

Antonio's MAN
CLERK

Magnificoes of Venice, officers of the Court of Justice, a
gaoler, musicians, servants and other attendants

For Salario, see p. 105.

Enter Antonio, Salerio, and Solanio
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,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

SALERIO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean,
There where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signors 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.

SOLANIO

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

Audition
Piece

⇒ select sections
for

Antonio

Bassanio

Solanio

Salerio (if vacant)

* Plus any

other roles
(here in)

which

become

vacant on

or before

audition

Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALERIO

My wind cooling my broth

Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.

I should not see the sandy hour-glass run

But I should think of shallows and of flats,

And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,

Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs

To kiss her burial. Should I go to church

30 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,

Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,

And in a word, but even now worth this,

And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought

To think on this, and shall I lack the thought

That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?

But tell not me; I know Antonio

40 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

Upon the fortune of this present year.

Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SOLANIO

Why then you are in love.

ANTONIO

Fie, 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, 50
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:

Some that will evermore peep through their eyes

And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper,

And other of such vinegar aspect

That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile

Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano

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 me. 60

ANTONIO

Your worth is very dear in my regard.

I take it your own business calls on you,

And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

SALERIO

Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say, when?

You grow exceeding strange. Must it be so?

SALERIO

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Exeunt Salerio and Solanio

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. 70

BASSANIO

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO

You look not well, Signor 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,
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO

Let me play the fool;

80 With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man whose blood is warm within
Sit, like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

Sleep when he wakes? And creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,
I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks:

90 There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain

With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark.'

O my Antonio, I do know of these

100 That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when I am very sure
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which hearing them would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time.

But fish not with this melancholy bait
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LORENZO

Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time.
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

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 a talker for this gear.

GRATIANO

Thanks i' faith; for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo

ANTONIO Is that anything 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 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,
That you today promised to tell me of.

BASSANIO

120 '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.
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,
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.

ANTONIO

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

BASSANIO

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

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

BASSANIO

In Belmont is a lady richly left,

And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.

Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Caro's daughter, Brutus' Portia;

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strond,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.

170

O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift
That I should questionless be fortunate.

ANTONIO

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea,
Neither have I money, nor commodity
To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do,
That shall be racked 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

180

Enter Portia with her waiting-woman, Nerissa
PORTIA By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is awearied
of this great world.

I.2

NERISSA You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries
were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are;
and yet for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with
too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean

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

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 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 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 return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

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

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 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

How now, what news?

SERVINGMAN The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave, and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the Prince his master will be here 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 of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shive me than wive me. Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before. Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

Exeunt

Enter Bassanio with Shylock the Jew

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.

BASSANIO May you stead 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.

16

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE : 1.3

SHYLOCK Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO Have you heard any imputation 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. Yet his means are in supposition. He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO 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?

30 BASSANIO If it please you to dine with us.

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

Enter Antonio

BASSANIO

This is Signor Antonio.

SHYLOCK (*aside*)

How like a fawning publican he looks.

I hate him for he is a Christian;

40 But more, for that in low simplicity

He lends out money gratis and brings down

The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

17

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE : 1.3

If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

He hates our sacred nation and he rails

Even there where merchants most do congregate

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

Which he calls interest. Cursèd be my tribe

If I forgive him.

BASSANIO Shylock, do you hear?

SHYLOCK

I am debating of my present store,

And by the near guess of my memory

I cannot instantly raise up the gross

Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?

Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,

Will furnish me. But soft, how many months

Do you desire? (*To Antonio*) Rest you fair, good signor!

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANTONIO

Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow

By taking nor by giving of excess,

Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend,

I'll break a custom. (*To Bassanio*) Is he yet possessed

How much ye would?

60

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. And let me see; but hear you,

Methoughts you said you neither lend nor borrow

Upon advantage.

ANTONIO I do never use it.

SHYLOCK

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep —

70 This Jacob from our holy Abram 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 streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes being rank,
In end of autumn turned to the rams;
And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skilful shepherd peeled me certain wands,
And in the doing of the deed of kind
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving, did in eaning time
Fall parti-coloured lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest,
And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.

ANTONIO

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

SHYLOCK

I cannot tell, I make it bred as fast.
But note me, signor --

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 apple rotten at the heart.
O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

SHYLOCK

100 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 to you?

SHYLOCK

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

But lend it rather to thine enemy,

Who if he break, thou mayst with better face

Exact the penalty.

SHYLOCK

Why look you, how you storm!

I would be friends with you and have your love,

Forget the shames that you have stained me with,

Supply your present wants, and take no doer

Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.

This is kind I offer.

BASSANIO

This were kindness.

SHYLOCK

This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your single bond, and, in a merry sport,

If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are

Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit

Be nominated for an equal pound

Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

In what part of your body pleaseh 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 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

The thoughts of others! Pray you tell me this:

If he should break his day, what should I gain

By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man

Is not so estimable, profitable neither,

As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say

To buy his favour I extend this friendship.

If he will take it, so; if not, adieu.

And for my love I pray you wrong me not.

ANTONIO

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

Of an unthrifty knave, and presently

I'll be with you.

Exit

ANTONIO

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

BASSANIO

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

ANTONIO

Come on. In this there can be no dismay;

My ships come home a month before the day. *Exeunt*