

II. I *Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco, a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four followers according to, with Portia, Nerissa, and their train*

MOROCCO

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

PORTIA

In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes.
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
But if my father had not scanted me,
And hedged me by his wit to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair
As any corner I have looked on yet
For 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
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solymán,
I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,

Audition Piece

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Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when 'a roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But alas the while,
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand!

So is Alcides beaten by his page,
And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
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.

MOROCCO

Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

PORTIA First, forward to the temple; after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

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

Flourish of cornets. Exeunt

II. 2 *Enter Launcelot Gobbo, alone*
From here...

LAUNCELOT Certainly my conscience will serve me to run
from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and
tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo,
good Launcelot,' or 'Good Gobbo,' or 'Good Launcelot
Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My con-
science says, 'No, take heed, honest Launcelot, take
heed, honest Gobbo,' or as aforesaid, 'Honest Launcelot
Gobbo, do not run, scorn running with thy heels.' Well,

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Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage. Therefore be advised.

MOROCCO

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PORTIA First, forward to the temple; after dinner
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the most courageous fiend bids me pack. 'Fia!' says the fiend; 'Away!' says the fiend. 'For the heavens, 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 Launcelot', being an honest man's son or rather an honest woman's son, for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste — well, my conscience says, 'Launcelot, 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, is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and in my conscience, my conscience is but 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?

LAUNCELOT (*aside*) O heavens, this is my true-begotten father who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel-blind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

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

LAUNCELOT Turn up on 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, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

GOBBO By God's sonries, 'twill be a hard way to hitt Can you tell me whether one Launcelot that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

LAUNCELOT Talk you of young Master Launcelot? (*aside*) Mark me now, now will I raise the waters.—Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

GOBBO No master, 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.

LAUNCELOT Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of

so

GOBBO Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

LAUNCELOT But I pray you, ergo old man, ergo I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot.

GOBBO Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

LAUNCELOT Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father, for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three 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.

LAUNCELOT Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, 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?

LAUNCELOT Do you not know me, father?

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

LAUNCELOT Nay, indeed if you had your eyes you might fail of the knowing me; it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. (*He kneels*) Give 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 Launcelot my boy.