran), and his autobiography, *Beside Myself* (2001). As an artist, his recent exhibitions have included the London Jewish Cultural Centre (2007) and the National Theatre (2009).

Henry Goodman was born in 1950. After graduating from RADA he moved to South Africa, running Athol Fugard's Space Theatre in Cape Town. Returning to England in the 1980s he quickly made a name for himself in a remarkably versatile range of roles, winning the Olivier Award for Best Actor in 1993 for his role in Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*. At the RSC his work includes *Richard III*, *Volpone, The Comedy of Errors*, and *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* At the National Theatre he won his second Olivier Award for his portrayal of Shylock in Trevor Nunn's production of *The Merchant of Venice*, discussed here, as well as playing Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*, Roy Cohn in *Angels in America*, and Philip Gellburg in *Broken Glass.* In the West End his roles include *Duet for One*, Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Freud in *Hysteria*, and Eddie in *Feelgood*, and on Broadway his work includes *Tartuffe* and *Art*.

His television and film work includes *The Damned United, Churchill, Colour Me Kubrick, Notting Hill, Mary Reilly*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Shylock is a major role, but he is on stage for very few scenes, so there is little opportunity for gradual evolution of his character: is that a particular challenge?

AS: I think that Shylock is extremely well structured as a role, with one exception (I wish he had a final scene, an Act 5 Scene 2, after all the lightweight comedy about missing rings in 5.1), but there is still ample opportunity to develop his character. To summarize: in Act 1 Scene 3, we see him as he normally is in public, treading a tightrope with the Christians, now being humble, now resentful, now darkly humorous; in Act 2 Scene 5, we see him as he is in private—paranoid and strict (as a father); in Act 3 Scene 1, we see this troubled man explode, almost splitting into two—shaken senseless by his daughter's elopement, while rejoicing crazily at Antonio's misfortunes; in Act 3 Scene 3, we see how he has now hardened, the split personality fused into a single immovable force; in Act 4 Scene 1, the "Trial Scene," we see a horrible spectacle—the new monstrous Shylock ruling supreme at first, and then being cut down, piece by piece, till he is a shadow of his former self, and finally loses everything. What a journey.

HG: No, because what you get in *Merchant* are huge events in the offstage life that forcefully inform and cause the remarkable things you see. The sparing use of the actual presence of Shylock onstage means that the huge events that happen in his family life, in his home, in his social milieu, in a broader sense socially and politically, but in a very direct sense in his daily life, are immediate and active catalysts that we witness in his development when he is onstage. For example, with the taunting of the young lads-about-town, the irritation with his servant at home, Gobbo, and then the huge upheaval in his family life after Jessica elopes with a Christian, all of these events are like an emotional tidal wave that expose the bare foundations and leave him naked and visceral. I think he's sparingly used, but when he does come on he is just overwhelming in force to everybody else around him. In theater, as in life, situation always breeds character; how people deal with challenges, pressures, or opportunities reveals who they really are.

Villain or victim?

AS: He is both victim and villain, strictly in that order, and epitomizes a syndrome which fascinates me, and has featured often in my work, both as an actor and a writer: the persecuted turning into the persecutor. I witnessed it in my native South Africa. In colonial times, the Boers were persecuted by the British, who, during the Anglo-Boer War, invented the concentration camp, starving and killing thousands of Boer women and children. But then when the Boers gained power, becoming the Afrikaners, they created Apartheid, and persecuted the blacks. Meanwhile, my family fled anti-Semitic persecution in Eastern Europe, settled in South Africa, gradually prospered, and ended up supporting the racist Afrikaner government. Seldom do human beings seem to learn from experience, seldom do they draw the obvious comparisons between what they have previously suffered and now go on to inflict. As with Shylock. In his first scene, he describes how the Christians treat him as a second-class citizen, their form of "kaffir": "You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, / And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine." To be spat upon is a small, physically harmless, yet particularly foul form of humiliation (as I learned during the Jew-baiting scenes in our production). Surely someone who has endured this outrage wouldn't want it done to others? No, indeed—Shylock wants worse. He wants a pound of flesh cut from Antonio. It's a worthless thing, inedible to man, "a weight of carrion flesh" as he says himself, but, now that he has the upper hand, this bruised and battered victim simply wants revenge of the most violent kind.

HG: I cannot help but be deeply affected by Shakespeare, as with all his writing, showing many sides of the picture—many more than simply continuing the notion that all foreigners are evil and dangerous. He's far more balanced and sophisticated than that, and it's only by going more deeply into the details of the text that we can explore that. I did a great deal of reading around the history of the production and I found all that liberating, because you realize that everyone who ever played the role is trying to deal with the essential problem of whether you fall into the trap of deciding, am I villain or victim? The key is the inner experience he is having. I feel he's a victim of *himself*. There are many people treated harshly by life who manage to stop themselves from becoming vicious and ugly because they have the inner resources or countervailing

warmth and generosity of spirit within them to offset the poison. But Shylock hasn't—he has been poisoned by the pressure of the reality he lives in. I think we see that in the scene with Jessica and Gobbo in his home. The home, I think we should believe from Jessica's words, is a prison. She may belong to his nation, but not to his manner, and in that wonderful speech that she has, she hates him for his hatred. It's clearly more than natural teenage rebellion, it's religious repression: there's something in the orthodoxy of Shylock's behavior that really upsets her deeply. It's a type of fanaticism. For Shylock there's a sense that your home is a retreat from the world. Jessica wants it to be open, to be a passport to the world in every sense. But then you have to understand that their home is in a ghetto. In this the details are important: by sunset every night you have to be inside with the doors firmly closed; if you're not inside you have to pay a huge fine to the authorities. They are locked in on the site of an old iron foundry (the Italian is *barghetto*, where *ghetto* comes from). Every night this community of people that would have come from all over the Mediterranean, Persia, France, Jews from Europe, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and other exotic places, would have to get out of the city and into the ghetto. What binds them is an enforced identity as aliens. So they take solace from that very otherness —solace and, crucially, strength. In Shylock, a potentially villainous, fanatical, justified strength of thought, strength of righteousness. A strength that is self-harming and eventually condones, with right and God on its side, murder. There's a wonderful book by Cecil Roth on the history of the Jews which gives a great insight into the lives of their dynamic and exciting cultures throughout Europe (in the late sixteenth century). Shakespeare doesn't concentrate on that aspect, and this is the interesting thing: what Shakespeare does is show the effect of the political and the social on the private man. The individual tortured by society. He shows how that very society "breeds" its own monsters, monsters that will wound it deeply. Also, in a similar way, domestically: that's why Shakespeare goes out of his way to show that this man has no wife. Jessica *is* his wife: his daughter has to be mature beyond her years; she not only lives in a very orthodox, repressive regime, but emotionally her father is a disturbed man. He is obsessed, not just by money-making but by protecting himself from the savagery of the awfulness of the life out there on the streets. There is a psychological ghetto in the home

scenes as much as the physical ghetto outside.

Though often regarded as an especially isolated character, we see Shylock with Tubal, and his family is obviously very important to him (his relationship with Jessica, his memory of his wife Leah): did you seek to convey both these aspects?

AS: It is vitally important for the actor playing Shylock to make him as detailed and complex a character as possible, and to show his humanity. No better chance comes than when Tubal reports that Shylock's eloped daughter, Jessica, has traded one of his rings for a monkey. Numb with shock, Shylock suddenly mentions his late wife (in the action there's no Mrs. Shylock to help him, like there's no Mrs. Lear or Mrs. Prospero), and he speaks with a strange, blurred eloquence: "I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." The fact that he says this to Tubal indicates a trust, a friendship between the men, and the fact that they agree to meet later at their synagogue gives a glimpse of their social and spiritual life. These may just be tiny moments, but they're valuable.

More specifically, how did you and your Jessica play the relationship with each other?

AS: The opportunity to play the Shylock/Jessica relationship lies not so much in their one short scene together as in its aftermath. Deborah Goodman and I played the scene rather formally, an Orthodox Jewish father and daughter; he stern, she dutiful. Then, during the elopement, she revealed how oppressed she had felt under his rule, and how liberated she was now. He, in turn, learning about her betrayal, unleashed the kind of primal passion you only feel about those closest to you: "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear!" Later, during the banter about rings in Act 5, Jessica became increasingly isolated, and then at the end of the play, we created an extra moment, like most modern productions do (to compensate for what I call "the missing Shylock scene")—she dropped her newly acquired crucifix, and it was retrieved by Antonio. He held it in front of her with ambiguous intent: was he returning it, or was he questioning

her right to wear it? Two lonely outsiders. He deprived of his beloved Bassanio, she of her father and her racial identity.



7. Henry Goodman as Shylock with Gabrielle Jourdan as Jessica: huge affection, though sometimes expressed, as affection often is, in violence.

HG: Well, the key to any hatred is love gone wrong. They love each other deeply and they need each other. But they don't need the way the other behaves and they don't need the other's needs! Shylock needs Jessica to be everything that he believes in: to be respectful, true to rules and to the traditions of Jewish orthodox behavior, to live in the denial of

pleasure that he lives in, against the society from which he earns his living. There is an issue, beneath the play, of moral superiority, of who's right, the New Testament or the Old. You can say that he is learning to be a mother, and he can't. Gabrielle Jourdan, who played Jessica, brought a huge intelligence and yearning. There wasn't just a naughty young girl there, there was somebody who had a desire to be supportive, kind, and understanding, but also a love of life that was being stifled. We tried to show, I think instinctively, that there was huge affection between them which was expressed, as affection often is, in violence. Losing temper with the ones you love. Disturbing and treating horribly the ones you care about. Love is dysfunctionally expressed, and that is the link with the society outside. When events take the course they do, he has not got the control or that surface carapace that he normally has on the Rialto.

"Hath not a Jew eyes?" is one of those famous speeches, like "To be or not to be," that everyone is waiting for and on which an actor perhaps needs a new angle to keep it fresh: what did you discover in the speech?

AS: The "Hath not a Jew eyes?" speech was born out of the very center of the production: the violence of prejudice. In Act 2 Scene 8, the audience has learned that Shylock is running through the streets, shouting: "My daughter! O my ducats! … two rich and precious stones / Stol'n by my daughter!" Also they learn that "all the boys in Venice follow him / Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats." So in Act 3 Scene 1, the director Bill Alexander and I decided to have Shylock enter in a disheveled state, his forehead bleeding (as though actually stoned by the boys), and to have Solanio and Salerio attack him, verbally and physically. Then the great speech just came out as a spontaneous and deeply felt response. Here, especially, we wanted to show the victim before he becomes the villain, the persecuted before he becomes the persecutor.

HG: Actually in performance it flows out from the action organically, but yes, it is a burden. To avoid self-consciousness I needed to find the context out of which he is driven. We've a man who has worked on the

Rialto for many years and when he's outside he smiles, he's genial. Then he goes home to this sour, dark temple, where he can spit about the society outside. There's this dichotomy, this schism emotionally within him. At home, as I did in my performance, he smacks his daughter round the face, he is violent, he's aggressive and ugly. He is not a nice man. He cannot express love. Yes, we know why and we can understand why he's not a nice man, but he's not a well-balanced, pleasant man. It is not right to avoid that in trying to portray him honestly. The actor should avoid at all costs mollifying him or making him a villain for politically correct motives. What the play is really saying, I think, is that society buys its own outcomes. The notion of value and what we buy in life is central to the play.

Off the script, but intuited from it, consider this: the sense of grievance, and I believe grief, at the death of his wife Leah is the soil out of which this articulate human challenge comes. "Why me? Please, not more grief and pain and insult and disgrace and loss. Please explain to me … it's just not fair" is a paraphrase I would use to shape that inner sense of being wronged beyond endurance.

Shylock is in the habit of expecting Antonio to treat him in a certain way, to spit on him and insult him, but when the tables are turned and Antonio needs the loan it is fascinating. Antonio is a bold public figure who confidently entertains his friends by his derision toward the Jews. He has a very strong sense of religious commitment, and I think this is very important. Antonio is a very committed Christian, he's a good Christian, and to be a good Christian is to stop Jews being Jews. The pope has at this time condoned, by law, burning them, let's recall! That all religion is dangerous is something the play reveals and explores. Shylock in a certain sense has an equally indomitable commitment to religion. This is the New Testament versus the Old. So when Antonio needs to borrow the money it brings out in Shylock a sense of opportunism, a savagery. For years he has demonstrated a patient acceptance of how you deal with life, of *years* of habitually being spat on, and he makes it quite clear he's dealt with it patiently. It really is remarkable, and I think that is a secret about Shylock: he has learned a carapace of survival in this society, of smiling, laughing. On the surface a certain sense of bonhomie, but inside a deep sense of self-denigration,

shame, guilt about that very carapace. Then the leading Merchant of Venice, Antonio, who is the champion of all of these anti-alien, anti-Jewish behaviors, who encourages the young bloods in this mercantile city, suddenly HE needs money! It is like the Lockerbie bomber needing a loan from the parents of those he killed. The irony unleashes something unique emotionally, an opportunity to rebalance the books. On the surface you can say that's just revenge and hatred, but I think it's also a certain sort of justice. I think all of that context is swimming underneath: the loss of his money, his diamonds, his daughter, his wife, and then the ring, which he was given as a bachelor by his wife-to-be, Leah, who means a great deal to him and whose death has devastated Shylock. And the only memory of this human being is the ring. I think before Shylock speaks those powerful words he's reached a stage of primal, lucid, almost existential thinking. I don't think he's ever been in this state before. He's asking *himself* the question; it's not just rage at these two racists that spit on him and laugh at him and taunt him. The emotional impact of his daughter becoming a Christian, running away with the enemy and taking the ring, puts him in a state when he says those lines which is absolutely new for him. It's not just an old habit coming out, it's something absolutely new. The thoughts are newly discovered because of a traumatized state, and that's why they're great. That's what shapes the rhetorical bite of his thought. Newness of discovery is why any Shakespeare speech becomes great: people reach a point of understanding about themselves that shapes their thoughts and language. I think that's the way to understand that speech; he's been pushed to a point where he's almost for a moment gone beyond just anger. Yes, there's huge emotional heft in the scene, but there's also a sense of unavoidable truthfulness, lucidity.

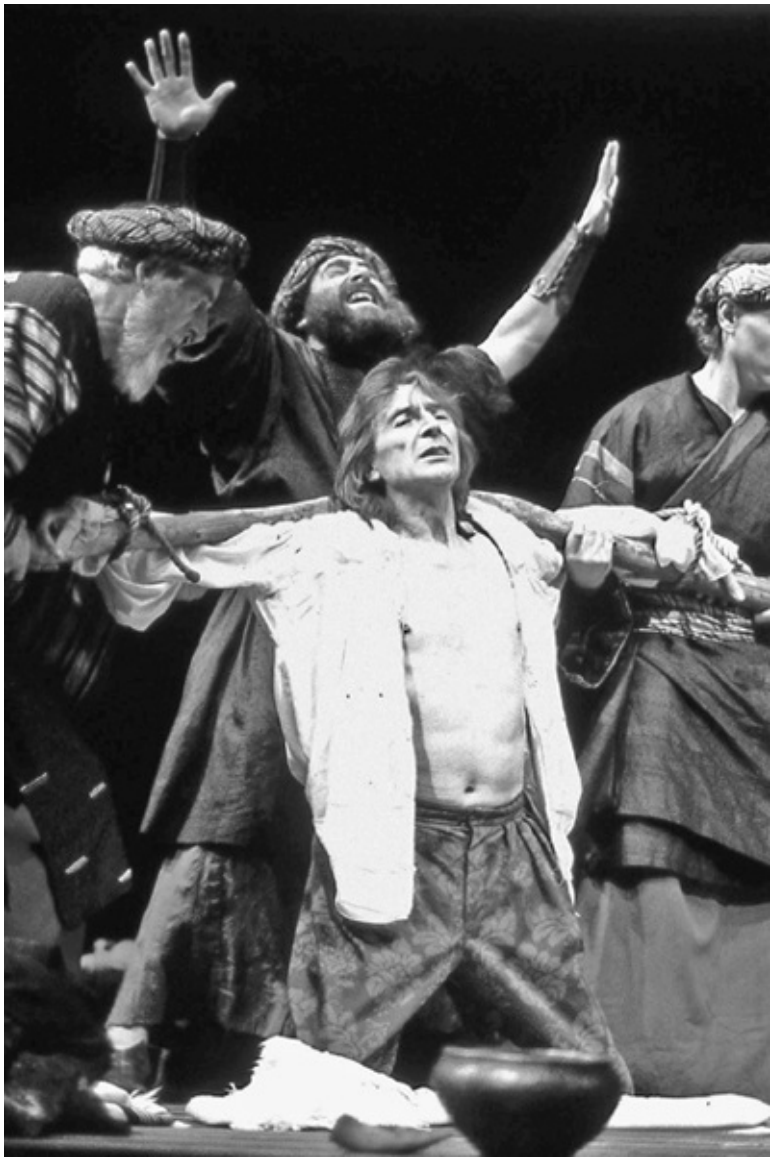
Shylock's implacability in the trial scene is pretty unremitting: how do you as an actor empathize with the man who insists on his pound of flesh?

AS: I had no difficulty at all empathizing with him in the trial scene—he's been badly damaged by his treatment, and now he's insane with rage. We intensified his mental state by having him perform a (totally invented) Jewish ritual while he prepared to cut the pound of flesh from

Antonio, chanting away in Hebrew, as though this was some ancient sacrificial rite. But I have to confess that my commitment to the frenzied attack was shaken one night when a lady in the front row said of John Carlisle, playing Antonio, and the slimmest of actors, "Oh, you'll never get a pound of flesh off him!"

HG: I think what's important is that before he goes into the trial scene we learn from the scene on the street that the jailer has been breaking the rules and allowing Antonio to come begging for mercy. Antonio is so powerful in this town that people are fighting on his behalf; even the duke has clearly spoken to Shylock on Antonio's behalf. So before he gets in the courtroom, people are on the streets calling out "You vicious Jew, how can you try and bring down one of our leading men of Venice?" The whole city has turned against him. He goes home to an empty house; everywhere he looks, hatred looks back at him. I'm very conscious before he gets into that public space of the private nightmare of his life. However bad it was before, it is now a million times worse. And, crucially, he now has legitimate opportunity and inner need for justice (some say revenge). Think of it: sitting at home, on his own, without his daughter or wife, even Tubal his sole Jewish friend has started to think "You're going too far." He's lonely, he's isolated, and in his isolation he becomes very dangerous. I also think it's important that Shylock is a very clever, canny man. He's read the Old Testament in all of its rich, proverbial allegories and stories. He's a market trader at the highest level—that sense of playing the long game, almost mental chess, working out numbers, planning when ships come in, how much a piece of cloth will be; he plays hedge funds in his head. He thrives when challenged with complex situations. Emotionally, he rubs his soul with joy when people take him on. He's held his sense of injustice back and spat about it inside the ghetto, but now he can actually look at it, deal with it. That's what I was interested in exploring. He enjoys taking them on in a way that he never did before. Then there is the very key issue of his innate temperament, his "humour" in the contemporary Elizabethan medical sense. Early in the play, well before bile is aroused, he can't stop himself from saying, "Signior Antonio, many a time and oft / In the Rialto you have rated me / About my moneys and my usances … What should I say to you?," etc. He can't stop himself from being ironical, and

prodding, because he knows he's got these guys in a corner intellectually, and they're hypocrites. Now put that into a political, social, emotional, life-and-death situation, a man who thinks and says, "I fight for my tribe." He even says in the trial, which a lot of people forget, "I follow thus / A losing suit against him." I am fighting a losing situation—he uses those words. "A pound of flesh. What good is that to me? But now I will have him." And that's why all this insight comes under pressure: "You bought your slaves. If I said to you, why don't you let them sleep in your beds and marry your daughters, would you do it? No, you wouldn't, because you *bought* them. You *own* them. Well I *bought* the right to hate this man. My hatred is 'dearly bought.'" It's a remarkable statement. He knows what he's saying. He *loves* the legal precedents, that's why the notion of Daniel, the great thinker, the great judge in the great biblical tradition, is so important to him—and also Jacob, the father of the nation—because these were thinkers. Daniel was a wise, powerful, clever man. So all of that is in that room. It's the chance to bite back. And in the moment of playing, you're not aware at all of playing the big speeches, or big problems, you've just got the heft of all of these events and history behind you, just speaking out from an unavoidable inner insight and pressure. The phrase "affection / Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood / Of what it like or loathes": my paraphrase would be "I am—we are all—at the mercy of this effect (as Freud called it!), this drive. I can't stop myself as Shylock—like people who pee whenever they hear the bagpipes!"



8. Antony Sher as Shylock in the trial scene, intoning his (invented) Hebrew sacrificial prayer.

Were physical characteristics an important part of your creation of the character?

AS: In researching the Jewish ghetto in Venice (Jan Morris' book on that city was particularly useful), I was interested to learn that a significant part of its population was Turkish. Bill Alexander and I became drawn to the idea that it wasn't just Shylock's religion that made him very foreign, very alien, to the Christians. Since they were being played in RP British accents, Shylock developed a very Turkish sound, and look—with long

hair and beard, and a large purple djellaba—and a heavy, almost brutal walk. I thought of him as a simple, relatively uneducated man, a peasant turned businessman, used to receiving blows, and now ready to return them.

HG: I feel very strongly that in the writing there's a different rhythm in the way he speaks. There were not a lot of Jews in London when Shakespeare wrote the play, so they were a little bit alien, but there were a great many foreigners with foreign accents. London in that sense was like Venice: it benefited from them, even though there was a huge, fearful mentality and a terror of being at war. I think one of the things that hit me were the sounds of the writing and the rhythm of the writing; there's a rhythmic shape and pattern. In our production, the sensibility was to put it pre-Holocaust, otherwise it becomes unwatchable and in bad taste. Trevor found a way to put it in Europe, in Vienna or in Budapest; it wasn't explicit, probably in the late 1920s, early 1930s, before things had really got out of hand. And one of the lovely ideas that Trevor had which affected the social, political milieu was that Shylock, when he went off for dinner, went off to meet Antonio to seal the deal, met them at the cabaret, which is really louche and sexy and naughty, and which for Shylock is utterly abhorrent and uncomfortable. And there was Gobbo, whom he has just sacked, on the microphone saying "My master's an old Jew …" Once again, there it is: all the hatred, from his own servant, who's now dressed a little better, working for Bassanio, whom Shylock has just lent a load of money to. It's a wonderful irony and a great idea of Trevor's.

Did historical research into the status of Jews in Shakespeare's time play a part in your preparation of the role?

AS: No, though I knew of course that Jews were officially banned from England at the time Shakespeare wrote the play. So his fully rounded and compassionate view of Shylock came either from encounters with Jews elsewhere, or, more likely, his fully rounded and compassionate view of humanity in general.

HG: The key thing is to look at what's in the text before you start to

interpret, but I was overwhelmingly struck when doing research for the play by the events surrounding Roderigo Lopez. Lopez was hung, drawn and quartered, and let's remind ourselves that that is hanging somebody until they're not quite dead and then viscerally ripping them to bits and cutting out their belly, all in front of a shrieking, laughing crowd at Tyburn in Marble Arch. The Elizabethan love of watching these live events, even though there might be horror and distaste, was also there in the thrill of bear-baiting and cock-fighting, and, as we know only too well, is not that far from our own society. There's both the visceral impact of that and also the social and political events in London, in a country at war with Spain, having recently dealt with the Armada. It brought something out. And it's much too simplistic to say that it's just prejudice or hatred. Lopez was a man who wasn't a leader, but who was very close to the queen, who had permission to touch the royal fruitless private parts, he was one of only twenty-odd people given the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, he was at the highest level of court. He was a man whom the queen became very close to, but who was hated by the Earl of Essex and all these people; he was what they called a *marrano*, which means "pig," *converso*, somebody they thought was a secret Jew, although I suspect that he had given up his religion. All of these things bespeak in the court, and in society, a fear of the foreigner, especially in an island that was at war with Spain and frightened of the large numbers of exiled Portuguese (Spain had conquered it and the Portuguese king had fled to London)—Lopez being Portuguese and Jewish: a double alien! It is true, from research I found, that Lopez was trying to do deals and was acting as a fixer (not the same thing as a spy) for his patients, the queen and Lord Burleigh. There was fierce rivalry between Essex and Burleigh (Essex pro-war with Spain; Burleigh a peace-seeker). Essex basically tortured this seventy-year-old man [Lopez] until he got what he wanted out of him. Essex took him to his own private home to get outside of the city walls because Elizabeth didn't want him to be tortured, she believed in him. I think that all of that going on at court, where Shakespeare was already by then performing in various companies, inspired me as much as the detailed current events and specific textual events in the play. I personally find all that background really helpful and useful.

I found and read the papal bulls which from the Inquisition onward had been issuing orders to kill Jews. In Pisa and many different places they put them on bonfires and burned them. Venice didn't—why? Because Venice understood that they needed these people, because they spoke many languages so they could speak to the traders and pedlars and businessmen from all over the world. So there is built into the play that sense of mercantile life. Before I've even spoken a word, I find all that stuff really exciting. Context and history, personal and emotional. The signals and the clues are all from the text, never in spite of it, but they lead you back and then you can fill out what Shakespeare has done. I always find it fascinating how Shakespeare adapted and changed his sources, in this case *Il Pecorone*. The changes he made are very revealing: what did he keep, and what didn't he? The fact that he pushes the trial to go in a particular direction, and Antonio forces Shylock to become a Christian and pushes the events of the play away from the original story, tells us that Shakespeare is interested in certain things. All of those things are very important. A lot of people say, "This is all directors' stuff." Absolute nonsense. Any thinking, feeling, intelligent human being wants to understand the context, and I think that division between acting and directing is just ridiculous.

What was your take on the accusation that the representation of the part is anti-Semitic?

AS: I think it is as wrong to call *Merchant* anti-Semitic as it is to call *Othello* racist. The two plays examine these issues—anti-Semitism and racism—in a tough and uncomfortable way, but without ever condoning or promoting them. Yet *Merchant*'s flaw remains its silly Act 5, which seems to round off the dark and complex story in a totally trivial way. It's one of those rare occasions in Shakespeare where a modern audience —and specifically a post-Holocaust audience—has great difficulty accepting what he's written. A clear case, I think, of a play hijacked by history.

HG: In very simple language, I don't agree with it. I think it perpetuates an image to some degree, but is showing the Welsh and the Scotsmen in *Henry V* anti-Welsh or anti-Scot? No, it shows the rivalries, the clichés,

the stereotypes, and the bitterness in the Elizabethan world, when everybody was about to go to war. I think what is, to me, overwhelming is that Shakespeare goes out of his way to show Shylock in a personal context, which doesn't explain or completely exonerate in any way his behavior, but it does contextualize it, and it does humanize it, and he gives him, like he gives Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*, a public trial. If you think of the big trial scenes they usually give the foreigner a great voice actually. He doesn't allow us just to laugh at Shylock, although there is some of that, or to show him merely in his appalling behavior; he also says that this is a man with knowledge and insight and reason to think and feel and behave in the way that he does. There are certain key choices that you've got to make if you play this role. What's the learning curve? I think that he may be in very few scenes, but he has absolutely huge triggers before and during them. I believe he finds it not so easy to actually kill someone. Some people become so psychopathic in their hate that they can just stab a knife into somebody without even thinking about it. I don't believe he's become that, because all of his other self is justice, decency, control; and although he's got to a point of doing something appalling, I believe he has that moment of doubt. It might only be a millisecond, but he does.

Hamlet is not always played as peculiarly Danish, Macbeth does not always have a Scottish accent … could you imagine a production in which Shylock is not peculiarly Jewish?

AS: Shylock's Jewishness is far more critical than Macbeth's Scottishness or Hamlet's Danishness; one half of *Merchant*'s plot is fueled by the hatred between the Christians and the Jews. The question is, how Jewish to make him? I believe very Jewish—without, of course, spilling over into caricature. In Trevor Nunn's 1999 National Theatre production, set in 1930s Europe, Henry Goodman played a very Jewish Shylock with total authenticity, and the result was superb. You both believed in him as a three-dimensional man, yet also understood that when the Christians looked at him they saw one of those Nazi cartoons of verminous Jews. At the other extreme, there was Jonathan Miller's 1970 National Theatre production with Laurence Olivier. Backed by his Jewish director, Olivier chose to play a totally assimilated Jew, a

sophisticated Disraeli-type figure (the setting was Victorian). I understood their point—the enemies of the real Disraeli (who wasn't just assimilated, but had actually converted to Christianity) often reverted to anti-Semitic abuse when they were on the attack—yet it was hard to believe that this particular Shylock had ever been spat upon. And it is this ugly, visceral little act which is, I believe, crucial to his side of the story. But how it relates to the other side, Portia's fairy-tale adventures, this simply mystifies me. When we began work on our RSC production in 1987, I was convinced that Bill Alexander, Deborah Findlay (Portia), and I would find a way of marrying the two halves, and yet when we finished two years later, after the Stratford and Barbican runs, I then felt it was impossible. I look forward to being proved wrong one day …

HG: Now I know it's a multilayered issue, but yes I can. See, there's a principle here. If you say no black person should ever play Shylock or no white person should ever play Othello, to me you can't do theater. What's the point of it? Being the other, undergoing their experience, that is the journey of theater. Now of course we live in an age where, thank heavens, black people can play kings of England and that's great, but we have to acknowledge that in the context of the time those prejudices did exist. It's wonderful that we're now growing as human beings and we can be color blind, but the plays do come from an era when people were not. It's as if Shakespeare could only have written about people living in Stratford-upon-Avon or London—it's a very far-reaching point, this. How could he write about all these different cultures? He can only *imagine* them. He might see some at court when he went to perform at Whitehall, he might have met some at Stratford Town Hall when his dad was hosting events. But then he captures those people and gives us characters. If he's got the right to *write* them, then we've got the right to *act* them. The problem is, does Shylock have to be the clichéd version of what a Jew is? Of course not. That's why I fully accepted the version of Olivier, even though it lacked certain things. Yes, the play does take on added (I'm not being naive) intensity and emotional authenticity and veracity if you feel in its context, as we did in Europe in the 1930s: that felt right. But if you imagine Jonathan Miller or Freddie Raphael or hundreds of modern Jewish writers or eminent lawyers or doctors or journalists, etc., etc., being Shylock, they might just speak like I'm

speaking now. The issue is, do they have to have a funny accent, do they have to use their hands in a certain way …?

That's the very dangerous thing with Shylock and people bend over backward to try and negotiate that. I went out of my way to show that he lives very religiously, he's devout. But anybody can do that research, you don't have to be Jewish to do that. If I'm playing Macbeth I'll look into understanding the things about his life, and his wife, and his society, and Scots, and the hatred of England, and lairds and lords. So yes I can. The question is the quality that it would bring to the work. And the trouble with Shylock is that he embraces and encourages—even tempts—extreme ways of playing him. Or you fall into the other trap of desperately trying not to be Jewish, make it absolutely, completely modern, just somebody who is wronged and is completely like all the other people in his community. It's a fascinating subject, and context and period is absolutely crucial in this play—more than in any other play, I think. We must remember that the Nazis did dozens and dozens of productions of this play during the era because they thought it was useful, but they cut out all things that were humane. Shakespeare didn't, he put them in.

* Blood libel: an allegation, recurring during the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, that Jews were killing Christian children to use their blood for the ritual of making unleavened bread (*matzah*). A red mold which occasionally appeared on the bread started this myth. From *The Jewish Virtual Library* (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/index.html).

* Lord Alfred Douglas was the lover of the famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde, and went on to marry heiress and poet Olive Eleanor Custance.

SHAKESPEARE'S CAREER IN THE THEATER

BEGINNINGS

William Shakespeare was an extraordinarily intelligent man who was born and died in an ordinary market town in the English Midlands. He lived an uneventful life in an eventful age. Born in April 1564, he was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a glove maker who was prominent on the town council until he fell into financial difficulties. Young William was educated at the local grammar in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, where he gained a thorough grounding in the Latin language, the art of rhetoric, and classical poetry. He married Ann Hathaway and had three children (Susanna, then the twins Hamnet and Judith) before his twenty-first birthday: an exceptionally young age for the period. We do not know how he supported his family in the mid-1580s.

Like many clever country boys, he moved to the city in order to make his way in the world. Like many creative people, he found a career in the entertainment business. Public playhouses and professional full-time acting companies reliant on the market for their income were born in Shakespeare's childhood. When he arrived in London as a man, sometime in the late 1580s, a new phenomenon was in the making: the actor who is so successful that he becomes a "star." The word did not exist in its modern sense, but the pattern is recognizable: audiences went to the theater not so much to see a particular show as to witness the comedian Richard Tarlton or the dramatic actor Edward Alleyn.

Shakespeare was an actor before he was a writer. It appears not to have been long before he realized that he was never going to grow into a great comedian like Tarlton or a great tragedian like Alleyn. Instead, he found a role within his company as the man who patched up old plays, breathing new life, new dramatic twists, into tired repertory pieces. He paid close attention to the work of the university-educated dramatists who were writing history plays and tragedies for the public stage in a

style more ambitious, sweeping, and poetically grand than anything that had been seen before. But he may also have noted that what his friend and rival Ben Jonson would call "Marlowe's mighty line" sometimes faltered in the mode of comedy. Going to university, as Christopher Marlowe did, was all well and good for honing the arts of rhetorical elaboration and classical allusion, but it could lead to a loss of the common touch. To stay close to a large segment of the potential audience for public theater, it was necessary to write for clowns as well as kings and to intersperse the flights of poetry with the humor of the tavern, the privy, and the brothel: Shakespeare was the first to establish himself early in his career as an equal master of tragedy, comedy, and history. He realized that theater could be the medium to make the national past available to a wider audience than the elite who could afford to read large history books: his signature early works include not only the classical tragedy *Titus Andronicus* but also the sequence of English historical plays on the Wars of the Roses.

He also invented a new role for himself, that of in-house company dramatist. Where his peers and predecessors had to sell their plays to the theater managers on a poorly paid piecework basis, Shakespeare took a percentage of the box-office income. The Lord Chamberlain's Men constituted themselves in 1594 as a joint stock company, with the profits being distributed among the core actors who had invested as sharers. Shakespeare acted himself—he appears in the cast lists of some of Ben Jonson's plays as well as the list of actors' names at the beginning of his own collected works—but his principal duty was to write two or three plays a year for the company. By holding shares, he was effectively earning himself a royalty on his work, something no author had ever done before in England. When the Lord Chamberlain's Men collected their fee for performance at court in the Christmas season of 1594, three of them went along to the Treasurer of the Chamber: not just Richard Burbage the tragedian and Will Kempe the clown, but also Shakespeare the scriptwriter. That was something new.

The next four years were the golden period in Shakespeare's career, though overshadowed by the death of his only son Hamnet, aged eleven, in 1596. In his early thirties and in full command of both his poetic and his theatrical medium, he perfected his art of comedy, while also

developing his tragic and historical writing in new ways. In 1598, Francis Meres, a Cambridge University graduate with his finger on the pulse of the London literary world, praised Shakespeare for his excellence across the genres:

> As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labours Lost*, his *Love Labours Won*, his *Midsummer Night Dream* and his *Merchant of Venice*: for tragedy his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John, Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*.

For Meres, as for the many writers who praised the "honey-flowing vein" of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, narrative poems written when the theaters were closed due to plague in 1593–94, Shakespeare was marked above all by his linguistic skill, by the gift of turning elegant poetic phrases.

PLAYHOUSES

Elizabethan playhouses were "thrust" or "one-room" theaters. To understand Shakespeare's original theatrical life, we have to forget about the indoor theater of later times, with its proscenium arch and curtain that would be opened at the beginning and closed at the end of each act. In the proscenium arch theater, stage and auditorium are effectively two separate rooms: the audience looks from one world into another as if through the imaginary "fourth wall" framed by the proscenium. The picture-frame stage, together with the elaborate scenic effects and backdrops beyond it, created the illusion of a self-contained world—especially once nineteenth-century developments in the control of artificial lighting meant that the auditorium could be darkened and the spectators made to focus on the lighted stage. Shakespeare, by contrast, wrote for a bare platform stage with a standing audience gathered around it in a courtyard in full daylight. The audience was always conscious of themselves and their fellow spectators, and they shared the same "room" as the actors. A sense of immediate presence and the

creation of rapport with the audience were all-important. The actor could not afford to imagine he was in a closed world, with silent witnesses dutifully observing him from the darkness.

Shakespeare's theatrical career began at the Rose Theatre in Southwark. The stage was wide and shallow, trapezoid in shape, like a lozenge. This design had a great deal of potential for the theatrical equivalent of cinematic split-screen effects, whereby one group of characters would enter at the door at one end of the tiring-house wall at the back of the stage and another group through the door at the other end, thus creating two rival tableaux. Many of the battle-heavy and faction-filled plays that premiered at the Rose have scenes of just this sort.

At the rear of the Rose stage, there were three capacious exits, each over ten feet wide. Unfortunately, the very limited excavation of a fragmentary portion of the original Globe site, in 1989, revealed nothing about the stage. The first Globe was built in 1599 with similar proportions to those of another theater, the Fortune, albeit that the former was polygonal and looked circular, whereas the latter was rectangular. The building contract for the Fortune survives and allows us to infer that the stage of the Globe was probably substantially wider than it was deep (perhaps forty-three feet wide and twenty-seven feet deep). It may well have been tapered at the front, like that of the Rose.

The capacity of the Globe was said to have been enormous, perhaps in excess of three thousand. It has been conjectured that about eight hundred people may have stood in the yard, with two thousand or more in the three layers of covered galleries. The other "public" playhouses were also of large capacity, whereas the indoor Blackfriars theater that Shakespeare's company began using in 1608—the former refectory of a monastery—had overall internal dimensions of a mere forty-six by sixty feet. It would have made for a much more intimate theatrical experience and had a much smaller capacity, probably of about six hundred people. Since they paid at least sixpence a head, the Blackfriars attracted a more select or "private" audience. The atmosphere would have been closer to that of an indoor performance before the court in the Whitehall Palace or at Richmond. That Shakespeare always wrote for indoor production at court as well as outdoor performance in the public theater should make

us cautious about inferring, as some scholars have, that the opportunity provided by the intimacy of the Blackfriars led to a significant change toward a "chamber" style in his last plays—which, besides, were performed at both the Globe and the Blackfriars. After the occupation of the Blackfriars a five-act structure seems to have become more important to Shakespeare. That was because of artificial lighting: there were musical interludes between the acts, while the candles were trimmed and replaced. Again, though, something similar must have been necessary for indoor court performances throughout his career.

Front of house there were the "gatherers" who collected the money from audience members: a penny to stand in the open-air yard, another penny for a place in the covered galleries, sixpence for the prominent "lord's rooms" to the side of the stage. In the indoor "private" theaters, gallants from the audience who fancied making themselves part of the spectacle sat on stools on the edge of the stage itself. Scholars debate as to how widespread this practice was in the public theaters such as the Globe. Once the audience was in place and the money counted, the gatherers were available to be extras on stage. That is one reason why battles and crowd scenes often come later rather than early in Shakespeare's plays. There was no formal prohibition upon performance by women, and there certainly were women among the gatherers, so it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that female crowd members were played by females.

The play began at two o'clock in the afternoon and the theater had to be cleared by five. After the main show, there would be a jig—which consisted not only of dancing, but also of knockabout comedy (it is the origin of the farcical "afterpiece" in the eighteenth-century theater). So the time available for a Shakespeare play was about two and a half hours, somewhere between the "two hours' traffic" mentioned in the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* and the "three hours' spectacle" referred to in the preface to the 1647 Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. The prologue to a play by Thomas Middleton refers to a thousand lines as "one hour's words," so the likelihood is that about two and a half thousand, or a maximum of three thousand lines, made up the performed text. This is indeed the length of most of Shakespeare's comedies, whereas many of his tragedies and histories are much longer,

raising the possibility that he wrote full scripts, possibly with eventual publication in mind, in the full knowledge that the stage version would be heavily cut. The short Quarto texts published in his lifetime—they used to be called "Bad" Quartos—provide fascinating evidence as to the kind of cutting that probably took place. So, for instance, the First Quarto of *Hamlet* neatly merges two occasions when Hamlet is overheard, the "Fishmonger" and the "nunnery" scenes.

The social composition of the audience was mixed. The poet Sir John Davies wrote of "A thousand townsmen, gentlemen and whores, / Porters and servingmen" who would "together throng" at the public playhouses. Though moralists associated female playgoing with adultery and the sex trade, many perfectly respectable citizens' wives were regular attendees. Some, no doubt, resembled the modern groupie: a story attested in two different sources has one citizen's wife making a post-show assignation with Richard Burbage and ending up in bed with Shakespeare—supposedly eliciting from the latter the quip that William the Conqueror was before Richard III. Defenders of theater liked to say that by witnessing the comeuppance of villains on the stage, audience members would repent of their own wrongdoings, but the reality is that most people went to the theater then, as they do now, for entertainment more than moral edification. Besides, it would be foolish to suppose that audiences behaved in a homogeneous way: a pamphlet of the 1630s tells of how two men went to see *Pericles* and one of them laughed while the other wept. Bishop John Hall complained that people went to church for the same reasons that they went to the theater: "for company, for custom, for recreation … to feed his eyes or his ears … or perhaps for sleep."

Men-about-town and clever young lawyers went to be seen as much as to see. In the modern popular imagination, shaped not least by *Shakespeare in Love* and the opening sequence of Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* film, the penny-paying groundlings stand in the yard hurling abuse or encouragement and hazelnuts or orange peel at the actors, while the sophisticates in the covered galleries appreciate Shakespeare's soaring poetry. The reality was probably the other way around. A "groundling" was a kind of fish, so the nickname suggests the penny audience standing below the level of the stage and gazing in silent open-

mouthed wonder at the spectacle unfolding above them. The more difficult audience members, who kept up a running commentary of clever remarks on the performance and who occasionally got into quarrels with players, were the gallants. Like Hollywood movies in modern times, Elizabethan and Jacobean plays exercised a powerful influence on the fashion and behavior of the young. John Marston mocks the lawyers who would open their lips, perhaps to court a girl, and out would "flow / Naught but pure Juliet and Romeo."

THE ENSEMBLE AT WORK

In the absence of typewriters and photocopying machines, reading aloud would have been the means by which the company got to know a new play. The tradition of the playwright reading his complete script to the assembled company endured for generations. A copy would then have been taken to the Master of the Revels for licensing. The theater book-holder or prompter would then have copied the parts for distribution to the actors. A partbook consisted of the character's lines, with each speech preceded by the last three or four words of the speech before, the so-called "cue." These would have been taken away and studied or "conned." During this period of learning the parts, an actor might have had some one-to-one instruction, perhaps from the dramatist, perhaps from a senior actor who had played the same part before, and, in the case of an apprentice, from his master. A high percentage of Desdemona's lines occur in dialogue with Othello, of Lady Macbeth's with Macbeth, Cleopatra's with Antony, and Volumnia's with Coriolanus. The roles would almost certainly have been taken by the apprentice of the lead actor, usually Burbage, who delivers the majority of the cues. Given that apprentices lodged with their masters, there would have been ample opportunity for personal instruction, which may be what made it possible for young men to play such demanding parts.



9. Hypothetical reconstruction of the interior of an Elizabethan playhouse during a performance.

After the parts were learned, there may have been no more than a single rehearsal before the first performance. With six different plays to be put on every week, there was no time for more. Actors, then, would go into a show with a very limited sense of the whole. The notion of a collective rehearsal process that is itself a process of discovery for the actors is wholly modern and would have been incomprehensible to Shakespeare and his original ensemble. Given the number of parts an actor had to hold in his memory, the forgetting of lines was probably more frequent than in the modern theater. The book-holder was on hand to prompt.

Backstage personnel included the property man, the tire-man who oversaw the costumes, call boys, attendants, and the musicians, who might play at various times from the main stage, the rooms above, and within the tiring-house. Scriptwriters sometimes made a nuisance of themselves backstage. There was often tension between the acting companies and the freelance playwrights from whom they purchased scripts: it was a smart move on the part of Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men to bring the writing process in-house.

Scenery was limited, though sometimes set pieces were brought on (a bank of flowers, a bed, the mouth of hell). The trapdoor from below, the gallery stage above, and the curtained discovery space at the back

allowed for an array of special effects: the rising of ghosts and apparitions, the descent of gods, dialogue between a character at a window and another at ground level, the revelation of a statue or a pair of lovers playing at chess. Ingenious use could be made of props, as with the ass's head in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a theater that does not clutter the stage with the material paraphernalia of everyday life, those objects that are deployed may take on powerful symbolic weight, as when Shylock bears his weighing scales in one hand and knife in the other, thus becoming a parody of the figure of Justice who traditionally bears a sword and a balance. Among the more significant items in the property cupboard of Shakespeare's company, there would have been a throne (the "chair of state"), joint stools, books, bottles, coins, purses, letters (which are brought on stage, read or referred to on about eighty occasions in the complete works), maps, gloves, a set of stocks (in which Kent is put in *King Lear*), rings, rapiers, daggers, broadswords, staves, pistols, masks and vizards, heads and skulls, torches and tapers and lanterns which served to signal night scenes on the daylit stage, a buck's head, an ass's head, animal costumes. Live animals also put in appearances, most notably the dog Crab in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and possibly a young polar bear in *The Winter's Tale*.

The costumes were the most important visual dimension of the play. Playwrights were paid between £2 and £6 per script, whereas Alleyn was not averse to paying £20 for "a black velvet cloak with sleeves embroidered all with silver and gold." No matter the period of the play, actors always wore contemporary costume. The excitement for the audience came not from any impression of historical accuracy, but from the richness of the attire and perhaps the transgressive thrill of the knowledge that here were commoners like themselves strutting in the costumes of courtiers in effective defiance of the strict sumptuary laws whereby in real life people had to wear the clothes that befitted their social station.

To an even greater degree than props, costumes could carry symbolic importance. Racial characteristics could be suggested: a breastplate and helmet for a Roman soldier, a turban for a Turk, long robes for exotic characters such as Moors, a gabardine for a Jew. The figure of Time, as in *The Winter's Tale*, would be equipped with hourglass, scythe, and

wings; Rumour, who speaks the prologue of *2 Henry IV*, wore a costume adorned with a thousand tongues. The wardrobe in the tiring-house of the Globe would have contained much of the same stock as that of rival manager Philip Henslowe at the Rose: green gowns for outlaws and foresters, black for melancholy men such as Jaques and people in mourning such as the Countess in *All's Well That Ends Well* (at the beginning of *Hamlet*, the prince is still in mourning black when everyone else is in festive garb for the wedding of the new king), a gown and hood for a friar (or a feigned friar like the duke in *Measure for Measure*), blue coats and tawny to distinguish the followers of rival factions, a leather apron and ruler for a carpenter (as in the opening scene of *Julius Caesar* —and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where this is the only sign that Peter Quince is a carpenter), a cockle hat with staff and a pair of sandals for a pilgrim or palmer (the disguise assumed by Helen in *All's Well*), bodices and kirtles with farthingales beneath for the boys who are to be dressed as girls. A gender switch such as that of Rosalind or Jessica seems to have taken between fifty and eighty lines of dialogue—Viola does not resume her "maiden weeds," but remains in her boy's costume to the end of *Twelfth Night* because a change would have slowed down the action at just the moment it was speeding to a climax. Henslowe's inventory also included "a robe for to go invisible": Oberon, Puck, and Ariel must have had something similar.

As the costumes appealed to the eyes, so there was music for the ears. Comedies included many songs. Desdemona's willow song, perhaps a late addition to the text, is a rare and thus exceptionally poignant example from tragedy. Trumpets and tuckets sounded for ceremonial entrances, drums denoted an army on the march. Background music could create atmosphere, as at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, during the lovers' dialogue near the end of *The Merchant of Venice*, when the statue seemingly comes to life in *The Winter's Tale*, and for the revival of Pericles and of Lear (in the Quarto text, but not the Folio). The haunting sound of the hautboy suggested a realm beyond the human, as when the god Hercules is imagined deserting Mark Antony. Dances symbolized the harmony of the end of a comedy—though in Shakespeare's world of mingled joy and sorrow, someone is usually left out of the circle.

The most important resource was, of course, the actors themselves.

They needed many skills: in the words of one contemporary commentator, “dancing, activity, music, song, elocution, ability of body, memory, skill of weapon, pregnancy of wit.” Their bodies were as significant as their voices. Hamlet tells the player to “suit the action to the word, the word to the action”: moments of strong emotion, known as “passions,” relied on a repertoire of dramatic gestures as well as a modulation of the voice. When Titus Andronicus has had his hand chopped off, he asks “How can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give it action?” A pen portrait of “The Character of an Excellent Actor” by the dramatist John Webster is almost certainly based on his impression of Shakespeare’s leading man, Richard Burbage: “By a full and significant action of body, he charms our attention: sit in a full theater, and you will think you see so many lines drawn from the circumference of so many ears, whiles the actor is the centre….”

Though Burbage was admired above all others, praise was also heaped upon the apprentice players whose alto voices fitted them for the parts of women. A spectator at Oxford in 1610 records how the audience was reduced to tears by the pathos of Desdemona’s death. The puritans who fumed about the biblical prohibition upon cross-dressing and the encouragement to sodomy constituted by the sight of an adult male kissing a teenage boy on stage were a small minority. Little is known, however, about the characteristics of the leading apprentices in Shakespeare’s company. It may perhaps be inferred that one was a lot taller than the other, since Shakespeare often wrote for a pair of female friends, one tall and fair, the other short and dark (Helena and Hermia, Rosalind and Celia, Beatrice and Hero).

We know little about Shakespeare’s own acting roles—an early allusion indicates that he often took royal parts, and a venerable tradition gives him old Adam in *As You Like It* and the ghost of old King Hamlet. Save for Burbage’s lead roles and the generic part of the clown, all such castings are mere speculation. We do not even know for sure whether the original Falstaff was Will Kempe or another actor who specialized in comic roles, Thomas Pope.

Kempe left the company in early 1599. Tradition has it that he fell out with Shakespeare over the matter of excessive improvisation. He was replaced by Robert Armin, who was less of a clown and more of a

cerebral wit: this explains the difference between such parts as Lancelet Gobbo and Dogberry, which were written for Kempe, and the more verbally sophisticated Feste and Lear's Fool, which were written for Armin.

One thing that is clear from surviving "plots" or storyboards of plays from the period is that a degree of doubling was necessary. *2 Henry VI* has over sixty speaking parts, but more than half of the characters only appear in a single scene and most scenes have only six to eight speakers. At a stretch, the play could be performed by thirteen actors. When Thomas Platter saw *Julius Caesar* at the Globe in 1599, he noted that there were about fifteen. Why doesn't Paris go to the Capulet ball in *Romeo and Juliet*? Perhaps because he was doubled with Mercutio, who does. In *The Winter's Tale*, Mamillius might have come back as Perdita and Antigonus been doubled by Camillo, making the partnership with Paulina at the end a very neat touch. Titania and Oberon are often played by the same pair as Hippolyta and Theseus, suggesting a symbolic matching of the rulers of the worlds of night and day, but it is questionable whether there would have been time for the necessary costume changes. As so often, one is left in a realm of tantalizing speculation.

THE KING'S MAN

On Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, the new king, James I, who had held the Scottish throne as James VI since he had been an infant, immediately took the Lord Chamberlain's Men under his direct patronage. Henceforth they would be the King's Men, and for the rest of Shakespeare's career they were favored with far more court performances than any of their rivals. There even seem to have been rumors early in the reign that Shakespeare and Burbage were being considered for knighthoods, an unprecedented honor for mere actors—and one that in the event was not accorded to a member of the profession for nearly three hundred years, when the title was bestowed upon Henry Irving, the leading Shakespearean actor of Queen Victoria's reign.

Shakespeare's productivity rate slowed in the Jacobean years, not

because of age or some personal trauma, but because there were frequent outbreaks of plague, causing the theaters to be closed for long periods. The King's Men were forced to spend many months on the road. Between November 1603 and 1608, they were to be found at various towns in the south and Midlands, though Shakespeare probably did not tour with them by this time. He had bought a large house back home in Stratford and was accumulating other property. He may indeed have stopped acting soon after the new king took the throne. With the London theaters closed so much of the time and a large repertoire on the stocks, Shakespeare seems to have focused his energies on writing a few long and complex tragedies that could have been played on demand at court: *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Cymbeline* are among his longest and poetically grandest plays. *Macbeth* only survives in a shorter text, which shows signs of adaptation after Shakespeare's death. The bitterly satirical *Timon of Athens*, apparently a collaboration with Thomas Middleton that may have failed on the stage, also belongs to this period. In comedy, too, he wrote longer and morally darker works than in the Elizabethan period, pushing at the very bounds of the form in *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*.

From 1608 onward, when the King's Men began occupying the indoor Blackfriars playhouse (as a winter house, meaning that they only used the outdoor Globe in summer?), Shakespeare turned to a more romantic style. His company had a great success with a revived and altered version of an old pastoral play called *Mucedorus*. It even featured a bear. The younger dramatist John Fletcher, meanwhile, sometimes working in collaboration with Francis Beaumont, was pioneering a new style of tragicomedy, a mix of romance and royalism laced with intrigue and pastoral excursions. Shakespeare experimented with this idiom in *Cymbeline* and it was presumably with his blessing that Fletcher eventually took over as the King's Men's company dramatist. The two writers apparently collaborated on three plays in the years 1612–14: a lost romance called *Cardenio* (based on the love-madness of a character in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*), *Henry VIII* (originally staged with the title "All Is True"), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a dramatization of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale." These were written after Shakespeare's two final solo-authored plays, *The Winter's Tale*, a self-consciously old-fashioned work

dramatizing the pastoral romance of his old enemy Robert Greene, and *The Tempest*, which at one and the same time drew together multiple theatrical traditions, diverse reading, and contemporary interest in the fate of a ship that had been wrecked on the way to the New World.

The collaborations with Fletcher suggest that Shakespeare's career ended with a slow fade rather than the sudden retirement supposed by the nineteenth-century Romantic critics who read Prospero's epilogue to *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's personal farewell to his art. In the last few years of his life Shakespeare certainly spent more of his time in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he became further involved in property dealing and litigation. But his London life also continued. In 1613 he made his first major London property purchase: a freehold house in the Blackfriars district, close to his company's indoor theater. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* may have been written as late as 1614, and Shakespeare was in London on business a little over a year before he died of an unknown cause at home in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1616, probably on his fifty-second birthday.

About half the sum of his works were published in his lifetime, in texts of variable quality. A few years after his death, his fellow actors began putting together an authorized edition of his complete *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*. It appeared in 1623, in large "Folio" format. This collection of thirty-six plays gave Shakespeare his immortality. In the words of his fellow dramatist Ben Jonson, who contributed two poems of praise at the start of the Folio, the body of his work made him "a monument without a tomb":

> And art alive still while thy book doth live
> And we have wits to read and praise to give …
> He was not of an age, but for all time!

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS: A CHRONOLOGY

1589–91	? *Arden of Faversham* (possible part authorship)
1589–92	*The Taming of the Shrew*
1589–92	? *Edward the Third* (possible part authorship)
1591	*The Second Part of Henry the Sixth*, originally called *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (element of coauthorship possible)
1591	*The Third Part of Henry the Sixth*, originally called *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (element of co-authorship probable)
1591–92	*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
1591–92; perhaps revised 1594	*The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* (probably cowritten with, or revising an earlier version by, George Peele)
1592	*The First Part of Henry the Sixth*, probably with Thomas Nashe and others
1592/94	*King Richard the Third*
1593	*Venus and Adonis* (poem)
1593–94	*The Rape of Lucrece* (poem)
1593–1608	*Sonnets* (154 poems, published 1609 with *A Lover's Complaint*, a poem of disputed authorship)
	Sir Thomas More (a single scene for a play originally by

1592–94/ 1600–03	Anthony Munday, with other revisions by Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Heywood)
1594	*The Comedy of Errors*
1595	*Love's Labour's Lost*
1595–97	*Love's Labour's Won* (a lost play, unless the original title for another comedy)
1595–96	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*
1595–96	*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*
1595–96	*King Richard the Second*
1595–97	*The Life and Death of King John* (possibly earlier)
1596–97	*The Merchant of Venice*
1596–97	*The First Part of Henry the Fourth*
1597–98	*The Second Part of Henry the Fourth*
1598	*Much Ado About Nothing*
1598–99	*The Passionate Pilgrim* (20 poems, some not by Shakespeare)
1599	*The Life of Henry the Fifth*
1599	"To the Queen" (epilogue for a court performance)
1599	*As You Like It*
1599	*The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*
1600–01	*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (perhaps revising an earlier version)
1600–01	*The Merry Wives of Windsor* (perhaps revising version of 1597–99)

1601	"Let the Bird of Loudest Lay" (poem, known since 1807 as "The Phoenix and Turtle" [turtledove])
1601	*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*
1601–02	*The Tragedy of Troilus and Cressida*
1604	*The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*
1604	*Measure for Measure*
1605	*All's Well That Ends Well*
1605	*The Life of Timon of Athens*, with Thomas Middleton
1605–06	*The Tragedy of King Lear*
1605–08	? contribution to *The Four Plays in One* (lost, except for *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, mostly by Thomas Middleton)
1606	*The Tragedy of Macbeth* (surviving text has additional scenes by Thomas Middleton)
1606–07	*The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra*
1608	*The Tragedy of Coriolanus*
1608	*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, with George Wilkins
1610	*The Tragedy of Cymbeline*
1611	*The Winter's Tale*
1611	*The Tempest*
1612–13	*Cardenio*, with John Fletcher (survives only in later adaptation called *Double Falsehood* by Lewis Theobald)
1613	*Henry VIII (All Is True)*, with John Fletcher
1613–14	*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, with John Fletcher

FURTHER READING AND VIEWING

CRITICAL APPROACHES

Adelman, Janet, *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in The Merchant of Venice* (2008). Fascinating psycho-theological analysis.

Auden, W. H., "Brothers and Others," in *The Dyer's Hand* (1962). Pioneering account of the homoerotic element.

Chernaik, Warren, *William Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*, Writers and Their Work Series (2005). Useful introduction to text in conjunction with performance issues.

Coyle, Martin, ed., *The Merchant of Venice: William Shakespeare*, New Casebooks Series (1998). Diverse collection of influential, theoretically informed essays.

Edelman, Charles, "Which Is the Jew That Shakespeare Knew? Shylock on the Elizabethan Stage," *Shakespeare Survey*, 52 (1999), pp. 99–106. Excellent correction of many misapprehensions about the representation of Jews on the Shakespearean stage.

Gross, Kenneth, *Shakespeare Is Shylock* (2006). Challenging, provocative, sometimes personal account of Shylock's outsider status making him a kind of double for Shakespeare himself.

Holmer, Joan Ozark, *The Merchant of Venice: Choice, Hazard and Consequence* (1995). Focuses on play's genre, structure, and language.

Janik, Vicki K., *The Merchant of Venice: A Guide to the Play* (2003). Useful introductory guide with a wide range of material.

Kaplan, M. Lindsay, ed., *The Merchant of Venice: Texts and Contexts* (2002). Useful introductory guide.

Mahon, John W., and Ellen Macleod Mahon, eds., *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays* (2002). Useful collection of essays

covering a wide range of approaches from text to theory and performance.

McCullough, Christopher, *The Merchant of Venice: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life*, Shakespeare Handbooks Series (2005). Useful study guide covering text, history, and performance.

Nuttall, A. D., "*The Merchant of Venice*," in his *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality* (1983). Has a brilliant feel for the realized texture of the world of the play.

Shapiro, James, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (1996). Fascinating, detailed historical account.

Wheeler, Thomas, ed., *The Merchant of Venice: Critical Essays* (1991). Useful collection of essays from Granville-Barker on text, to Hazlitt on Shylock, up to contemporary productions of the play.

Wilders, John, ed., *Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*, Casebook Series (1969). Useful selection of early criticism and significant twentieth-century essays up to 1960s.

Yaffe, Martin D., *Shylock and the Jewish Question* (1997). Jewish religious scholar, generally sympathetic to Shylock, reads play as a work of political philosophy.

THE PLAY IN PERFORMANCE

Barton, John, *Playing Shakespeare* (1984). Chapter 10, "Playing Shylock," in which David Suchet and Patrick Stewart explore their different approaches to the role.

Bonnell, Andrew G., *Shylock in Germany: Antisemitism and the German Theatre from the Enlightenment to the Nazis* (2008). Scrupulously detailed study.

Brockbank, Philip, ed., *Players of Shakespeare* (1985). Actors discuss their roles: Chapter 2, Patrick Stewart discusses Shylock; Chapter 3, Sinead Cusack on Portia.

Brooke, Michael, "The Merchant of Venice on Screen," www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/564652/index.html. Summary overview of film and television versions, with links to clips.

Bulman, James C., ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare in Performance (1991). Excellent detailed overview of stage history.

Edelman, Charles, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare in Production (2002). Detailed historical overview and annotated text with stage directions from important historical productions.

Gilbert, Miriam, *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare at Stratford (2002). Detailed account of RSC productions.

Gross, John, *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend* (1992). Exemplary detailed account of Shakespeare's Shylock, dramatic interpretations and the character's afterlife.

Jackson, Russell, and Robert Smallwood, eds., *Players of Shakespeare 2* (1988). Ian McDiarmid on playing Shylock.

Jackson, Russell, and Robert Smallwood, eds., *Players of Shakespeare 3* (1993). Deborah Findlay on playing Portia; Gregory Doran on Solanio.

Jones, Maria, *Shakespeare's Culture in Modern Performance* (2003). Chapter 3 on *Merchant of Venice*, pp. 57–100: detailed discussion of the "alien" in *Merchant* in Shakespeare's time and today in relation to historical and modern performance.

Kennedy, Dennis, ed., *Foreign Shakespeares: Contemporary Performance* (1993). With Avraham Oz's influential essay, "Transformations of Authenticity: *The Merchant of Venice* in Israel," pp. 56–75, which discusses performance and the play's legitimacy.

Lelyveld, Toby, *Shylock on the Stage* (1960). Useful historical overview with chapter on theatrical greats such as Kean and Irving.

O'Connor, John, *Shakespearean Afterlives: Ten Characters with a Life of Their Own* (2003). Chapter 4, "Shylock," pp. 95–148, detailed stage history and discussion of place of play in contemporary culture.

Overton, Bill, *The Merchant of Venice: Text and Performance* (1987). Part 1 has a useful introduction to play; Part 2 discusses play in performance from 1970 to 1984.

Parsons, Keith, and Pamela Mason, eds., *Shakespeare in Performance* (1995). Useful introduction to play, pp. 136–142; lavishly illustrated.

Smallwood, Robert, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 4* (1998). Christopher Luscombe on playing Lancelet Gobbo in *Merchant* (and Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost*), pp. 18–29.

AVAILABLE ON DVD

The Merchant of Venice, directed by John Sichel for television (1973, DVD 2007). Stars Laurence Olivier as Shylock; with its Edwardian setting and middle-aged cast, the production seems pervaded by *fin de siècle* languor.

The Merchant of Venice, directed by Jack Gold for BBC Shakespeare (1980, DVD 2005). Warren Mitchell as Shylock is compelling.

The Merchant of Venice, directed by Trevor Nunn for BBC films (2001, DVD 2003). Royal National Theatre staging with Henry Goodman as Shylock (the production discussed in his interview, above).

The Merchant of Venice, directed by Michael Radford (2004, DVD 2005). Filmed in Venice, starring Al Pacino as Shylock, Jeremy Irons as Antonio, Joseph Fiennes as Bassanio, and Lynn Collins as Portia.

REFERENCES

1. William Poel, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (1913, reprinted 1968), p. 77.
2. John Doran, *Their Majesties' Servants*, Vol. II (1865), p. 187.
3. Quoted by Francis Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor* (1770, reprinted 1969), p. 292.
4. Toby Lelyveld, *Shylock on the Stage* (1961), p. 41.
5. *Chronicle*, 6 March 1816.
6. *Spectator*, 8 November 1879.
7. *Daily Herald*, 29 July 1932.
8. *The Times*, London, 13 December 1932.
9. Avraham Oz, "*The Merchant of Venice* in Israel," in *Foreign Shakespeare* (1993), p. 63.
10. Oz, "*The Merchant of Venice* in Israel," p. 69.
11. *National Review*, 15 September 1989.
12. *News Chronicle*, 16 March 1953.
13. *Evening Standard*, 13 April 1960.
14. *Evening News*, 13 April 1960.
15. Robert Speaight, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 12, p. 428.
16. Jonathan Miller, *Subsequent Performances* (1986), pp. 155.
17. James C. Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare in Performance (1991), p. 96.
18. *Shakespeare Survey*, 53, p. 268.
19. Charles Edelman, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare in Production (2002), p. 86.
20. David Calder, interviewed by Liz Gibly, *Plays International*, June 1993.
21. David Nathan, *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 December 1997.
22. Arnold Wesker, *Sunday Times*, 6 May 1993.
23. Tracey R. Rich, "Love and Brotherhood," *Judaism 101*, www.jewfaq.org/brother.htm (accessed 4 September 2006).
24. John O'Connor, *Shakespearean Afterlives* (2003).
25. Benedict Nightingale, *New Statesman*, 97, 2511, 4 May 1979.
26. Peter Holland, *English Shakespeares*, 1997.

27. O'Connor, *Shakespearean Afterlives*.
28. Heather Neill, interview with David Calder, *The Times*, London, 1 June 1993.
29. Patrick Stewart, "Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*," in Philip Brockbank, ed., *Players of Shakespeare* (1985).
30. Nightingale, *New Statesman*, 97, 2511, 4 May 1979.
31. Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice*.
32. Raymond, *Theatre Week*, 5 September 1988.
33. Michael Billington, *Country Life*, 14 May 1987.
34. Christopher Edwards, *Spectator*, 9 May 1987.
35. Billington, *Country Life*, 14 May 1987.
36. Christopher Edwards, *Spectator*, 9 May 1987.
37. Deborah Findlay, "Portia," in Russell Jackson and Robert Smallwood, eds., *Players of Shakespeare 3* (1993).
38. Michael Coveney, *Financial Times*, 30 April 1987.
39. John Pitcher, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 May 1987.
40. Penny Gay, "Portia Performs: Playing the Role in the Twentieth-Century English Theatre," in John W. Mahon and Ellen Macleod Mahon, eds., *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays* (2002).
41. David Suchet on playing Shylock, in Judith Cook, *Shakespeare's Players* (1983).
42. Patrick Stewart on Playing Shylock, in John Barton, *Playing Shakespeare* (1984).
43. O'Connor, *Shakespearean Afterlives*.
44. O'Connor, *Shakespearean Afterlives*.
45. O'Connor, *Shakespearean Afterlives*.
46. David Calder on playing Shylock, *The Merchant of Venice*, RSC Education Pack, 1993.
47. Alastair Macaulay, *Financial Times*, 5 June 1993.
48. Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 7 May 1993.
49. Sinead Cusack, "Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*," in Philip Brockbank, ed., *Players of Shakespeare* (1985).
50. Michael Coveney, *Financial Times*, 22 April 1981.
51. B. A. Young, *Financial Times*, 17 April 1965.
52. James Shaw, "The Merchant of Venice," in Keith Parsons and Pamela Mason, eds., *Shakespeare in Performance* (1995).

53. Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 1 May 1987.

54. Irving Wardle, *The Times*, London, 1 April 1971.

55. Shaw, “The Merchant of Venice.”

56. Findlay, “Portia.”

57. Pitcher, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 May 1987.

58. Sinead Cusack, “Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*.”

59. Irving Wardle, *The Times*, 22 April 1981.

60. Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 5 June 1993.

61. John Peter, *Sunday Times*, 13 June 1993.

62. David Thacker, *The Merchant of Venice*, RSC Education Pack, 1993.

63. Thacker, *The Merchant of Venice*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PICTURE CREDITS

Preparation of "*The Merchant of Venice* in Performance" was assisted by a generous grant from the CAPITAL Centre (Creativity and Performance in Teaching and Learning) of the University of Warwick for research in the RSC archive at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded a term's research leave that enabled Jonathan Bate to work on "The Director's Cut."

Picture research by Michelle Morton. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust for assistance with reproduction fees and picture research (special thanks to Helen Hargest).

Images of RSC productions are supplied by the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon. This library, maintained by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, holds the most important collection of Shakespeare material in the UK, including the Royal Shakespeare Company's official archive. It is open to the public free of charge.

For more information see www.shakespeare.org.uk.

1. Drinkwater Meadows as Old Gobbo (1858). Reproduced by kind permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
2. Directed by Denis Carey (1953). Angus McBean © Royal Shakespeare Company
3. Directed by John Barton (1978). Joe Cocks Studio Collection © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
4. Directed by Gregory Doran (1997). Malcolm Davies © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
5. Directed by David Thacker (1993). Malcolm Davies © Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
6. Directed by Darko Tresnjak (2007). © Donald

Cooper/photostage.co.uk

7. Directed by Trevor Nunn (1999). © Donald Cooper/photostage.co.uk
8. Directed by Bill Alexander (1988). Reg Wilson © Royal Shakespeare Company
9. Reconstructed Elizabethan Playhouse © Charcoalblue

THE MODERN LIBRARY EDITORIAL BOARD

Maya Angelou

•

A. S. Byatt

•

Caleb Carr

•

Christopher Cerf

•

Harold Evans

•

Charles Frazier

•

Vartan Gregorian

•

Jessica Hagedorn

•

Richard Howard

•

Charles Johnson

•

Jon Krakauer

•

Edmund Morris

•

Azar Nafisi

•

Joyce Carol Oates

•

Elaine Pagels

•

John Richardson

•

Salman Rushdie

•

Oliver Sacks

•

Carolyn See

•

Gore Vidal

MODERN LIBRARY IS ONLINE AT
WWW.MODERNLIBRARY.COM

MODERN LIBRARY ONLINE IS YOUR GUIDE
TO CLASSIC LITERATURE ON THE WEB

THE MODERN LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

Our free e-mail newsletter is sent to subscribers, and features sample chapters, interviews with and essays by our authors, upcoming books, special promotions, announcements, and news. To subscribe to the Modern Library e-newsletter, visit **www.modernlibrary.com**

THE MODERN LIBRARY WEBSITE

Check out the Modern Library website at
www.modernlibrary.com for:

- The Modern Library e-newsletter
- A list of our current and upcoming titles and series
- Reading Group Guides and exclusive author spotlights
- Special features with information on the classics and other paperback series
- Excerpts from new releases and other titles
- A list of our e-books and information on where to buy them
- The Modern Library Editorial Board's 100 Best Novels and 100 Best Nonfiction Books of the Twentieth Century written in the English language
- News and announcements

Questions? E-mail us at **modernlibrary@randomhouse.com**.
For questions about examination or desk copies, please visit
the Random House Academic Resources site at
www.randomhouse.com/academic

2010 Modern Library Paperback Edition

Copyright © 2007, 2010 by The Royal Shakespeare Company

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Modern Library, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York.

MODERN LIBRARY and the TORCHBEARER Design are registered trademarks of Random House, Inc.

"Royal Shakespeare Company," "RSC," and the RSC logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of The Royal Shakespeare Company.

The version of *The Merchant of Venice* and the corresponding footnotes that appear in this volume were originally published in *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, published in 2007 by Modern Library, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.

eISBN: 978-1-58836-874-4

www.modernlibrary.com

v3.0

[1] **sooth** truth

[4] **stuff** substance

whereof … born i.e. what is its cause

[5] **to learn** yet to discover

[6] **want-wit** senseless idiot

7 **ado** trouble

[8] **tossing on** troubled/preoccupied with

[9] **argosies** large merchant ships
portly stately, majestic
sail sails/(act of) sailing

10 **signiors** sirs/gentlemen
burghers citizens
flood sea

[11] **pageants** spectacles, shows

[12] **overpeer** look down upon

petty traffickers inferior merchant ships

[13] **curtsy** bow or curtsy, perhaps suggested by the bobbing of the smaller ships in the argosies' wake

do them reverence pay them respect

14 **fly** speed

woven wings material sails (also suggestive of the wings of a **fly**)

15 **venture** risky business enterprise
forth away from home, i.e. on the seas

16 **better part** greater half
affections emotions/thoughts

17 **hopes** expectations, prospects
still constantly

[18] **where sits** i.e. which way blows

19 **roads** harbors

[24] **ague** fever, shaking

[26] **should** i.e. could

[27] **flats** sandbanks

[28] ***Andrew*** name of a ship

[29] **Vailing** lowering (in submission)

high top top section of the mast

ribs i.e. body of the ship

30 **burial** burial place

should I was I able to

[32] **bethink me straight** think immediately

33 **but** merely
gentle noble/harmless

34 **stream** current

[35] **waters … silks** may play on idea of “watered silk,” a relatively new fabric

[36] **even** just
this this much (i.e. the value of the cargo)

[39] **bechanced** having happened

[43] **bottom** ship's bottom, hold

[44] **estate** fortunes/circumstances

[45] **Upon** dependent on/risked upon
fortune chance, fate

[48] **Fie** expression of impatience or disgust

[52] **Janus** Roman god with two faces

53 **framed** formed

[54] **peep** peer through eyes half-closed in laughter

[55] **bagpiper** bagpipes were thought to sound melancholic

[56] **other** others

vinegar aspect sour expression

58 **Though** even if

Nestor Trojan leader, noted for his wisdom and gravity

Gratiano according to a contemporary Italian dictionary, a name given to a foolish or clownish character in a play

63 **prevented** forestalled

[64] **dear** valuable

regard consideration

66 **embrace** welcome

th'occasion the opportunity

[68] **laugh** i.e. meet for some fun

69 **strange** distant/unfamiliar

[70] **leisures … yours** spare time accommodate yours, i.e. ensure we are available when you are

[73] **have in mind** i.e. think about

[76] **respect … world** concern for worldly affairs/business

77 **it** enjoyment (especially of material wealth)

buy … care i.e. worry so much about it

[78] **marvellously** extremely

[79] **hold** consider, view

[83] **old** your former/plentiful/familiar, “good old” (puns on the sense of “elderly”)

[84] **liver** thought to be the seat of the passions

[85] **heart … groans** groans were believed to drain blood from the heart
mortifying penitential/deadly

[87] **grandsire** grandfather

cut in alabaster i.e. a statue on a tomb

[88] **creep … jaundices** become yellow from an excess of yellow bile or choler

[89] **peevish** irritable, morose

91 **visages** faces

[92] **cream and mantle** become covered in a layer of scum (i.e. are calm/expressionless)
standing still/stagnant

[93] **wilful** deliberate

stillness restraint/quietness

entertain maintain

[94] **dressed … opinion** invested with a reputation

95 **conceit** understanding

[96] **As … say** as if to say

97 **ope** open

[101] **damn … fools** condemn the hearers for obliging them to call the speakers fools (according to the Bible a damnable offense)

[104] **melancholy bait** i.e. silence used to fool people into assuming you are wise

105 **fool** foolish

gudgeon proverbially gullible fish

107 **exhortation** earnest speech/entreaty

109 **dumb** silent

[113] **grow** become

for this gear as a result of this talk/on account of this matter

115 **neat's tongue dried** cured ox tongue
vendible saleable/sought-after (for marriage)

116 **Is … now?** Did that (talk) mean anything?

118 **reasons** reasonings, opinions

119 **ere** before

[122] **same** i.e. one

126 **disabled** devalued

127 **something** somewhat

swelling port extravagant lifestyle

128 **faint** inadequate

grant continuance allow maintenance (of)

[129] **make moan** complain

abridged deprived

130 **noble rate** high style of living

care concern

131 **come … from** i.e. repay

132 **time** (young) age/time spent
prodigal excessive, lavish

133 **gaged** pledged/entangled

135 **warranty** authorization

136 **unburden** reveal

140 **Within … honour** i.e. honorable

142 **occasions** needs

143 **shaft** arrow

144 **his … flight** the same type of arrow

145 **advisèd** careful

146 **forth** out

adventuring risking

147 **urge** bring forward
proof test/example

148 **innocence** sincerity

151 **self** same

153 **or** either

[154] **hazard** i.e. that which was risked subsequently

155 **rest** remain

156 **spend but** only waste

157 **wind … circumstance** ingratiate yourself by speaking in an elaborate, roundabout way

158 **out of** without

159 **making … uttermost** questioning my offer of all the help I can give

160 **made waste** spent/wasted

161 **but** only

163 **pressed** enlisted

164 **richly left** with a large inheritance (left by her father)

166 **Sometimes** formerly, at one time

168 **nothing undervalued To** worth no less than

169 **Cato** Roman politician of the second century BC

Brutus Roman politician of the first century BC, married to **Portia**

[173] **golden fleece** in Greek mythology the valued prize sought for by **Jason**

174 **seat** rural estate

strand the shore of **Colchos** (Colchis), where the fleece was found

178 **presages** that predicts
thrift profit/advantage

179 **questionless** without question

181 **commodity** goods

182 **present** immediate, ready

183 **Try** find out

184 **racked** stretched

185 **furnish thee** equip you to go

186 **presently** at once (to)

188 **of my trust** on my credit as a merchant

sake i.e. friendship's sake

waiting woman companion and confidante; she is a genteel character, not a servant

[1] **troth** faith

[3] **would be** would have real reason to be (weary)

[5] **aught** anything

surfeit feed to excess

[7] **mean** middle
Superfluity overindulgence
comes sooner by sooner gains

[8] **competency** sufficiency/modest means

[9] **sentences** maxims
pronounced delivered

13 **divine** clergyman

[16] **blood** passions (i.e. not reason)

hot temper passionate, impulsive temperament

[17] **cold decree** i.e. sensible advice

18 **meshes** nets, traps

19 **in fashion** the (right) way

20 **would** want

21 **will** desire

[22] **will** testament/inclination

25 **lottery** game of chance

[27] **who** whoever

his meaning i.e. the chest he intended

[28] **rightly** correctly (sense then shifts to “truly”)

31 **overname** list

[33] **level at** point to/guess at

[34] **Neapolitan** inhabitants of Naples were famed for their horsemanship

[35] **colt** foolish/lustful youth (puns on the sense of “young horse”)

[36] **appropriation** addition/special feature

[37] **parts** abilities

38 **played false** was unfaithful
smith blacksmith

[39] **County** Count

Palatine possessing royal privileges over his region

40 **who** if one

An if

[41] **choose** i.e. do as you like

[42] **prove** prove to be

weeping philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, a reclusive and melancholy philosopher of 500 BC

[43] **unmannerly** impolite/immoderate

sadness gravity/melancholy

[44] **death's-head** skull

[47] **How** what

by about

Le Bon the good (French)

[50] **better bad** i.e. worse

[51] **He … man** he copies characteristics of everyone else but lacks his own identity

[52] **throstle** thrush
straight straightaway
a capering to dancing

55 **if** even if

[59] **say** i.e. speak (puns on Nerissa's meaning, "think about")

[61] **come … swear** i.e. testify

[62] **poor … the** i.e. very little

proper man's picture the image of an attractive man

63 **dumb show** mime

64 **suited** dressed

doublet close-fitting jacket

65 **round hose** short breeches, puffed out at the hips

bonnet hat

69 **borrowed** received

[71] **surety** guarantor

sealed under pledged (literally, set his seal)

another i.e. a further **box of the ear**

[73] **Saxony** former principality of Germany

77 **beast** may pun on **best**

An if

fall befall, happen

78 **make shift** arrange, manage

80 **you should** you would

[83] **Rhenish wine** German white wine

contrary incorrect

if even if

[84] **without** on the outside

[86] **sponge** i.e. excessive drinker

[88] **determinations** resolutions

90 **suit** courtship
sort way

91 **imposition** command

[92] **Sibylla** Cumaean prophetess whom Apollo granted as many years of life as there were grains in her handful of sand

[93] **Diana** Roman goddess of chastity

94 **parcel** company

99 **Montferrat** Italian dukedom

102 **foolish** inexperienced

105 **four strangers** foreign suitors (in fact, six have been mentioned)

111 **condition** disposition

112 **complexion … devil** traditionally black

shrive me hear my confession, absolve me

[113] **wive** marry

Sirrah sir (used to an inferior)

Shylock perhaps from the Hebrew *Shallach* (“cormorant”), or from “Shiloh” (Genesis 49:10, although the word means “messiah”); possible connotations of wary secrecy and hoarding (shy lock)

[1] **ducats** gold coins

[5] **bound** bound in obligation to repay

[7] **stead** assist

pleasure oblige

13 **imputation** accusation

15 **sufficient** of adequate means

16 **supposition** uncertainty

[17] **Tripolis** Tripoli, North African port (now in Libya)

Indies East Indies

[18] **Rialto** merchants' exchange in Venice; also bridge over the Grand Canal

[19] **squandered** scattered/sent recklessly

21 **pirates** puns on **rats**

[23] **notwithstanding** nevertheless

[26] **assured** shifts sense to “guaranteed against risks”

[27] **bethink me** consider it

[29] **habitation** i.e. the body of a pig

30 **Nazarite** someone from Nazareth, i.e. Jesus

32 **following** forth

[36] **publican** tax collector

[38] **low simplicity** humble naïveté/foolishness

[39] **gratis** for nothing (i.e. without charging interest)

[40] **usance** lending money at interest

[41] **upon the hip** at a disadvantage (wrestling term)

42 **fat** until fat

[43] **our sacred nation** i.e. the Jewish people
rails rants/is abusive (about)

[44] **there … congregate** i.e. on the Rialto

45 **thrift** profit

[46] **tribe** i.e. one of the twelve tribes of Israel, from which all Jews were descended

[49] **debating … store** considering my supply of ready money

51 **gross** total

[53] **Tubal** name found in Genesis 10:2

54 **furnish** supply

soft wait a moment

[55] **Rest you fair** form of greeting (“may you remain well”)

[56] **Your … mouths** i.e. we were just talking about you

[58] **excess** i.e. interest

[59] **ripe wants** pressing needs

60 **possessed** notified of

61 **would** want

65 **bond** contract/pledge

67 **advantage** interest

[68] **use** employ (puns on the sense of “interest”)

[69] **Jacob … sheep** with his mother's help, Jacob tricked his father into making him heir; fleeing his brother Esau's wrath, he went to work for his **uncle Laban** (Genesis 27 and 30)

70 **from** descended from
Abram Abraham

71 **wrought** brought about, arranged

[72] **third possessor** i.e. of the birthright (after Abraham and Isaac)

75 **Mark** pay attention to

76 **were compromised** had reached agreement

77 **eanlings** newborn lambs

pied spotted with another color

78 **fall as** become
hire wages
rank lustful/in heat

80 **generation** procreation

[82] **peeled … wands** stripped the bark off particular sticks

[83] **in … kind** while the sheep were engaged in their natural act (i.e. breeding)

[84] **stuck … ewes** refers to the idea that what the mother sees during conception influences the appearance of the offspring

fulsome lustful

85 **eaning** lambing

86 **Fall** drop, give birth to

87 **thrive** profit

[89] **venture** enterprise

served served God

91 **fashioned** arranged, created

[92] **inserted** introduced, brought up

good i.e. justifiable

100 **goodly** wholesome-looking

104 **beholding** indebted

106 **rated** berated, reproached (puns on **rate**)

109 **sufferance** endurance

111 **gaberdine** loose cloak or coat

112 **use** employment (puns on sense of “financial interest”)

114 **Go to** expression of impatient dismissal

116 **void** discharge, empty

rheum spittle

117 **foot** kick

spurn despise/reject/strike

stranger cur unknown dog

118 **suit** request

122 **bondman’s key** serf’s tone

123 **bated** subdued

128 **like** likely

[132] **A … metal** an unnatural increase of money—i.e. interest
barren unable to reproduce naturally
of from

[134] **break** i.e. fail to repay the sum

better more willing

[139] **doit** small coin (i.e. tiny amount)

141 **kind** kindness/natural behavior

142 **were** would be (indeed)

[144] **notary** person authorized to draw up contracts

145 **single** particular/**bond** that specifies that a sum of money must be paid on an appointed day

148 **condition** contract

[149] **nominated for** named as
equal exact

155 **dwell** remain/exist

necessity need

161 **suspect** i.e. to doubt

163 **break his day** miss the appointed date (for repayment)

166 **estimable** valuable

169 **so** so be it

172 **forthwith** at once

173 **direction** instruction

174 **purse** bag up

175 **See** attend

fearful fear-inducing

176 **unthrifty** profligate/careless

knave scoundrel/servant

presently soon

178 **Hie** hurry

gentle courteous (may pun on “gentile”)

179 **kind** agreeable/generous/natural

tawny dark-skinned/of yellowish-brown skin

Moor person of either African or Middle Eastern origin

Flourish fanfare

[2] **livery** uniform/badge

burnished shining like polished metal

[3] **near bred** closely related

[5] **Phoebus** Roman sun god

[6] **make incision** i.e. to let blood

[7] **reddest** suggestive of courage and vigor

[8] **aspect** face

[9] **feared** frightened

10 **clime** land

11 **hue** color/appearance

[14] **nice** scrupulous/whimsical
direction guidance

17 **scanted** limited

[18] **hedged** protected/confined

wit wisdom

19 **His** as his

20 **then** would then have

fair i.e. fair a chance (puns on the sense of “fair-skinned/attractive”)

[22] **For** of gaining/hoping for

[25] **scimitar** short, curved sword

[26] **Sophy** ruler (shah) of Persia

[27] **fields** battles

of from/against

Solyman Suleiman, sultan who fought against Persia

[28] **o’erstare** outstare

[33] **Hercules** Greek hero

Lichas Hercules' companion

[36] **Alcides** another name for Hercules

[44] **advised** warned

[45] **Nor will not** break my word, i.e. speak to a woman

[47] **hazard** risk/choice/fortune

Clown a rustic, and/or comic character

Lancelet i.e. “little lance” (type of spear/penis); Sir Lancelot was famous for adultery with King Arthur’s wife; a “lance” was also a surgeon’s instrument for piercing an abscess

```
1 serve allow
```

[3] **Gobbo** hunchback (Italian)

5 **start** advantage

7 **with thy heels** firmly (plays on literal sense)

[8] **courageous** purposeful/forceful/lusty

pack depart

Fia! *Via*! i.e. away (Italian)

[9] **For the heavens** i.e. in heaven's name

12 **honest** honorable (sense then shifts to “chaste”)

[13] **something** somewhat/some thing (i.e. vagina)

[14] **smack** have a taste for/taste literally/have sex with
grow to become one with/tend toward/become erect
taste preference/literal taste

[19] **God … mark** i.e. excuse my language

[20] **saving your reverence** i.e. begging your pardon

[22] **incarnation** slip for “incarnate” (ironic, given that the Incarnation refers to the making of Christ into flesh)

[28] **true-begotten** honestly conceived (Lancelet means “real, true”)

[29] **sand-blind** half-blind (from “sam-blind,” but Lancelet thinks “as if with **sand** in the eyes”)
high-gravel-blind completely blind

[30] **confusions** (appropriate) malapropism for “conclusions”—i.e. “experiment”

[35] **of no hand** i.e. neither left or right

indirectly along a winding route (perhaps plays on the sense of “moral crookedness”)

[37] **sonties** saints

hit get right, find

41 **raise the waters** provoke tears

[43] **master** gentleman or professional tradesperson

[45] **well to live** well-to-do/managing satisfactorily/healthy

46 **a** he

[48] **friend and Lancelet** Old Gobbo's polite way of rejecting the title "master" for Lancelet

[49] ***ergo*** “therefore” (Latin)

51 **an’t** if it

[53] **father** respectful form of address for an old man

[54] **Sisters Three** three Fates, goddesses who spin, measure, and cut the thread of a person's life

[59] **hovel-post** doorpost of a hovel

66 **of the knowing** to recognize

[67] **it … child** reversal of the proverb “it is a wise child that knows its own father”

[74] **your boy … be** comic paraphrase of the Gloria from the Book of Common Prayer: “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be”

[80] **Margery** sometimes used as slang term for a whore, or vagina

[83] **fill-horse** carthorse (“fills” were the shafts of a cart)

[86] **backward** inward (i.e. is shorter)

of on

89 **agree** get on

91 **set … rest** staked all

92 **rest** pause, stop

93 **very** thorough

94 **halter** hangman's noose

tell count

95 **finger … ribs** Lancelet reverses **ribs** and **finger**

[96] **Give me** give for me/give (**me** is emphatic)

[97] **rare** splendid

liveries uniforms (for servants)

[99] **Jew** i.e. villain

100 **hasted** hastened

101 **farthest** latest

103 **anon** shortly

106 **Gramercy** many thanks

aught anything

[108] **poor** shifts sense from “unfortunate/humble” to “penniless”

[110] **infection** malapropism for “affection” (i.e. desire)

115 **scarce** scarcely

cater-cousins good friends, close

118 **frutify** malapropism for “certify”

[121] **impertinent** malapropism for “pertinent”

126 **defect** malapropism for “effect” (i.e. meaning, purport)

[129] **preferred** recommended/promoted

[132] **old proverb** “the grace of God is gear enough” (i.e. sufficient)
parted divided

136 **inquire … out** find out where my house is

138 **guarded** ornamented by braid trimmings

[141] **table** part of the palm

book i.e. Bible (on which oaths are sworn)

[142] **simple** ordinary/unremarkable

line of life the life-line on the palm supposedly records the length and nature of a person's life

143 **trifle** insignificant amount

144 **simple** humble

coming-in income (puns on the sense of “having sex”)

145 **scape** escape

[146] **edge … feather-bed** perhaps refers to the dangers of marriage (i.e. a wife's infidelity)

147 **scapes** escapes/adventures/wrongdoings

148 **gear** matter

the i.e. a

151 **bestowed** stowed away (on the ship bound for Belmont)

152 **feast** lay on a feast for

154 **herein** in this matter

[160] **obtained it** i.e. been granted your request

164 **rude** raucous/coarse

165 **Parts** qualities

become suit

167 **show** appear

168 **liberal** licentious

take pain make an effort

169 **allay** diminish

modesty restraint/ propriety

170 **skipping** frivolous

171 **misconstered** misconstrued, misunderstood

174 **habit** demeanor/behavior/clothing

175 **but** only

177 **saying** being said

180 **studied … ostent** practiced in a solemn appearance

181 **grandam** grandmother

183 **bar** exclude

gauge assess

188 **purpose** intend

Jessica probably a form of “Iscah,” daughter of Abraham’s brother, Haran (Genesis 11:29)

[10] **exhibit** express (malapropism for “inhibit,” i.e. restrain)

12 **get** beget, conceive

18 **manners** behavior/character

[19] **strife** i.e. internal conflict, turmoil

[1] **in** during

[5] **spoke … of** discussed/hired

[6] **vile** degrading/worthless
quaintly skillfully
ordered arranged

[9] **furnish us** prepare

10 **An** if

this i.e. the letter's seal

[11] **seem to signify** i.e. tell you something

12 **hand** handwriting

fair hand attractive handwriting (sense then shifts to “beautiful pale hand”)

16 **By your leave** with your permission (to go)

18 **sup** have supper

[22] **Go** i.e. come

[23] **masque** theatrical entertainment, usually involving music and dancing

24 **of** with

28 **some** about an

[31] **must needs** must

directed instructed/described

[36] **gentle** puns on “gentile”

37 **foot** step/path

[38] **she** i.e. misfortune

[39] **she** i.e. Jessica

issue child

faithless pagan/dishonest

[2] **of** between

[3] **gormandize** eat excessively

[5] **rend apparel out** wear out your clothes

[9] **wont** accustomed

12 **bid forth** invited out

13 **wherefore** why

[15] **upon** i.e. at the expense of

16 **prodigal** wastefully extravagant

17 **to** after

right loath very reluctant

18 **ill** harm/trouble

19 **tonight** last night

20 **expect** await

[21] **reproach** malapropism for “approach”; Shylock responds to what Lancelet has actually said

[25] **nose fell a-bleeding** considered to be a bad omen

Black … th'afternoon a deliberately nonsensical series of details; Lancelet pokes fun at superstitious attitudes such as Shylock's

Black Monday Easter Monday

30 **wry-necked** played with the musician's head twisted away from the instrument

31 **casements** windows

[33] **varnished faces** i.e. wearing masks

34 **stop** shut

35 **fopp'ry** foolishness

[36] **Jacob's staff** in the Bible, the only possession Jacob started out with

[37] **mind of** inclination for
forth away from home

41 **for** despite

[43] **a Jewès eye** proverbial phrase for something very valuable; also plays on Jessica (a “Jewess”) eyeing Lorenzo

[44] **Hagar's offspring** Abraham's Egyptian concubine Hagar gave birth to Ishmael; both mother and son were outcast at Abraham's wife Sarah's request

[46] **patch** fool, clown

47 **profit** progress

[48] **Drones** non-workers (literally, bees whose only role is to impregnate the queen)
hive live (in a hive)

[54] **Fast … find** keep possessions securely and they'll always be found quickly (proverbial)

56 **crossed** thwarted

[1] **penthouse** projecting roof of a building

[2] **make a stand** i.e. wait

[3] **His … past** i.e. he is almost late

[4] **marvel** surprising

out-dwells his hour i.e. is late

[5] **ever** always

run … clock i.e. are early

[6] **Venus' pigeons** doves that draw Venus' chariot

[8] **obligèd** contracted, pledged
unforfeited unbroken

[9] **ever** always

holds holds true

10 **that** with which

11 **untread** retrace

12 **measures** paces

unbated fire undiminished keenness

15 **younger** younger son, as the **prodigal** was (sometimes emended to “younker,” fashionable youth)

16 **scarfèd bark** ship decorated with flags
puts from leaves

17 **strumpet** lascivious/wild/changeable

[19] **over-withered ribs** over-weathered ship's timbers (i.e. damaged by waves)

20 **rent** torn

beggared made destitute

[22] **your** I beg your
abode delay

25 **watch** wait/keep watch

26 **father** father-in-law

[28] **tongue** i.e. voice

[36] **exchange** change (into boy's clothes)

[38] **pretty** clever, artful

[39] **Cupid** Roman god of love

[42] **hold … to** stand and observe/illuminate

[43] **sooth** truth

light immoral/evident/luminous

[44] **office of discovery** i.e. torchbearing, because it involves revealing things

[47] **garnish** outfit/trimming (some editors emend “lovely” to “lowly”)

[49] **close** secretive/concealing

play the runaway i.e. pass quickly

50 **stayed for** awaited

[51] **make fast** i.e. shut securely, lock

gild equip, adorn (literally, cover with gold)

53 **gentle** dear one/gentile

54 **Beshrew** curse

56 **true** reliable

57 **true** constant

65 **stay** wait

[66] **is come about** i.e. has changed (favorably for sailing)

trains retinues

[1] **discover** reveal

[2] **several** various, individual

[4] **who** which

5 **Who** whoever

[8] **dull** not bright/blunt
blunt forthright/unrefined

12 **withal** with it

14 **back** over

[20] **dross** rubbish/residue from melted metal

21 **nor** neither

[22] **virgin hue** possibly because **silver** is the color of the moon, ruled over by Diana, goddess of chastity

25 **weigh** weigh up, assess
even fair/impartial

[26] **rated** valued/estimated
estimation reputation/value

30 **disabling** belittling

36 **graved** engraved

[40] **mortal breathing** i.e. living

[41] **Hyrcanian deserts** Persian region south of the Caspian Sea known for its wildness
desert deserted/isolated place
vasty vast

[44] **watery kingdom** i.e. the sea
ambitious head i.e. waves

46 **spirits** courageous men

[49] **like** likely

50 **base** unworthy (puns on lead as a **base** metal)

gross inferior/coarse/ earthly

[51] **rib** enclose (as ribs do the internal organs)
cerecloth winding-sheet, shroud
obscure concealed/dark

[52] **immured** enclosed

[53] **undervalued to** less in value compared with

trièd tested

55 **set** fixed, like a jewel

[56] **angel** Archangel Michael who appeared on a coin known as an “angel”

[57] **insculped** engraved

61 **form** image

64 **carrion** loathsome/skeletal/putrefying

Death death's head, skull

69 **But** only

[72] **in judgement old** i.e. wise

[73] **inscrolled** inscribed on a scroll

78 **tedious** lengthy

part depart

80 **complexion** temperament/skin color

[4] **raised** roused, woke up

12 **passion** passionate outcry

13 **outrageous** excessively fierce

[19] **double ducats** twice the value of single ducats

20 **stones** jewels

[24] **stones** plays on the sense of “testicles”

[25] **look** be sure

day i.e. date on which the loan is to be repaid

[28] **reasoned** talked

[29] **narrow … English** i.e. the English Channel

30 **miscarried** came to harm/was destroyed

31 **fraught** laden

32 **upon** of

40 **Slubber** spoil/rush

[41] **stay** wait (for)
riping ripening

42 **for** as for

[43] **of** i.e. concerned with

45 **ostents** displays

[46] **become you** be appropriate to you/dignify you

[47] **there** i.e. then

[49] **affection wondrous sensible** emotion extraordinarily evident

[51] **he … him** i.e. Bassanio is all he lives for

[53] **quicken** revive/lighten

embracèd heaviness adopted sadness

Servitor servant

[1] **straight** straight away

[2] **Aragon** region of northeastern Spain

[3] **election** choice

presently at once

[9] **enjoined** bound

10 **unfold** reveal

[12] **Of** i.e. to choose

18 **addressed me** prepared myself
Fortune good luck

25 **By** to signify
fool foolish
show appearance

[26] **fond** foolish

[27] **pries** peers closely

martlet swift/house-martin

[28] **in** i.e. in a place exposed to

[29] **force** turbulence/violence
road pathway
casualty mischance

31 **jump** agree

40 **estates, degrees** status, rank
offices official roles

[41] **clear** innocent, pure

[42] **purchased** obtained

[43] **cover … bare** i.e. keep their hats on (social inferiors removed their hats in the presence of their superiors)

[45] **gleaned** stripped, culled

46 **seed** plant germ/descendants

[48] **new-varnished** newly adorned, polished

50 **assume desert** claim worth

54 **schedule** scroll

[60] **To … natures** i.e. Aragon must not assess his own case now that it has been judged; or, Portia says that she cannot comment, because she is the indirect cause of the offense

63 **this** i.e. the silver casket

[64] **judgement** i.e. God's judgment

65 **amiss** incorrectly

66 **shadows** images/illusions/ reflections

68 **iwis** indeed

[69] **Silvered o’er** white-haired/decorated with ornamentation indicating military or court status

71 **I** i.e. the fool’s head

[72] **sped** (have) achieved your purpose/sent away with speed

[74] **By the time** i.e. the longer

78 **wroth** grief/anger

80 **deliberate** calculating

[83] **wiving** marrying

goes is determined

[86] **my lord** playful response to **my lady**

[90] **sensible regreets** tangible greetings (i.e. **gifts**)

[91] **To wit** that is to say
commends commendations
breath speech

92 **yet** until now

95 **costly** bountiful

[96] **fore-spurrer** one who has ridden ahead (i.e. messenger)

[99] **high-day** holiday (i.e. elaborate)

101 **post** messenger

[2] **it … unchecked** an undisputed rumor is circulating

[3] **lading** cargo

narrow seas presumably the English Channel

[4] **Goodwins** Goodwin Sands, off the Kent coast

flat sandbank

5 **tall** lofty/gallant

[6] **gossip** old friend/chatty woman

[9] **knapped** nibbled at

ginger old women were proverbially fond of ginger

10 **slips of prolixity** evasions into tedious explanation

[11] **crossing** forestalling

plain … talk i.e. good, honest communication

[14] **Come … stop** i.e. get to the point and finish what you're saying

17 **prove** prove to be

[18] **betimes** at once

cross thwart

[24] **wings** (page's) costume/flying apparatus

[26] **fledged** ready to fly/sexually ripe
complexion temperament

[27] **dam** mother

[29] **devil** probably alludes to Shylock

[30] **flesh and blood** i.e. daughter (Solanio plays on the sense of “sexual desires”)

[31] **Out upon it** expression of irritation
carrion putrefying flesh
these years i.e. your advanced age

[34] **jet and ivory** i.e. black and white

37 **match** contract

[39] **mart** market, i.e. the **Rialto**

[40] **look to** heed, remember

[41] **for … courtesy** out of Christian charity/for a good deed in return

[46] **hindered me** prevented me from earning

[48] **cooled** alienated

[49] **heated** angered

[51] **dimensions** parts of the body
affections inclinations/emotions/love
passions powerful emotions

[58] **what … humility** i.e. in what benevolent manner does he respond

[59] **his sufferance** the Jew's endurance

61 **go hard but** be highly unfortunate if I do not

62 **better the instruction** improve on the (Christian) example

65 **up and down** everywhere

[66] **of the tribe** i.e. Jew

[67] **matched** i.e. found to match them

68 **Genoa** northwestern coastal Italian city

[73] **Frankfurt** site of a famous jewelry fair
curse God's curse on the Jews

77 **hearsed** in a coffin

81 **satisfaction** compensation

82 **lights** settles

[87] **cast away** lost, shipwrecked

94 **fourscore** eighty

[96] **at a sitting** in one go

97 **divers** several

98 **break** fail to keep the bond/go bankrupt

101 **of** from

103 **Out upon her!** expression of frustration and condemnation

104 **Leah** Shylock's wife

105 **wilderness** i.e. large number

106 **undone** ruined

107 **fee** purchase, hire, secure

108 **officer** constable/ bailiff

bespeak engage

before i.e. before the date of Antonio's bond

110 **what** whatever
merchandise business dealings
will want

[1] **tarry** wait, delay

[2] **in choosing** if you choose

[3] **forbear** desist, have patience

6 **quality** way

[8] **And … thought** i.e. a modest young woman can think but not speak what she feels

10 **venture** take a chance (i.e. with the caskets)

11 **forsworn** will have broken my promise

12 **So** that (i.e. forsworn)

So as a result

miss me i.e. choose incorrectly

15 **o’erlooked** bewitched

[17] **would** i.e. should

18 **naughty** wicked

19 **bars** obstacles

[20] **though … yours** i.e. although I am truly yours (by desire), I am not so legitimately

Prove it if it turn out to be

[22] **peise** delay (literally by weighing down)

[23] **eke** eke out, extend

[24] **stay** prevent/dissuade
election choice

[26] **rack** torture instrument that stretched the limbs, used to elicit confessions from those suspected of **treason**

[29] **mistrust** worry, doubt

30 **fear** fearful, doubtful about
enjoying with sexual connotations

32 **as** as between

[34] **enforcèd** compelled

[36] **confess and live** plays on “confess and be hanged” (proverbial)

[40] **deliverance** i.e. from death

[41] **let me to** allow me (to deal with)

[44] **aloof** to one side

[46] **swan-like end** swans were thought to sing as they died

51 **flourish** trumpet fanfare

53 **dulcet** sweet

56 **presence** dignity/noble demeanor

[57] **Alcides** i.e. Hercules, who rescued Hesione from a **sea-monster** and was rewarded by her father, the king of Troy, with a pair of magnificent horses, rather than the maiden's love

58 **howling** grieving

[59] **stand for** represent

61 **blearèd visages** tear-stained faces

62 **issue** outcome

63 **Live thou** if you live

64 **fray** assault/din

65 **fancy** love

66 **Or** either

67 **begot** conceived

71 **the cradle** its infancy/the **eyes**

72 **knell** funeral bell

[75] **themselves** i.e. like what they seem

76 **still** always

78 **gracious** charming

[80] **sober brow** i.e. solemn clergyman

81 **approve** support

text passage from the Bible

[82] **grossness** flagrant/coarse nature

83 **simple** small/basic

assumes acquires

[84] **his** its

[87] **Mars** god of war

[88] **searched** probed surgically

livers … milk the liver was thought to be the seat of courage; a coward's would be pale from lack of blood

89 **excrement** facial hair

[90] **redoubted** dreaded/revered

beauty … weight cosmetics and hair were bought by the ounce

[93] **lightest** most frivolous/least heavy

94 **crispèd** tightly curled

95 **wanton** playful/wild/lascivious

96 **fairness** beauty/brightness

[97] **dowry … sepulchre** i.e. a wig made of a dead woman's hair

99 **guilèd** deceptive

101 **Indian** i.e. dark-skinned (the Elizabethans preferred fair complexions)

103 **gaudy** excessively showy/bright

[104] **Midas** Phrygian king whose wish for everything he touched to turn to gold was granted only too literally

105 **thee** i.e. the silver casket

drudge lackey, because used in business transactions

110 **fleet** change/pass swiftly

111 **As** such as

rash-embraced recklessly adopted

114 **measure** moderation
rain pour (but could be “rein”)
scant limit

116 **surfeit** overindulge and become ill

118 **counterfeit** image

demigod i.e. the painter, or creator of this perfect image

119 **eyes** i.e. the eyes of the portrait

120 **Or whether** or

balls of mine i.e. my eyeballs

121 **severed** parted

122 **bar** barrier (i.e. **breath**)

123 **sunder** separate

126 **Faster** more tightly

[128] **it** i.e. the first painted eye

129 **unfurnished** unfinished, unpartnered

130 **substance** subject (i.e. Portia)

shadow image, reflection

133 **continent** summation/container

135 **Chance as fair** guess as fortunately

[143] **by note** i.e. as directed by the scroll

note invoice/account

144 **prize** contest

148 **his** for him

151 **confirmed, signed, ratified** language of commerce

158 **account** estimate/financial reckoning

159 **livings** possessions, livelihood

160 **account** calculation

sum essence/financial amount

161 **term in gross** express overall, wholesale

[162] **unpractisèd** inexperienced/innocent

170 **converted** changed (also a legal term for wrongfully appropriating someone else's property for one's own use)
But just

176 **presage** indicate

177 **vantage** opportunity/superior position

exclaim on accuse/denounce

179 **blood** blood/passion

180 **confusion** agitation

powers faculties

[184] **something** i.e. small utterance

blent blended

185 **wild** wilderness (i.e. confused sound, hubbub)

save except

186 **expressed** articulated, comprehensible

188 **be bold** presume, feel certainty

190 **That** who

194 **wish none** require no more/want to detract from any of my joy

196 **faith** (love) promise

197 **Even** exactly

198 **so** provided

201 **maid** waiting-woman

202 **intermission** delay/respite (in loving)

204 **stood** depended

205 **falls** turns out

[207] **roof** i.e. of the mouth

208 **last** endure (puns on **at last**)

213 **so** provided

215 **faith** in truth/fidelity

[217] **play … boy** bet who has the first son

218 **stake down** put the money down in advance

[219] **sport** game/sex

stake down i.e. with a non-erect penis

220 **infidel** i.e. Jessica

223 **youth** newness

new interest recently acquired authority

225 **very** true

235 **Commends him** sends his regards

236 **ope** open

240 **estate** circumstances

241 **cheer** welcome

yond yonder, that

243 **royal** kingly, magnificent

247 **shrewd** ominous/grievous

250 **constitution** mood

251 **constant** consistent, stable

[252] **leave** your permission

half yourself i.e. as his wife; the witnessed betrothal was nearly as binding as marriage

262 **Rating** reckoning, estimating

264 **state** estate, wealth

266 **engaged** pledged

267 **mere** total

269 **as** like

272 **hit** success

274 **Barbary** Barbary Coast, North Africa

275 **dreadful** fear-inspiring

276 **merchant-marring** capable of damaging a merchant ship

[278] **should appear** i.e. appears

279 **present** ready
discharge pay

280 **He** i.e. Shylock

282 **confound** destroy

284 **impeach** call into question

freedom civil liberty

286 **magnificoes** foremost noblemen in Venice

287 **port** dignity/social standing
persuaded entreated

288 **envious** malicious

plea legal claim

289 **forfeiture** penalty

[291] **Chus** a name found in Genesis 10:6, spelled “Cush”

296 **hard with** badly for

299 **best-conditioned** best-natured

300 **courtesies** good services

306 **deface** obliterate

318 **hence** (go) from here

319 **cheer** appearance/welcome

320 **dear** expensively (sense then shifts to “deeply”)

323 **estate** condition/status

[326] **Notwithstanding** nevertheless

use your pleasure enjoy yourself/do what you wish

328 **Dispatch** settle

332 **'twixt us twain** between us two

[1] **look** see

[2] **gratis** for no interest

10 **naughty** wicked
fond foolish

11 **abroad** out of the jail/outside

15 **dull-eyed** easily deceived/stupid

20 **kept** dwelt

[22] **bootless** pointless

25 **made moan** complained, lamented (about debts to Shylock)

[28] **grant** allow

hold stand firm

[30] **commodity** (commercial) privileges
strangers outsiders (including Jews)

[33] **Since that** since

35 **bated me** diminished me/made me lose weight

[2] **conceit** understanding

[3] **godlike amity** divine friendship

[5] **to whom** i.e. Antonio

6 **relief** financial aid

7 **lover** friend

[9] **customary … you** ordinary generosity would make you

12 **waste** spend/while away

[14] **needs** of necessity

like similar, comparable

15 **lineaments** characteristics/physical features

[17] **bosom lover** intimate friend

20 **semblance** image

my soul i.e. Bassanio

25 **husbandry** domestic administration

manage management

[33] **deny** refuse

imposition command

[38] **people** i.e. household servants

[47] **honest-true** truthful and reliable

50 **render** give

52 **look what** whatever

53 **imagined** all imaginable

54 **traject** crossing place/ferry
common public

[55] **trades** i.e. crosses

62 **habit** clothing

63 **accomplishèd** equipped

64 **that we lack** i.e. penises (they will be disguised as men)

hold offer and maintain

65 **accoutred** dressed

67 **braver** bolder/more splendid
grace elegance/attitude

[68] **between … voice** i.e. with an adolescent boy's reedy breaking voice

69 **mincing** dainty

70 **frays** fights

71 **quaint** ingenious

74 **do withal** help it

76 **puny** petty/inexperienced

78 **Above** more than

[79] **raw** unrefined

Jacks fellows

[81] **turn to** become (Portia puns on the sense of “become sexually available to”)

87 **measure** cover/count out

[2] **promise** assure

fear you fear for you

[3] **plain** honest

agitation agitated thoughts (possible malapropism for “cogitation”)

[6] **bastard** mixed/illegitimate
neither nevertheless

[8] **got** begot, conceived

[13] **Scylla … Charybdis** Odysseus had to navigate between these two dangerous points (the monster **Scylla** and whirlpool **Charybdis**)
fall into with sexual connotations

14 **gone** ruined

15 **I … husband** “the unbelieving wife is made acceptable to God by being united to her Christian husband” (1 Corinthians 7:14)

[17] **We … enow** there were enough of us Christians

18 **by** alongside/off

[19] **raise … hogs** because Christians eat pork (unlike Jews)

21 **money** any price

[25] **get … corners** i.e. for sex

27 **are** have fallen

[32] **getting … belly** making the **negro** pregnant

Moor African (woman)

[34] **much** of concern

more than reason greater than is reasonable (i.e. pregnant); **more** puns on **Moor**

[35] **less … for** i.e. Lancelet does not think much of the woman's morals (possibly he gets confused in his attempt to play on **Moor/more/less**)
honest chaste

38 **grace** virtue, quality

[40] **them** i.e. the servants (but Lancelet takes the sense of “diners”)

41 **stomachs** appetites

42 **wit-snapper** wisecracker

[44] **‘cover’** lay the table (Lancelet goes on to play on the sense of “cover one’s head with a hat”)

[46] **my duty** i.e. as a servant, who would remove his hat in the presence of superiors

[47] **quarrelling with occasion** i.e. taking the opportunity for quibbling

50 **fellows** fellow servants

[52] **For** as for
table i.e. food

[53] **covered** i.e. on a covered serving dish

[54] **humours and conceits** whims and fancies

[55] **discretion** judgment

suited adapted as appropriate

[58] **A many** many

stand … place have higher positions of employment

[59] **Garnished** provided with a good supply of words/dressed

60 **Defy the matter** confuse the meaning
cheerest thou are you feeling

63 **Past all expressing** beyond words
meet suitable

[68] **In reason** it stands to reason

70 **lay** bet, stake

72 **Pawned** pledged
rude unrefined

73 **fellow** equal

74 **Even** just

75 **of** in

78 **stomach** appetite/inclination

81 **digest** consider/endure/swallow

[82] **set you forth** praise you/serve you up

[3] **answer** face/defend yourself against

[6] **From** of

dram tiny amount

[8] **qualify** diminish, moderate

[9] **stands obdurate** remains inflexible

11 **envy's** malice's

14 **tyranny** cruelty

17 **our** the royal plural

[19] **but … fashion** only persist in this form/contrivance

[20] **last … act** i.e. eleventh hour, final moment

21 **remorse** pity

strange surprisingly

[22] **strange** unnatural/foreign

25 **loose** revoke, abandon

[27] **moiety** portion/half

30 **royal merchant** merchant prince

32 **brassy bosoms** hard hearts

[33] **Turks and Tartars** both considered pitiless infidels

[35] **gentle** puns on “gentile”

36 **possessed** notified

38 **due** debt

39 **danger** damage

[40] **charter** deed of privilege

[42] **carrion** loathsome/putrefying

[44] **humour** mood, inclination

answered explained satisfactorily

[47] **baned** poisoned

48 **love** who love

50 **i'th'nose** with a nasal twang

51 **affection** inclination

[55] **he** one person

gaping i.e. roasted with its mouth open

56 **Why he** another person

necessary useful (for catching rats and mice)

[61] **lodged** deep-rooted
certain definite, fixed

62 **follow** pursue

[63] **losing** i.e. involving loss (for Antonio)

65 **current** course, flow

71 **think** realize

[73] **main flood** sea at high tide

bate lessen

74 **use question** dispute

77 **wag** sway

78 **fretted** chafed

[79] **hard** difficult (puns on the sense of “tough, firm”)

80 **than** more than

83 **conveniency** convenience

88 **draw** collect/receive

[89] **rend'ring** yielding/giving back

[90] **no wrong** i.e. nothing illegal

[93] **parts** actions/duties

[98] **viands** food (as you eat)

104 **stand for** represent/uphold

109 **stays without** waits outside

116 **tainted** diseased

wether sheep (specifically, castrated ram)

117 **Meetest** most fitting

126 **keen** sharp/eager

[127] **hangman's** i.e. executioner's

keenness sharpness/eagerness/ severity

130 **inexecrable** unmovable/accursed

131 **thy life** the fact that you are alive

accused chastised

[133] **Pythagoras** ancient Greek philosopher whose doctrine supported the transmigration of souls

135 **currish** mean-spirited/snarling (like a dog)

137 **fell** savage

fleet leave, fly off

138 **unhallowed** unholy

dam mother

141 **rail** rant

142 **but offend’st** merely harm

143 **Repair** restore

148 **hard** close

155 **in loving visitation** on a friendly visit

159 **furnished** equipped

161 **importunity** urging

163 **reverend** respected, worthy

165 **whose trial** the testing of whom

166 **publish** make known

commendation recommendation/praise

172 **difference** dispute

173 **present question** current argument

174 **throughly** thoroughly

180 **rule** proper discipline

181 **impugn** call into question

182 **danger** (power to) harm

184 **confess** acknowledge

188 **strained** forced, artificial; also perhaps filtered/distilled (setting up rain imagery)

190 **is twice blest** bestows a double blessing

194 **shows** represents

196 **dread** reverence/awe

197 **sceptred sway** royal government

200 **likest** most like

201 **seasons** modifies

[203] **justice** i.e. God's justice (if He did not show mercy to humankind)

205 **render** perform in return

[210] **My … head!** possible echo of the crowd's acceptance of responsibility for Jesus' death (Matthew 27:25)

212 **discharge** pay

213 **tender** offer

217 **must appear** will be evident

218 **bears down truth** overwhelms integrity

219 **Wrest once** for once, forcibly subject

[224] **for** as

precedent i.e. on which future lawsuits can be based

[227] **Daniel** in the Apocryphal story, Daniel judges Susannah correctly, despite his youth and the false witness of the Elders
judgement i.e. make judgment

240 **tenure** legal conditions, terms of the bond

254 **Hath … to** fully supports

262 **balance** scales

265 **by** nearby

on your charge at your responsibility/expense

266 **stop** staunch

[272] **armed** i.e. prepared/fortified

276 **still** always (usually)
use practice

282 **process** course, manner

283 **me … death** favorably of me when I am dead

285 **love** i.e. loving friend

289 **with … heart** most willingly/literally, with my heart

291 **Which** who

295 **deliver** free

302 **else** otherwise

304 **Would** I wish

Barabbas a thief released by Pontius Pilate instead of Jesus at the people's request

306 **trifle** waste

pursue proceed with

319 **confiscate** confiscated

321 **Mark** take note

330 **Soft!** Wait a moment!

331 **all** only/complete

[337] **just** exact (plays on the sense of “fair, lawful”)

338 **substance** amount/weight

340 **scruple** tiny amount

341 **estimation … hair** by a hair's breadth/weight

[344] **on the hip** at a disadvantage (wrestling term)

[346] **principal** original capital sum, i.e. three thousand ducats

[349] **merely** only/absolute

[352] **barely** i.e. at the very least

355 **good** good fortune

356 **stay** remain

question to argue the case

360 **alien** foreigner

363 **contrive** scheme

364 **seize** take legal possession of

365 **privy coffer** private treasury

366 **in** at

367 **gainst … voice** despite any other appeals

369 **proceeding** course of action

373 **danger** damage/penalty
rehearsed related

374 **Down** i.e. on your knees

377 **cord** rope

378 **charge** cost

381 **For** as for

383 **humbleness** remorse (on Shylock's part)

drive convert

[384] **for … Antonio** i.e. the state's portion of the goods may be reduced to a fine, but not Antonio's half

390 **halter** hangman’s noose

391 **So** if it please

392 **quit** cancel, release (Shylock) from

393 **so** provided that

394 **use** (legal) trust

398 **presently** immediately

400 **possessed** possessed of

401 **son** i.e. son-in-law

403 **late** lately

412 **ten more** i.e. twelve, the number in a jury

413 **font** place of Christian baptism

415 **of** for

417 **meet** fitting, necessary

418 **your … not** you don’t have time to stay

419 **gratify** show gratitude to/reward

[423] **in lieu whereof** in exchange for which

[425] **cope** give in recompense (for)

[430] **account** consider (plays on the sense of “financial reckoning”)

[432] **know** remember (a private joke on the sense of “have sex with”)

434 **attempt** tempt/persuade

[437] **pardon me** i.e. excuse my insistence

[438] **press** urge (plays on the sense of “enjoy sexually”)
yield plays on the sense of “submit sexually”

[440] **love** friendship (plays on the sense of “marital love”)

442 **in** out of

[446] **mind to** desire for

448 **dearest** most expensive

451 **liberal** free/over-generous

470 **Fly** hasten

[1] **Inquire … out** find out where the Jew's house is

deed i.e. the document stating Shylock will leave his possessions to Jessica and Lorenzo

[3] **be** i.e. arrive

[5] **you … o’erta’en** i.e. I’m glad I caught you

6 **advice** reflection

17 **old** plenty of

[19] **outface** defy/contradict/shame

outswear outdo in swearing

[4] **Troilus** separated from his lover, Cressida (**Cressid**), by the Trojan War, he was subsequently abandoned by her

[8] **Thisbe** at their meeting place Pyramus discovered his lover Thisbe's cloak, dropped in fright at the sight of a lion; his mistaken belief that she had been killed led to both their suicides

o'ertrip skip over

9 **ere himself** before the lion itself

[12] **Dido** Queen of **Carthage** who fell in love with, and was abandoned by, Aeneas
willow willow leaves; symbol of grief for lost love

13 **wild** unruly/cruel

waft wafted (i.e. beckoned)

16 **Medea** lover of Jason; she helped him gain the golden fleece and restored the health of his father, **Aeson**

17 **renew** rejuvenate/revive

19 **steal** run stealthily from/rob

20 **unthrift** extravagant

[27] **shrew** troublemaker, ill-tempered woman

28 **love** lover

[29] **out-night you** i.e. outdo you in our game of references to the night

did if

30 **footing** footfall

[36] **doth stray about** is distracted by

[37] **holy crosses** shrines by the road

[46] **Sola** imitation of the sound of a messenger's horn/a hunting cry

Wo ha, ho! falconer's call to the hawk

50 **hollowing** shouting/urging on of dogs in the hunt

53 **post** messenger

[54] **horn** messenger's instrument/cornucopia, i.e. plentiful supply

56 **in** go in
expect await

58 **signify** make known

60 **music** i.e. musicians

air plays on sense of “melody”

64 **Become** suit

touches skillful playing (by plucking or fingering instruments)

[65] **floor of heaven** i.e. sky

[66] **patens** shallow, circular dishes (on which communion bread is placed)

[67] **orb** heavenly body (planet, star)

[68] **motion** movement (heavenly bodies were thought to be surrounded by hollow spheres; as they rotated they produced beautiful music)

[69] **Still choiring** continually singing in chorus
young-eyed with eternally clear sight
cherubins cherubim, angels

[71] **muddy … decay** i.e. clay-like mortal clothing (flesh)

[72] **grossly** physically, coarsely

close it in i.e. enclose the soul

[73] **Diana** Roman goddess of the moon

[77] **spirits** mental faculties/feelings

attentive i.e. preoccupied

78 **wanton** unrestrained, wild, boisterous

[79] **race** company/herd
unhandled untamed

80 **Fetching** performing
bounds leaps

[81] **hot condition** passionate nature

blood spirit

[82] **but** only

perchance by chance/perhaps

83 **air** melody

84 **mutual stand** general pause

[86] **the poet** i.e. Ovid

[87] **feign** depict/invent
Orpheus legendary Greek poet and musician who could charm all of nature with his music
drew drew in, attracted
floods rivers

[88] **stockish** unfeeling/ stupid

92 **stratagems** schemes/bloody acts

spoils destruction, pillaging

[93] **motions** inner promptings

dull dark/lifeless

[94] **affections** feelings/disposition

Erebus place of darkness between earth and the classical underworld

98 **naughty** wicked

102 **by** nearby

his i.e. the substitute's

state dignity/sovereignty

104 **main of waters** sea

106 **respect** consideration of circumstance

110 **attended** paid attention to/heard

[114] **season** occasion

seasoned improved/flavored

[116] **Endymion** shepherd with whom the moon goddess fell in love; she granted him eternal sleep so she could visit him

124 **speed** succeed/hasten

words i.e. prayers

127 **before** ahead of them

132 ***tucket*** trumpet call

[138] **should … Antipodes** would experience day at the same time as the other side of the world

139 **in … sun** i.e. at night (since Portia is like a second sun)

140 **be light** be promiscuous

141 **heavy** sad (plays on the sense of “weighty”)

143 **sort** arrange

148 **bound** imprisoned/indebted/legally bound

149 **acquitted of** repaid for/freed from

152 **scant** cut short

breathing i.e. verbal

155 **gelt** gelded, castrated

for my part as far as I'm concerned

156 **at** to

[159] **posy** verse or motto inscribed on a ring

166 **Though** i.e. if

167 **respective** careful, considerate

173 **scrubbèd** undersized

175 **prating** chattering

178 **slightly** easily

180 **riveted** bolted

185 **masters** possesses

187 **mad** enraged

208 **conceive** understand

212 **virtue** power

214 **contain** retain

217 **If** that if

pleased wanted, attempted

218 **wanted** (so) lacking
modesty restraint

219 **urge** request persistently

ceremony sacred token

223 **civil doctor** doctor of civil law

226 **suffered** let

[227] **held up** i.e. saved

232 **it** i.e. honor

[233] **candles … night** i.e. stars

239 **liberal** generous

242 **Know** recognize/have sex with

243 **Argus** monster with a hundred eyes

245 **honour** good name/chaste reputation
yet still

247 **be well advised** take care

249 **take** catch

250 **mar** ruin

pen i.e. penis

251 **th'unhappy** the unlucky/miserable/trouble-causing

258 **doubly sees himself** sees himself reflected twice

259 **double** dual/deceitful

260 **of credit** worth believing

266 **quite miscarried** entirely come to harm

268 **advisedly** deliberately

269 **surety** guarantor

274 **lay with** slept with

277 **lieu of** exchange for

279 **fair** good, unmuddied (i.e. without needing repair)

280 **cuckolds** men with unfaithful wives

281 **grossly** coarsely/foolishly

287 **e’en** just

[292] **richly** i.e. laden with expensive goods

295 **dumb** speechless

302 **living** livelihood

304 **road** harbor

311 **manna** during the Exodus, the food God provided for the Israelites in the desert

[314] **you … full** your curiosity will not be content until further details are revealed

316 **charge … inter'gatories** examine us under formal questioning

318 **inter'gatory** question

319 **sworn on** under oath to answer truthfully

320 **stay** wait

323 **couching** in bed

325 **sore** greatly

ring gold band (plays on the sense of “vagina”)