

## Act I : Scene 1

The opening scene gives the Exposition, the situation on which the story is based. We are introduced to Antonio, the Merchant, who gives the title to the drama. Interest is heightened by showing him in a melancholic mood. Salarino and Salanio, his friends, give various reasons for his sadness and try to bring him out of it. Bassanio, the closest friend of Antonio asks for a loan from him in order to present himself as an eligible suitor to Portia, a rich heiress of Belmont. Antonio's ships are still at sea; he has no ready cash with him; but he authorises Bassanio to use his good name for credit and get a loan from the moneylenders.

### Scene I Venice. A street

Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio

Antonio

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.  
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;  
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,

5 I am to learn;

And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,  
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salarino

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

14. *fly*: speed past.  
*woven wings*: canvas sails.

1. *In sooth*: in truth.
2. *It ... me*: The sadness makes me tired.
3. *caught*: acquired. *came by*: got.
4. *whereof*: of what origin.
5. *I am to learn*: I am yet to learn.
6. *want-wit*: an absent-minded fellow.
7. *ado*: trouble.
- 6-7. This sadness makes me so absent-minded that I do not know who I am.
9. *argosies*: big commercial ships. Originally Argosy is a ship of Ragusa, a port on the Adriatic near Venice.  
*portly*: stately.
10. *signiors*: gentlemen.  
*burghers*: important citizens.  
*flood*: sea.
11. *pageants*: processions.
12. *overpeer*: surpass.  
*petty traffickers*: small commercial boats.
13. *curtsy*: bow in respect.  
*That ... reverence*: that move up and down, as if they were showing respect.  
*do them reverence*: show respect to them.



## Salanio

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

## Salarino

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

15. *venture*: business operations.  
*had... forth*: if I had such business  
abroad.
16. *affections*: feelings.
17. *still*: always.
18. *Plucking...wind*: holding up a blade  
of grass to see in which direction the  
wind is blowing.
19. *Peering*: looking carefully.  
*piers*: harbours.  
*roads*: channels.
21. *out of doubt*: without doubt.
23. *wind*: breath. *broth*: soup.
24. *Would blow me*: would make me  
tremble.  
*ague*: fever with shivering.
26. *sandy hour-glass*: an apparatus with  
two spheres of glass joined together  
with a tiny hole between, through  
which sand ran from one sphere to  
the other in one hour. The apparatus  
was used to indicate time before  
watches became common. The sight  
of the sand in the glass would remind  
one of dangers from hidden banks of  
sand at sea, on which ship may run  
aground.
27. *shallows*: shallow waters.  
*flats*: sandbanks.
28. *Andrew*: a common name for a big  
ship.  
*dock'd*: run ashore.
29. *Vailing her high-top*: lowering her top  
of the mast.  
*ribs*: sides of the ship.
30. *To kiss her burial*: to kiss the sand in  
which she is buried.
31. *edifice*: building.
32. *straight*: immediately.  
*And not...rocks*: and not reminded  
immediately of dangerous rocks.
33. *vessel*: two meanings—ship and  
container.

35. *Enrobe*: cover.36-7. *but...nothing*: just before a moment, the cargo was  
so valuable, but now it is worth nothing.



To think on this, and shall I lack the thought  
That such a thing bechanced would make me  
sad?

40 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 trusted,  
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate

45 Upon the fortune of this present year:  
Therefore, my merchandise makes me not sad.

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

**Antonio.** Fie, fie!

**Salarino**

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

50 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,

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:  
Some that will evermore peep through their  
eyes,

55 And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;  
And other of such vinegar aspect,  
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,  
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

58. *Nestor*: an old and wise Greek general, who fought in the Trojan War; a joke had to be extremely funny if Nestor laughed at it.

38-9. *shall... sad?*: If I can imagine all this could happen, shall I not also have the imagination to picture the grief which the occurrence of such a disaster would cause me?

39. *such a thing bechanced*: the happening of such a thing.

41. *to think... merchandise*: to think of the possible dangers for his merchandise.

42. *fortune*: (two meanings) 'luck' and 'wealth'.

43. *ventures*: business.  
*bottom*: ship.

43-4. *My ventures... place*: My business enterprises are not all risked in one single ship nor destined to any one place.

44-5. *nor is... year*: nor is my financial position dependent on the business ventures of this year.

48. *Fie*: nonsense.

49. *Not in love neither*: double negative for emphasis. In modern English it should read "Not in love either."

51. *leap*: frisk.

52. *Janus*: a Roman god of doors, who had two faces: one frowning, the other smiling; one head looking inwards and the other looking out. He is referred to here to indicate that Nature creates two different types of men, with different outlooks.

53. *framed*: made.

54. *evermore*: always.

*peep... eyes*: wrinkle their faces when they laugh, so that their eyes appear to be peeping through the folds.

55. *And... bag-piper*: laugh even at a bag piper as foolishly as a parrot laughs at anything.

*bag-piper*: one who plays the bag-pipe.

56. *of such vinegar aspect*: with such a sour expression

57. *in way of smile*: in a smile.

Salanio

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,

59. *kinsman*: probably means a friend.

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

Salarino

I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,  
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Antonio

Your worth is very dear in my regard

64. *regard*: esteem.

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

65. *calls on*: needs.

66. *embrace the occasion*: take the opportunity.

*Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.*

Salarino

Good morrow, my good lords.

Bassanio

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say,  
when?

68. *laugh*: have a merry party together.

You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

69. *You...strange*: you are becoming strangers to me.

Salarino

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

70. *We'll...yours*: When we are free and when it is mutually convenient we shall meet.

*[Exeunt Salarino and Salanio]*

Lorenzo

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

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

73. *have in mind*: remember.

Bassanio. I will not fail you.



Gratiano

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

Antonio

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

Gratiano

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

*jaundice*: a disease that turns the skin yellow. Elizabethans thought that jaundice was caused by jealousy and bad temper (*peevishness*); note here the influence of the mind on the body.

88-9. *creep...peevish?*: gradually work himself to be in a jaundiced state by being irritable.

90. *it is...speaks*: I am saying this out of love for you.

91. *sort*: kind. *visages*: faces.

92. *Do...mantle*: stand still like the scum that forms on the surface of still waters in a pool.

*cream*: refers to white cream on the top of milk.

76. *respect...world*: anxious thoughts concerning worldly affairs.

77. *They...much care*: Those who spend too much time worrying about worldly matters are never really happy.

78. *you...changed*: your appearance has changed so much.

79. *I hold...world*: I think of the world for what it is.

81. *And mine...one*: My part is sad. Shakespeare wishes to create a sense of foreboding on the principle that "coming events cast their shadows before."

82. *play the fool*: If Antonio has chosen to play a tragic part, Gratiano prefers to play a comic role.

83. *wrinkles*: when one laughs, wrinkles appear on one's face.

84. *liver...wine*: An Elizabethan belief that wine-drinking warmed the liver. It was believed then that there were four basic types of characters: the choleric, the melancholy, the phlegmatic and the sanguine. These types were physiologically determined by the digestion of food in the liver. A liver enriched by wine would produce rich blood, and thus a lively (sanguine) personality.

85. *heart cool...groans*: sighing and groaning were believed to take blood from the heart.

*mortifying*: causing death.

87. *alabaster*: pure white stone.

*Sit...alabaster*: sit as still as a carved statue of his grandfather.

88. *Sleep...wakes*: be motionless during the working hours (during the day) as if he were asleep.



And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
 95 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;  
 As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,  
 And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"  
 O my Antonio, I do know of these  
 That therefore only are reputed wise  
 100 For saying nothing: when, I am very sure,  
 If they should speak, would almost damn those  
 ears

Which, hearing them, would call their brothers  
 fools.

I'll tell thee more of this another time:

But fish not, with this melancholy bait,

105 For this fool gudgeon, this opinion—

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:

I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lorenzo

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

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,

110 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

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

113. *grow*: become.

*for this gear*: because of this advice.

91-2. whose faces are overcast with a serious  
 pale expression as unchanging as the  
 surface of a pool of standing water  
 and as the cream on the top of milk.

93. *do...entertain*: deliberately put on an  
 air of solemnity.

*wilful stillness*: deliberate silence.

94. *With purpose...opinion*: with the  
 intention of creating a reputation.

95. *gravity*: solemnity.

*profound conceit*: deep thought.

96. *As...say*: as if he were to say.

*I am Sir Oracle*: I speak with the  
 authority of the Greek oracle. The  
 oracle was believed to be the voice of  
 the gods, uttered through the mouth  
 of priests.

97. *ope*: open.

*let...bark*: a proverbial phrase: 'let  
 not a sound be heard'.

99-100. *That...nothing*: who have a reputation  
 for being wise only because they do  
 not say anything.

101-2. If they were to speak, their listeners  
 would call them fools; and for  
 saying this, they would be damned  
 (because the Bible says that 'whoever  
 shall say to his brother, "Thou fool"  
 shall be in danger of hell fire'; St.  
 Mathew, 5:22).

104. *melancholy bait*: bait of sadness.

104-5. Don't use this bait of melancholy  
 silence in order to catch such a cheap  
 fish like popularity.

105. *gudgeon*: a small worthless fish.

107. *exhortation*: good advice.

109. *same*: similar.

111. *but*: only.

112. You will have forgotten the sound of  
 your own voice.

Gratiano

Thanks, if faith; for silence is only commendable

115 In a neat's tongue dried,

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo*]

Antonio. Is that any thing now?

Bassanio

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

Antonio

Well; tell me now, what lady is the same

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,

125 That you today promised to tell me of?

Bassanio

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,

How much I have disabled mine estate,

By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance:

130 Nor do I now make moan to be abridged

From such a noble rate; but my chief care

Is, to come fairly off from the great debts

Wherein my time, something too prodigal,

Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,

135 I owe the most, in money and in love;

And from your love I have a warranty

To unburden all my plots and purposes

How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

114. *faith: indeed.*

*commendable: to be praised.*

115. *a neat's...dried: a head in vinegar.*

116. *It...moan: I don't make any sound.*

117. *infinite...nothing: a great deal of nonsense.*

118-20. *His reasons...chaff: His speech is like two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff.*

120. *ere: before.*

123. *the same: she.*

124. *swore...pilgrimage: promised to visit secretly.*

127. *disabled: squandered.*

*estate: means.*

128. *By...port: by living in a rather grand style ('port').*

129. *faint: limited.*

*grant continuance: permit me to keep up. Than...continuance: than my modest means will permit me to keep up.*

130. *make moan: complain.*

*to be abridged: to be forced to give up.*

131. *noble rate: kindly way of living.*

*chief care: main concern.*

132. *to come...from: to get honourably clear of.*

133. *my time...prodigal: my youth, which has been rather too extravagant.*

134. *gaged: in debt.*

136. *And...warranty: and your affection for me gives me the right.*

*warranty: assurance.*

137. *unburden...purposes: to unfold to you all my schemes and intentions.*

138. *How...owe: to free myself from the debts I owe.*



**Antonio**

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

**Bassanio**

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

**Antonio**

You know me well, and herein spend but time  
 To wind about my love with circumstance;  
 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong  
 160 In making question of my uttermost,  
 158. To appeal (*wind about*) to my love in such a  
 complicated manner.  
 159. *out of doubt*: indeed, undoubtedly.  
 160. *making question of*: doubting.  
*In...uttermost*: In doubting that I will do everything  
 I can.

139. *it*: Bassanio's plan.

140-1. *And...honour*: And if your scheme is  
 like yourself, perfectly honourable.

142. *extremest means*: utmost resources.

143. *Lie...occasions*: are all open for your  
 needs.

144. *shaft*: arrow.

145. *fellow*: a similar arrow. Arrows 'of the  
 same flight' were identical as regards  
 length, weight, etc., and therefore  
 sure to go the same direction if shot  
 under the same conditions.

146. *The self-same*: exactly the same.  
*more... watch*: watching it more  
 carefully.

147. *To...forth*: to find out the other.  
*adventuring*: risking.

148. *urge*: offer.

*proof*: experiment.

150. *wilful youth*: self-willed young man.

151. *That...lost*: I have lost whatever I got  
 from you.

152. *shoot another arrow*: send (give)  
 another loan.

*self*: same.

154. *As...aim*: because I will take care  
 ('watch') with what I am doing.

154-5. *or...Or*: either or.

155. *latter hazard*: the second loan.

155-6. Bassanio will ensure that the latter  
 loan (*hazard*) will be returned, and  
 he will still remain indebted to  
 Antonio for the original sum.

157. *spend but time*: only waste time.

158. *circumstance*: complicated way.



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

**Bassanio**

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

**Antonio**

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;  
Neither have I money, nor commodity

179. *mind*: insight.

*presages*: foretells.

*thrift*: profitable success.

180. *questionless*: without doubt.

182. *commodity*: goods, security for a loan.

161. *made waste of*: destroyed.

162. *do but say*: only say.

163. *may...done*: may be done by me.

164. *prest unto* it: quite ready to do it.

165. *richly left*: who has inherited great wealth.

166. *fairer than that word*: better than fair.

*fairer*: i.e., a thing that is fairer. Portia is beautiful as well as virtuous, which makes her more beautiful than the beauty of her face.

168. *speechless*: unspoken.

169-70. *nothing undervalued To*: in no way inferior to.

170. *Portia*: Portia here is compared to Portia in *Julius Caesar*, who was the daughter of Cato (a Roman Statesman) and wife of Brutus (a brave Roman general), the leader of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar.

173. *sunny*: bright. *locks*: hair.

174. *golden fleece*: the reference is made to the ancient Greek legend. "Fleece" refers to the crop of wool of a sheep or ram. A famous hero called Jason, with his companions, the Argonauts, went on a dangerous voyage to Colchos on the east coast of the Black Sea in search of the golden fleece which was fastened to an oak by the local ruler and the fleece was guarded by a dragon. Jason obtained it with the help of his wife Medea.

175. *seat*: house. *strand*: shore.

*Colchos' strand*: the ancient kingdom of Colchis or Colchos.

176. *Jasons*: adventurous suitors.

*quest*: search.

177-8. *had I...them*: if only I had the means to become a rival with these suitors.

To raise a present sum: therefore, go forth;  
 Try what my credit can in Venice do:  
 185 That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,  
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.  
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I,  
 Where money is; and I no question make,  
 To have it of my trust or for my sake.

[Exeunt

- 183. *present sum*: money that is required now.
- 184. *see how much you can borrow in Venice, giving me as your security.*
- 185. *rack'd*: stretched.
- 186. *To furnish... Belmont*: to provide what is necessary for you to go to Belmont.
- 187. *presently*: at once.
- 188-9. *I...sake*: I have no doubt that I will be able to borrow money either because of my business credit or on account of my personal surety.

### Act I: Scene 2

This scene opens in Belmont where Portia, the rich and beautiful heiress resides. She shares with her maid, Nerissa, her doubts concerning her future, due to the strange provisions of her father's will. According to the will, she is to be won by the suitor who chooses correctly from among the three caskets made of gold, silver and lead. Portia ridicules the suitors, who have come earlier to try their luck, showing her disapproval. When Nerissa reminds her of Bassanio, she remembers him and has tender thoughts for him. The scene is in prose and deals in indirect explanations and characterisation.

Scene 2 Belmont. A room in Portia's house.  
 Enter Portia and Nerissa

Portia  
 By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary  
 of this great world.

Nerissa  
 You would be, sweet madam, if your  
 miseries were in the same abundance as  
 your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught  
 5 I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too  
 much as they that starve with nothing. It  
 is no mean happiness therefore, to be  
 seated in the mean: superfluity comes

- 1. *By my troth*: by my faith.
- awearry*: tired.
- 3. *in the same abundance*: as plentiful.
- 4. *aught*: anything.
- 5. *surfeit*: are overfed.
- 6. *with nothing*: with having nothing.
- 7. *no mean*: not small, poor.
- 8. *seated...mean*: placed in the middle (between poverty and riches). Nerissa uses the word *mean* in two different meanings: (i) poor; (ii) moderate.
- 6-8. It is no small happiness to be seated in a position mid-way between poverty and riches.



10 sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Portia

Good sentences, and well pronounced.

Nerissa

They would be better, if well followed.

Portia

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

Nerissa

30 Your father was ever virtuous: and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore, the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, — whereof who chooses his meaning

31. *inspirations*: divine guidance. The idea of the lottery (here really a test of character) was that it would discover the true lover, so that Portia would have no cause to regret being debarred from choosing.

34. *his meaning*: the one that Portia's father meant him to choose.

8-9. *superfluity...hairs*: those who have too much of anything (*superfluity*) will age sooner.

9-10. *competency lives longer*: those who have just enough (*competency*) live longer.

11. *sentences*: maxims; proverbs.

*pronounced*: spoken. Portia, perhaps, is hinting at the legal use of 'sentences' which are legally 'pronounced' by judges.

12. *followed*: obeyed.

13. *to do*: to act.

14. *chapels*: a church which accommodates a small number of worshippers.

*had been*: would have been.

15. *It*: he.

16. *divine*: preacher.

17. *were*: is.

19. *brain*: reason or mind.

*devise*: make.

20. *blood*: will or body. Note the distinction between reason and will, or mind and body.

20-1. *a hot temper...decree*: The heat of desire disobeys such cold laws.

21. *cold decree*: good advice.

21-3. *such a ...cripple*: Youthful high spirits are like a hare, which easily leaps (*skip*) over the nets (*meshes*) of limping (*the cripple*) good advice (*counsel*).

23. *reasoning*: wise talk.

24. *in the fashion*: the proper way.

*choose me*: select for me.

24-5. *O me*: Oh dear.

26. *whom I would*: whom I like.

27. *the will*: two meanings: 'desire' and 'testament'.

*curbed*: restrained.

29. *nor...none*: the emphatic double negative.

30. *ever*: always.



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25 whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Nerissa

30 Your father was ever virtuous: and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore, the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, — whereof who chooses his meaning

31. *inspirations*: divine guidance. The idea of the lottery (here really a test of character) was that it would discover the true lover, so that Portia would have no cause to regret being debarred from choosing.

34. *his meaning*: the one that Portia's father meant him to choose.

8-9. *superfluity...hairs*: those who have too much of anything (*superfluity*) will age sooner.

9-10. *competency lives longer*: those who have just enough (*competency*) live longer.

11. *sentences*: maxims; proverbs.

*pronounced*: spoken. Portia, perhaps, is hinting at the legal use of 'sentences' which are legally 'pronounced' by judges.

12. *followed*: obeyed.

13. *to do*: to act.

14. *chapels*: a church which accommodates a small number of worshippers.

*had been*: would have been.

15. *It*: he.

16. *divine*: preacher.

17. *were*: is.

19. *brain*: reason or mind.

*devise*: make.

20. *blood*: will or body. Note the distinction between reason and will, or mind and body.

20-1. *a hot temper...decree*: The heat of desire disobeys such cold laws.

21. *cold decree*: good advice.

21-3. *such a ...cripple*: Youthful high spirits are like a hare, which easily leaps (*skip*) over the nets (*meshes*) of limping (*the cripple*) good advice (*counsel*).

23. *reasoning*: wise talk.

24. *in the fashion*: the proper way.

*choose me*: select for me.

24-5. *O me*: Oh dear.

26. *whom I would*: whom I like.

27. *the will*: two meanings: 'desire' and 'testament'.

*curbed*: restrained.

29. *nor...none*: the emphatic double negative.

30. *ever*: always.



35 chooses you. — will, no doubt, never  
 be chosen by any rightly but one  
 who shall rightly love. But what  
 warmth is there in your affection towards  
 any of these princely suitors that are  
 40 already come?

Portia

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

Nerissa

45 First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Portia

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

Nerissa

50 Then is there the County Palatine.

Portia

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

58. defend, protect.

36. *rightly*: correctly.

*but*: except.

41. *over-name them*: call out their names  
 one by one.

43. *level at*: guess.

45. *Neapolitan*: from Naples.

46. *colt*: inexperienced young man (like  
 a young horse).

Neapolitans were famed for their  
 horsemanship.

47-8. *a great...parts*: an addition to his own  
 merits.

48-9. *that...himself*: that he can shoe his  
 own horse.

50. *County Palatine*: The Count from  
 the Palatinate, the region on the  
 west bank of the Rhine; the count is  
 a local ruler or a nobleman.

51-2. *as who should say*: as if he were to say.

54. *prove*: become like.

*the weeping philosopher*: Heraclitus  
 of Ephesus, who went to live alone  
 in the mountains because he was so  
 distressed by mankind's stupidity.

55-6. *unmannerly sadness*: unpleasant  
 gloom.

56. *I had*: I should.

57. *death's head*: skull; the emblem of  
 a skull, with two bones crossed  
 underneath was usually known as a  
 "death's head."

*his*: its.

Nerissa

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

Portia

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

Nerissa

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

Portia

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

Nerissa

What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

33. *round hose*: breeches. *bonnet*: hat.

34. *behaviour*: manners.

60. *How say you by*: What do you think of.

60-1. *Monsieur Le Bon*: literally, "Sir, the Good," a satirical expression of the traditional, affected, vivacious Frenchman.

62-3. *pass for*: be accepted as.

63-4. *to be a mocker*: to mock at.

64-5. *he hath a horse better than*: he talks even more than the Neapolitan about his horse.

65. *a better bad habit*: a more exaggerated bad habit.

66-7. *he is...no man*: he has everybody else's characteristics and no personality of his own.

67. *throstle*: thrush, the common English bird.

67-8. *falls...a-capering*: immediately starts jumping up and down (to the music).

68. *fence*: draw his sword.

70. *twenty husbands*: because he has everybody else's characteristics.

71-2. *love me to madness*: love me passionately.

72. *requite him*: return his love.

73. *say...to*: think of.

76. *hath*: understands.

77. *come into the court*: bear witness.

79. *poor pennyworth*: very little knowledge (as much as could be bought for a penny).

80. *a proper man's picture*: a man of fine appearance.

81. *a dumb-show*: a mime, acting without words.

*oddly*: strangely.

82. *suited*: dressed.

*doublet*: jacket.



Portia

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

Nerissa

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

Portia

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

Nerissa

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

Portia

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

Nerissa

You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to  
115 return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by

87. *neighbourly charity*: charity for his neighbour.

88. *borrowed*: was given.

*a box of the ear of*: a blow on the ear from...

91. *became his surety*: guaranteed that he would repay the debt. Reference is made to the constant assistance that the French gave the Scots in their quarrels with the English.

91-2. *sealed...under*: signed his name underneath the Scotman's signature on the (imaginary) bond as a guarantee for a friend. (Pledged himself that the Scottish lord would repay the Englishman the box on the ear.)

95. *vilely*: badly.

96. *most vilely*: still worse.

97. *best*: at his best.

98. *worst*: at his worst.

99-100. *An...fell*: if the worst thing that could ever happen (*fell*) should happen (*fall*).

100. *make shift*: manage.

107. *set a deep glass*: place a large glass. *Rhenish wine*: white wine made from grapes grown in the Rhine valley.

108. *contrary*: wrong.

109. *temptation*: (the wine).

111. *sponge*: one who soaks up or absorbs liquor, drunkard.

112. *the having*: that you will have to accept.

113. *acquainted me with*: informed me of.

114. *determinations*: decisions.

116. *suit*: a request to marry.

some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Portia

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

Nerissa

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

Portia

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

Nerissa

True, madam: he, of all the men that ever  
my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best  
deserving a fair lady.

Portia

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

*Enter a Servant*

How now! what news?

Servant

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

117. *sort: means.*

117-8. *your father's imposition: the conditions imposed by your father.*

*depending on: based on the choice of.*

119. *Sibylla: the Sibyl is a prophetess in Roman mythology. Apollo granted her as many years of life as there were sand grains she held in her hand. Here, she is used as the traditional old woman.*

120. *Diana: the goddess of virginity in Roman mythology. She was also the goddess of hunting and of the moon.*

122. *parcel of wooers: crowd of suitors.*

123. *dote on: long for.*

123-4. *but I...absence: whom I do not wish to be absent.*

127. *a scholar and a soldier: Ironic, since Bassanio is neither of them. Nerissa says what Portia wants to hear.*

128-9. *Marquis of Montferrat: the title of an Italian nobleman, (who would have been known by name in England at this time).*

130-1. *as I think...called: Portia pretends to have forgotten his name so as not to appear too keen on him.*

137. *How now, what news?: Hello, what news?*

138. *four strangers: six have been mentioned earlier. Possible explanations for this are: (a) Shakespeare seems to have forgotten that six suitors have been discussed (b) the Scottish and English lords were added to the scene to amuse the audience. (c) the servant regards two of the suitors with such contempt that they are not even worth mentioning.*

139. *forerunner: messenger.*



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 of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. — *Sirrah*, go before. —

145 Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer,  
another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt*

145. *approach*: arrival.

146. *condition*: nature.

*complexion*: appearance.

147. *I had*: I should prefer.

*shrive me*: hear my sins and grant forgiveness like a holy man.

148. *wive*: marry.

149. *Sirrah*: expression addressing servant.

## Act I: Scene 3

In this scene, Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, is introduced. He is the most powerful dramatic figure in the play. Shylock's hatred for Antonio intensifies the drama. Having been ridiculed by Antonio for years, he does not want to lend money to his friend Bassanio. But foreseeing an opportunity to take his revenge on Antonio, he agrees to give the loan on a bond which would allow Shylock to cut off a pound of Antonio's flesh, if he fails to repay the loan in time. The bond story is the main plot around which all action in the play takes place.

Scene 3 Venice. A public place

Enter Bassanio and Shylock

Shylock

Three thousand ducats, — well.

Bassanio

Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock

For three months, — well.

Bassanio

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

Shylock

Antonio shall become bound, — well.

1. *ducats*: Venetian gold coins.

2. *Ay*: yes.

4. *For the which*: for which.

5. *be bound*: act as surety, as guarantee.

6. *well*: understand.

Bassanio

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

Shylock

10 Three thousand ducats, for three months,  
and Antonio bound.

Bassanio

Your answer to that,

Shylock

Antonio is a good man.

Bassanio

Have you heard any imputation to the  
contrary?

Shylock

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

Bassanio

30 Be assured you may.

Shylock

I will be assured I may; and, that I may be  
assured,

I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

7. *May you stead me?*: Will you help me?  
*pleasure*: oblige.

12. *good*: wealthy; Bassanio takes the  
word in its ordinary sense and  
Shylock explains the sort of goodness  
he means.

13. *imputation*: allegation.

13-4. *to the contrary?*: that he is not.

17. *sufficient*: financially adequate as  
surety for the 3000 ducats.

17-8. *in supposition*: subject to the risks of  
business.

*argosy*: merchant ship.

19. *Tripolis*: Tripoli on the Mediterranean  
coast of Africa; it was a great channel  
of trade to central Africa — a vivid  
impression of the world-wide trade  
of Venice (and England).

20. *the Rialto*: the Venetian Stock  
Exchange where the merchants met  
for the transaction of business.

22. *ventures*: business investments.

*squandered abroad*: uselessly scattered  
abroad; implying perhaps that  
Antonio has not acted prudently in  
risking so much all at once. He then  
outlines the dangers for Antonio's  
goods.

23. *boards*: planks of wood.

*men*: mortal men.

27-8. *The man...sufficient*: nevertheless the  
man is acceptable (satisfactory) as  
security.

31. *I will ...I may*: I would like to be  
assured that I may.

32. *bethink me*: think it over.

*with*: to.



Bassanio

If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock

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

*Enter Antonio*

Bassanio

This is Signior Antonio.

Shylock

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

I hate him for he is a Christian;

But more, for that in low simplicity

45 He lends out money gratis and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,

50 Even there where merchants most do  
congregate,

On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,

50. *there where*: on the Rialto.

*congregate*: gather.

51. *bargains*: business deals.

*well-won*: hard-earned.

*thrift*: success, gain.

34. *Yes*: ironical expression meaning "what?" *pork*: meat forbidden to the Jews, *habitation*: pig's body (dwelling place of the devil according to Shylock).

34-6. *the habitation...into*: Jesus Christ ('The Nazarite') healed a madman by ordering the devils that possessed him to leave the man and enter into a herd of pigs (St. Marks 5:1-13).

35. *Nazarite*: a resident of Nazareth. *conjured*: ordered.

36-7. *I will buy...talk with you*: I am ready to buy and sell with you.

37-8. *so following*: so forth.

40. Who is he *that* comes here?

42. *fawning*: servile.

*publican*: Roman tax-collector (Reference is made to the parable of the publican and the Pharisee, Luke XVIII, 10-14.) *Publican* is a name term of contempt and loathing in the mouth of a Jew.

43. *for*: because.

44. *low*: base.

*simplicity*: foolishness.

45. *gratis*: free of interest.

46. *usance*: interest or money lending.

47. *catch him...hip*: get hold of him at disadvantage. (The metaphor is from wrestling, referring to a position leading to a throw.)

48. *feed fat*: fully gratify (as though the grudge were an animal to be fed). *ancient grudge*: long-standing grievance.

49. *sacred nation*: Jewish race. *rails*: abuses.

Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,  
If I forgive him!

Bassanio

Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock

- 55 I am debating of my present store;  
And, by the near guess of my memory,  
I cannot instantly raise up the gross  
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?  
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
60 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months  
Do you desire? [*To Antonio*] Rest you fair, good  
signior;  
Your worship was the last man in our  
mouths.

Antonio

Shylock, albeit, I neither lend nor borrow  
By taking nor by giving of excess,

- 65 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
I'll break a custom.—[*To Bassanio*] Is he yet  
possessed  
How much ye would?  
Shylock. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Antonio

And for three months.

Shylock

- 70 I had forgot; three months; you told me so.  
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but  
hear you;  
Methought you said you neither lend nor  
borrow  
Upon advantage.

52. *interest*: profit.

*tribe*: race.

55. *debating of*: calculating,  
*present store*: ready money.

56. *near*: close.

57. *gross*: the full sum.

58. *What...that?*: That does not matter.

59. *a wealthy...tribe*: a wealthy Jew of my  
community.

*tribe*: the Jews were divided into 12  
tribes or family groups.

60. *furnish*: supply.

*But soft!*: wait a little.

61. *Rest you fair*: a greeting.

62. *Your worship*: your honour, a title of  
respect.

*in our mouths*: that we were talking  
about.

63. *albeit*: although.

64. *excess*: interest, more money than the  
sum borrowed or lent.

65. *ripe*: immediate, pressing.

*wants*: needs.

66-7. *Is he...possessed*: Is he aware yet of the  
amount you want?

67. *would*: want.

72. *Methought*: It seems to me, I think.

73. *Upon advantage*: with interest.



Antonio

I do never use it.

Shylock

75 When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's  
sheep,—

This Jacob from our holy Abraham was,  
(As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)  
The third possessor: ay, he was the third,—

Antonio

And what of him? did he take interest?

Shylock

80 No, not take interest; not, as you would say,  
Directly interest; mark what Jacob did.  
When Laban and himself were compromised  
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and  
pied  
Should fall as Jacob's hire.

85 This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:  
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Antonio

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;  
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of  
heaven.

90 Was this inserted to make interest good?  
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

89-90. It was controlled and shaped by the hand of God.  
Was this mentioned in order to justify charging of  
interest?

91. *ewes and rams*: ... that multiply.

74. *I do...it*: I have never done it.

75. *grazed*: led out to pasture.

76. Abraham was the founder of the  
Jewish race. Isaac was his son and  
Jacob was the grandson of Abraham.

77. *wrought*: schemed.

78. *The third possessor*: Jacob was third  
in the line of heirs to family estates.  
The first one being Abraham and the  
second, Isaac. Jacob should not have  
been the heir, since he was younger  
than his brother Esau. But Jacob's  
mother played a trick to have Jacob  
made Isaac's heir.

82. *compromised*: agreed.

83. *eanlings*: new-born lambs.

*streak'd and pied*: were with fleeces of  
two colours.

81-4. **Note**: A reference is made to the  
following story in the Bible. Jacob,  
son of Isaac, went to serve under  
his uncle Laban. An agreement was  
made between Jacob and Laban  
that the former should receive for  
his services the lambs which were  
born with spots or stripes. During  
the breeding season Jacob placed  
wooden rods in such a position that  
the shadows of the rods could fall  
on the sheep. By this means Jacob is  
said to have influenced the sheep so  
much that almost all the lambs were  
born spotted or striped, and thus  
they became the property of Jacob.

84. *fall...hire*: be counted as Jacob's  
wages.

85. *thrive*: succeed.

86. *thrift*: profit.

87. *This...for*: This was an enterprise for  
which Jacob worked (as a servant).

88. *A thing...pass*: it was a thing which his  
power could not cause to happen.

What should I say to you? Should I not say,  
 "Hath a dog money? is it possible  
 A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" or  
 120 Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,  
 With bated breath and whispering humbleness,  
 Say this,—  
 "Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;  
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time  
 125 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies  
 I'll lend you thus much moneys"?

**Antonio**

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

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

**Shylock**

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

140 This is kind I offer.

**Bassanio**

This were kindness.

141. *This were kindness*: That would indeed be kindness  
 on your part.

120. *bondman's key*: a voice like a slave.  
 121. *With bated breath*: anxiously.  
*whispering humbleness*: humble  
 whisper.

123. *Fair*: noble.

124. *spurn'd*: pushed me out. 14

125. *courtesies*: polite actions.

127. *as like*: just as likely.

131. *A breed...metal*: a product of sterile  
 metal, that is, interest.

130-1. *for when did...of his friend?*: The  
 classic example of anti-usury, i.e.  
 when did any friend take from  
 his friend a profit on a loan of  
 unproductive money? 1

133-4. *Who if...penalty*: From whom, if he  
 defaults, you can, without guilt, take  
 your penalty.

135. *Why...storm!*: See, how you have  
 become angry!

137. *shames*: insult.

*stain'd*: disgraced.

138. *Supply...wants*: supply what you need  
 now.

*doit*: a small insignificant sum  
 (A doit was a small Dutch coin).

139. *usance*: interest.

140. *This is...offer*: (i) It is kindness that I  
 offer.

(ii) Kind is used as in the sentence  
*A man likes the company of his own  
 kind*. Thus Shylock means, "This is  
 your system of loan which I offer  
 without any interest."

(iii) Kind also has the usage: to pay a  
 man in kind which means to return  
 similar treatment to him. So Shylock  
 may have thought here that he intends  
 to repay Antonio with insults similar  
 to those he had received himself.



**Shylock** This kindness will I show;

Go with me to a notary, seal me there  
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,

- 145 If you repay me not on such a day,  
In such a place, such sum or sums as are  
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit  
Be nominated for an equal pound  
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken  
150 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

**Antonio**

Content, i'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 in my necessity.

**Antonio**

- 155 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,  
160 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect  
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me  
this;

If he should break his day, what should I gain  
By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man

- 165 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,  
As flesh of muttens, beefs, or goats. I say,  
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:  
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

142. *This kindness...show*: perhaps here it means, "I shall return similar treatment."

143. *notary*: a solicitor; a legal officer.  
*seal me*: sign for me.

144. *single*: a bond undertaken by one man, i.e., it was signed by Antonio alone.

*merry sport*: for a pleasant joke.

147. *condition*: terms of the contract.  
*forfeit*: penalty.

148. *Be nominated*: named as, assessed at.  
*equal*: exactly a pound (from the scales being equally balanced when the one pound weight is in the one and the flesh in the other.) Note the irony Shylock himself emphasises the condition 'an exact pound.'

151. *Content, i'faith*: I am indeed content.

153. *seal*: sign, finalise.

154. *I'll rather...necessity*: I would rather remain in my present state of need.

158. *Of thrice three times*: nine times, many times.

160. *hard*: tough.

*suspect*: be suspicious of.

162. *break his day*: break his promise to pay on a certain day.

163. *exaction*: taking.

165. *estimable*: valuable.

167. *buy*: gain.

168. *take*: accept.

*so*: all right.

*adieu*: goodbye.

And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Antonio

170 Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shylock

'Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;  
Give him direction for this merry bond;  
And I will go and purse the ducats straight;  
See to my house, left in the fearful guard

175 Of an unthrifty knave, and presently  
I'll be with you.

Antonio

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

Bassanio

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

Antonio

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

[Exeunt]



169. *And...me not*: But do not be unjust to me for offering this act of love.

171. *notary's*: notary's office.

172. *direction for*: instructions about.  
*merry*: humorous.

173. *purse the ducats straight*: at once make ready the ducats in a purse.  
*straight*: at once.

174. *See...house*: ensure that my house is safe.

*fearful guard*: left in the unsafe care.

175. *unthrifty knave*: irresponsible servant.  
*presently*: soon.

177. *Hie thee*: make haste.

178. *Hebrew*: 'The Jew (Shylock).

179. *fair terms...mind*: apparently kind words offered by a villain's mind.

180. *dismay*: reason for fear.