

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE by “William Shakespeare”
A Contemporary English Version,
Emended and Rectified with Notes and Commentary
by Jonathan Star

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE OF VENICE

PRINCE OF MOROCCO (MOROCHO-Q1, MOROCHUS-Q1)

PRINCE OF ARRAGON (ARAGON)

} *suitors to Portia*

ANTONIO (ANTHONIO-Q1), *a merchant of Venice, friend of Bassanio*

BASSANIO, *winner of Portia*

LEONARDO, *a servant to Bassanio*

GRATZIANO (GRATIANO-Q1, GRAZIANO), *friend of Bassanio, with Nerissa*

LORENZO (LORENZO), *friend of Gratziano, with Jessica*

SALARINO

SALANIO-Q1 (SOLANIO-Q1)

SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice*

|
| *friends of Antonio*
|

SHYLOCK (SHYLOCKE-Q1) *a Jewish money-lender*

JESSICA, *daughter of Shylock, with Lorenzo*

TUBAL (TUBALL-Q1), *a Jew, friend of Shylock*

LAUNCELET -Q1 (LANCELET-Q2, LAUNCELOT, LANCELOT), *a fool, servant to Shylock*

OLD GOBBO (GOBBO), *father to Launcelet*

PORTIA, *an heiress of Belmont*

NERISSA, *her waiting-woman*

BALTHASAR-Q1 (BALTHAZAR)

STEPHANO (STEFANO)

|
| *servants of Portia*

MESSENGER, *for Portia*

SERVANT (SERVINGMAN), *for Portia*

MAN, *messenger for Antonio*

MESSENGER, *for Jessica*

*Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice,
a Jailor, Servants and other Attendants*

[See Additional Notes, 0.1.1, for a further discussion on the names]

Editions

Editions and Printing Dates:

First Quarto (Q1), 1600. *The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice*.

Second Quarto (Q2), 1619. *The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice*.

Third Quarto (Q3), 1637. *The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice*.

First Folio (F1), 1623; Second Folio (F2), 1632; Third Folio (F3), 1663; Fourth Folio (F4), 1685

Punctuation Key

Punctuation Key:

a) All line numbering and text references generally follow *The Merchant of Venice*, Oxford Edition, edited by Jay L. Halio, 1993.

b) Text found within {special brackets} is a reference to the text as found in Q1.

c) Text which follows ‘ / ’ or ‘ // ’ indicates alternative renderings.

d) Words found within < single brackets > indicate text which was not found in the original yet which was suggested by, or which clarifies, the original. Words found within << double brackets >> indicate text which has been added to the original and which was not indicated nor suggested by the original text.

e) Text found within [open square brackets] was not found in the original but is directly indicated by the original.

f) Text found within [brackets] indicate text which is found in the original but which is suspect.

g) An arrow ‘ > ’ indicates a commentary on the text

ACT ONE - Scene One (1.1)

Venice. Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio

[added text]

⟨—Antonio ¹

I know this hatred mocks^o all Christian virtue

/ hate befouls / hatred fouls

But they I loathe: their very sight abhors me.²

They are^o but vile infractions^o of nature,

/ They're none // infracts

A plague on all that is righteous and good.³

And the contracts they use to loan out money,⁴

/ they make to ply their loans

Made 'neath the guile of friendship and trust⁵

/ guise of kindness and friendship

Are none but instruments of fell deceit,

And sordid^o means to fetch^o another's ruin.⁶

/ wretched // bring

They would have men sign bonds to borrow money,⁷

And if the sums are^o not repaid on time

/ loan is

Then, as forfeit, they would take everything;

All that the man has earned in his lifetime⁸

Would come to naught and end in tearful ruin.⁹

'Tis an obscene,^o despised greed they show—¹⁰

/ It is a foul

These heartless usurers.¹¹ There is a place^o

/ There's a special place

In hell made just^o for them.¹²

/ reserved

1. These opening lines of Antonio are not found in the original play and were added to focus and clarify the central conflict of the play (between Antonio and Shylock) which is principally over usury, not religion. In the original we find Antonio musing over his serious and concerned demeanor (or "sadness") yet such a theme has no direct relevance to the plot nor does it set up a context for understanding the action of play. [To understand usury as it was viewed in Elizabethan England, see Additional Note, 1.1.0]

2. / But I am sickened by their very sight

3. / A plague afflicting the goodness of man / A plague upon the righteousness of man / A plague afflicting the spirit of man / A plague destroying the very heart of man / A plague that ravages the heart of man / A plague that crushes (/ destroys / ruins / shatters) the spirit of man / That which destroys the righteousness of man

4. / And all their contracts, listing penalties / And all the loans they make with forfeitures

5. / Made with a show of kindness and of friendship / Made under pretense of kindness and friendship / With shows of kindness and seeming friendship

6. / Are none but fell deceit and thievery

7. Option, add line: (Taking a loan beyond their means to pay,)

8. / All one has worked for and gained in his life / All that a man has made and gained in life / All that a man has gained in years of work

9. / Would soon come to a sad and ruinous end // Would end in sorrow, pain, and tearful ruin / Would end in sadness and a tearful ruin / Would come to sadness and ruin in the end.

10. / 'Tis a greed most obscene and despicable / Showing a greed obscene and despicable / It is a show of greed, gross and despicable

11. / They but entrap those who are most desperate:
Having them sign a bond to borrow money
For which they cannot repay, then as forfeit,
And after great despair, all that these men have
Is taken, all they have worked for is lost;
All is but gone to these heartless usurers.

12. / . . . and gained in life | Is lost—but gone to these heartless usurers. |
'Tis an obscene, despised greed they show.

—Salanio

Those damnèd° Jews.

/ cursèd

—Antonio

No, 'tis no Jewish thing this usury—°

/ 'Tis not a Jewish thing, this usury, no—

'Tis but a godless thing;¹³ a cursèd° thing,

/ godless / damnèd

An aberration felling Jew and gentile—°

/ A thing bereft of all humanity

A wretched thing. Enough of my complaints, °¹⁴

/ But enough of my moaning,

You know them° well.

/ it

—Salarino

And so we do, Antonio,

But here this face so grave, 'tis not a sight°

/ thing / face

We know so well.° Why look ye so, my friend? ¹⁵ >>

/ That we know well / We often see

—Antonio ¹⁶

In sooth,° I know not why I am so somber.° ¹⁷

/ truth // {sad} / grave

[It wearies me, I know° it wearies you;] ¹⁸

{you say} / I think / it must

Yet how I caught it, found it, or came by it,

{But}

What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,

13. / 'Tis more a foul disease

14. / But oft you've heard me moan,° /my grievance

15. / But here this face so sad, we know not well. | Why look ye so, my friend; what has got you?

/ But here this face so saddened, 'tis a sight | We know not well. Why look ye so, my friend?

/ But here this face so sad, 'tis not a sight | We know. Why look ye so, my friend? Why so?

16. The original play begins here, with Antonio talking about his sad and worrisome state. The play opens *in media res*, in the middle of an ongoing conversation between Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio, where Antonio is answering a question that was asked before the action of the play begins.

17. The term *sad* generally means grave, serious, or concerned. The commiserating images supplied by Salarino and Salanio (*your mind is tossing on the ocean*) suggest that Antonio's state resembles some kind of uneasiness or worry rather than sadness or depression. In all of this we never discover why Antonio is so grave or concerned—is it his nature to be grave (as later suggested by himself) or has his concern been brought about by some recent event? In either case, the issue of Antonio's grave nature has no bearing on the play nor does it make any further appearance. Antonio's talk of 'sadness' (or concern) could simply be a tool which allows the Sals to describe the grandeur of Antonio's sea ventures. Some commentators hold that the early talk of 'sadness' is meant to present a sense of foreboding but the jovial way that the subject is approached precludes this. [See Additional Note, 1.1.1] [For a rectification of this scene, as it may have appeared in an earlier draft, see Appendix].

18. {It wearies me, you say it wearies you}

As it stands, this line is somewhat misplaced and may be an appendage from an earlier draft, where the opening conversation was between Antonio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo, and where this line was originally voiced by Gratiano. This lines suggest that Antonio has spoken about his serious nature on numerous occasions, so much so that it wearies him (talking about it) and it wearies Salarino (and Salanio) upon hearing it. The line (as it stands in the original) is also questionable, since Antonio's sadness seems to be something newly experienced by the Sals, and not something they could have grown weary of. In addition, the Sals, who are unmitigated supporters of Antonio, would never have told Antonio that they were weary of hearing about his concerns.

I think: {you say} I hear, I know, I believe, I'm sure. This line (and especially the reference to *you say*) is most likely a remnant from a prior draft of the play where it opened, *in media res*, with Antonio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo (and not with Salarino and Salanio.) Hence, the familiar and history-based phrase, *you say*, was likely directed to Gratiano (as a singular)—a person who was familiar with Antonio's sad musings, and a person who would have told Antonio that he (Gratiano) was weary of hearing about Antonio's sadness. As neither Salarino nor Salanio have heard much about Antonio's sadness in the past—and as neither are so chummy and bold as to tell Antonio they are weary of hearing about it—neither would have made such a comment. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.2]

⟨And why it lingers on⟩¹⁹ I've yet to learn.^o
 [And such a want-wit graveness^o makes of me]
 [That I have much ado to know myself.]²⁰

/ And why it holds me so {I am to learn}
 {sadness}

—Salarino

Your mind is tossing on the ocean.²¹

There [*pointing*] are your argosies^o with portly sails—

/ grand vessels

Streaming^o upon the wave^o like proud maestros^{o22}

/ Moving {flood} / sea

Or like the grand displays of a sea pageant.²³

See your ships rise above^o the smaller boats^{o24}

{overpeer} // petty boats

That curtsy^o to them in awe and reverence²⁵

/ bow down / prostrate

As they fly by with their grand, woven wings.²⁶

⟨Ah, what a sight it is!⟩^o

/ to see

—Salanio

Believe me, sir,

Were I involved in ventures of such risk^o²⁷

{such ventures abroad}

The better part of my concerns would rest^o

{affections would}

Upon^o my hopes^o abroad. And everyday^o²⁸

/ Within // ships

I'd toss the grass^o to know where blows the wind,^o²⁹

/ which way the winds blows

And peer^o in maps for ports and piers and roads—

/ Peering

19. ⟨**And why it lingers on**⟩ / And why is has (/grips) me so / And why it doth remain / And why I hold it so

The line found in Q1 (*I am to learn*) is truncated, containing only two iambs (feet), as opposed to the usual five—i.e., four syllables as opposed to ten. It is also missing a connector, such as 'and.' Thus, the line as it appears is likely an error, and was not intended by the author. This short line could result from a smudge mark, rendering the text unreadable or some other such error. [For theories about this truncated line, See Additional Notes, 1.1.5]

20. There are several anomalies with respect to Antonio's opening lines, including the words 'you say' [2], the truncated line 5, and the repetitive and unsupported content of lines 6 and 7. Clearly these later two lines [6-7] are orphaned, repeat the sentiment of the previous lines, and weaken the overall import of the passage. Due to their prominent position in the original play (appearing in the opening passage), and being that they stand rather harmless, they could remain; being that they weaken the passage, may have found their way into the text by error—and in context of the emended opening about usury—these lines should be deleted. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.6]

21. / Your mind does toss like ships upon the wave

22. {Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood} / Like proud magnificoes^o upon^o the wave,

burghers: wealthy Venetians, rich citizens

23. {Or as it were the pageants of the sea} / Or like the grand water-floats of a pageant

/ Or like the festive pageants of the sea

pageants of the sea: floats and displays that were used on ships, as part of a festive pageantry held on the water. Pageants, like modern-day floats used in a parade, refer to large displays (such as castles, ships, or other staged figures) that were wheeled about the streets in ancient shows or pageants, or ships that provided such displays.

24. {Do overpeer the petty traffickers} / Where they but dwarf the petty traffickers

overpeer: peer over, look down on, tower above

petty traffickers: / petty trading ships / petty trade vessels / smaller merchant ship / smaller trading ships

25. {That curtsy to them, do them reverence} / That come to lower their topsails in reverence / That do but bow to them in utter reverence / And moving them to curtsy low in reverence / Impelling them to bow in awe reverence

cursy (Q1 = **cursie**) / **curtsy:** bow down. Refers to the image of: a) small ships that bob around in the wake of a passing argosy, which seemingly (and impelled by the wake) bow down or curtsy to these larger ships, or b) small cargo ships which would lower their topmasts as a sign of respect at the passing of a much larger ship. In both cases, there a show of reverence, akin to a tradesman bowing to a passing dignitary of higher rank

26. **woven wing:** The large sails on Antonio's ships are likened to the wings of flying bird (for their speed) or to the 'billowing splendor' of the clothes worn by wealthy burghers.

27. / Were all my wealth involved in such ventures

28. {I should be still} / Each day I'd be

still: always

29. {Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind}

And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my enterprise,^o no doubt,
 Would bring concern.^o ³⁰

/ undertaking / venture, there's no
 {Would make me sad}

—Salarino ³¹ My breath,^o cooling my broth,^o
 Would blow me to a shiver^o when I thought
 What harm a wind, too great, might do at sea.
 Each time I saw the sandy hour-glass run,
 I'd think of shallow flats and sandy banks,
 And see my ship, the *Andrew*,^o docked in sand, ³²
 With her top-sail a-hung^o below her ribs—^o
 Kissing her grave just like^o a burial shroud. ³³ ³⁴
 And should I go to church, instead of praying,
 I'd see the holy edifice of stone
 And straightaway bethink of dang'rous rocks^o
 Which, by a mere touch^o of my vessel's side,
 Would spread her cache^o of spice upon the wave,^o ³⁵
 And robe the roaring waters with her silk.
 And thus, in sum, reduce my worth^o to naught.^o
 Had I the mind^o to think on all of this,
 And should I think on all that could go wrong,
 I, too, would have a mind o'erly concerned .^o ³⁶
 So tell me not: I know Antonio
 Is grave^o to think upon^o his parlous ventures.^o ³⁷

{wind} / soup
 {an ague} / a frenzy / into a chill

/ my wealthy *Andrew*
 / hanging / fallen // hull
 / as would

/ me of the rocks
 / gentle stroke
 / prize // {stream} / sea

/ wealth // nothing
 / Should I have thoughts

{o'ercome by sadness}

{sad} // about // {merchandise} / risky ventures

30. {Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt | Would make me sad.}

/Misfortune to my ventures would, no doubt | But make me sad

31. By this description, and the preceding ones, we see that Salarino and Salanio are well-versed in the jargon of merchants, and both appear to be involved in the business of trade, as is Antonio.

32. {And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,}

/ And how my ship, the *Andrew*, rife with wealth, | Might fall a-ground and die a woeful^o death / piteous

33. / Laid out upon her burial like a shroud / Just like a shroud placed upon her grave / A shroud that kisses the ground of her burial / And now to kiss the ground wherein she lies

34. {Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs | To kiss her burial}

vailing: lowering, bringing down

ribs: the hull of a ship, made up of wooden ribs or center beams

The image here is that of a ship overturned, with her top-sails now lower than her hull; the top-sails are now kissing the ground, which is the place of the ship's burial (and the once proud sails have now become its burial shroud. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.28]

35. / Would scatter all her spices on the wave

36. / I, too, would have a mind that's fraught with sadness^o

/ besieged by worry / filled with distress / sad and distraught

Salarino (and Salanio) are describing Antonio's risky business ventures, which would elicit concern, worry, agitation, stress, etc. rather than sadness. (Thus, 'sadness' in this context should be taken to mean, 'worry, concern, distress,' etc.) This talk of Antonio's sadness seems to be an import of an earlier draft of the play, where the play initially opened with Antonio talking with Gratziano and Lorenzo about his (Antonio's) sad nature. Later in the scene we see the same conversation about Antonio's sadness repeated with Gratziano—and this relates to Antonio's sad and depressed nature, and not a new-arising sadness, related to a specific conditions (as is the subject of the conversation with Salarino and Salanio).

37. / Is worried when he thinks upon his ventures

These two lines are superfluous and appear too bold for either Salarino or Salanio—sounding more like something Gratziano would say. These lines may be vestiges of an earlier draft which involved a conversation between Antonio and Gratziano. Thus, these two lines could be deleted without any a meaningful loss and perhaps

—Antonio

Believe me—no. I thank my fortune for it:

My ventures are not in one vessel^o trusted,

{bottom}

Nor in one place, nor does my wealth depend^o

{nor is my whole estate}

Upon the fortune of this present year.

Therefore, my ventures do not make me somber.^o

{makes me not sad}

—Salanio

Why then, you are in love.

—Antonio

Nay, nay!

{Fie, fie} / No, no

—Salanio³⁸

Not in love neither? Then you must be somber³⁹

/ Then say you are sad

Because you are not destined^o to be merry;

/ fated / fashioned / humoured

For 'twere^o as easy now for you to laugh,

/ 'Twould be

And leap,^o and say that you are merry, only

/ dance

Because you are not sad. By the two faces

Of Janus—one which laughs and one which cries—^{40 41}

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:^o

/ day

Some that will smile so much their eyes have shut,^{o 42}

/ are half-shut

And laugh like parrots⁴³ when all else are crying.^o

/ at a mournful tune⁴⁴

And others so acerbic^o in their mode⁴⁵

/ others be so gloomy

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

with a slight improvement in the flow of the text.

38. Previously, Antonio's sadness was thought to be venture-related, then love-related—both causes of which Antonio denied. Here Salanio is surmising that Antonio must be sad because it is his nature to be sad. This philosophical address of Antonio sad nature is repeated later in the scene by Gratziano. It is likely, that in an earlier draft, Salanio's words were mouthed by Lorenzo (or possibly Gratziano) and herein transposed (somewhat imperfectly) to Salanio. Salanio (and Salarino) seem to know a lot about Antonio's business venture but little about his sad nature. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.47]

39. / Neither in love? Ah, then you must be sad

40. {Now, by two-headed Janus}

Janus: the Roman god of exits and entrances, who has two faces (not two heads) which looks in opposite directions; one face is smiling and the other is frowning. One god, having two opposite faces, suggests the singular root of both comedy and tragedy.

41. / Now, by Janus's | Two faces, one which laughs and one which cries

/ But here we see | Two sides of Janus—one laughing, one crying

/ But here are Janus' | Two heads, that face in opposite directions

42. {some that will evermore peep through their eyes}

This line refers to people who smile so much so that their cheek muscles have atrophied and now keep their eyes half-shut—and now they can only peep through them. The image, akin to the laughing face of Janus, is of a person smiling so much that it looks as if he is wearing the mask of a smiling face.

/ Some that can barely see through so much smiling / Some that e'er peep through eyes half-shut by smiling

43. **laugh like parrots:** a) refers to the parrot who by rote response laughs at everything, even a mournful tune.

Hence, laughing like a parrot refers to one who laughs at everything; one who is always laughing. b) implies a loud screeching laughter rather than the actual laughter of a parrot.

44. {at a bagpiper} The music of a bagpipe was considered woeful, which should bring on tears, not laughter.

45. / And there be others of such gloomy aspect (/sullen mode) / And others of such a vinegary aspect (/ sullen temperament) / And there be others of such sour mode / And there are others, so sour and tart

Though stern-browed Nestor swear the jest be funny.⁴⁶

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratziano.

Here comes Bassanio, your most favored^o friend,^o / dearest of friends {most noble kinsman}
With Gratziano and Lorenzo. Farewell,
We leave you now with better company.

—Salarino

I^o would have stayed until I^o made you merry, / we
If worthier friends had not prevented me.^o / us

—Antonio

⟨Nay Salarino—and my friend Salanio—⟩⁴⁷
Your worth is very dear in my regard.^o / esteem
I take it your own business calls you,
And you embrace th'occasion^o to depart. / the moment

—Salarino [*to those approaching*]

Good morrow, my good lords.^o / Good day, good gentlemen

—Bassanio [*also in greeting*]

Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say when?
You've become strangers. Must it be that way? ⁴⁸

—Salanio ⁴⁹

We'll make our leisure time^o fit in with^o yours. ⁵⁰ {leisures} / free time {to attend on}

—Lorenzo

My friend^o Bassanio, here^o you have found Antonio. {lord} {since}

46. {Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable}

Nestor: a Greek officer of the *Iliad*, famous for his soberness and gravity.

/ Not even at a jest that able to rouse | Stern-browed Nestor to rambunctious laughter.

/ Not even at a joke that could bestir | The somber Nestor into drunken laughter.

/ E'en at a jest that would rouse stern-browed | Nestor into a most rambunctious laughter.

47. The name of these two characters, Salarino and Salanio, are never mentioned in the play even though it is customary to name a character upon his entrance or during the first scene in which he appears. The failure to ever mention the names of these minor but significant characters may be because these they were not conceived as part of the original draft but added as part of a later draft. Thus, throughout the play, these two characters remain nameless. To rectify this omission, a line which includes both their names, could be added here.

48. {You grow exceedingly strange. Must it be so?}

exceedingly strange: (a) like strangers, (b) strange in your ways, i.e., too reserved, too serious, not willing to get together for a laugh.

Must it be so?: (a) i.e., it should not be that way and we must do something about it—such as get together for a laugh. (b) must you be so serious and not willing to laugh with us.

49. In Q1 the speech heading reads *Sal.* which is most often attributed to *Salarino*. Due to the confusion in abbreviations found in Q1, and because Salarino and Salanio often talk in tandem, this line is attributed to *Salanio*.

50. This exchange seems more of a gratuitous gesture than an actual intention to get together. We sense a cordial distance between Bassanio and Salarino-Salanio, as they all seek Antonio's attention. Bassanio may view the Sals as fans, supporters, and 'lesser friends' of Antonio.

[*aside, to Salarino*]
 We, too, will leave soon,[°] but at dinner time,[°]
 I pray you, have[°] in mind where we must meet.⁵¹ / bear

— Salarino⁵²
 We will not fail you.

—Salanio 〈We'll be there as planned.〉

Exeunt Salarino and Salanio

—Gratziano
 You look not well, Signior Antonio;⁵³
 You care too much for the things of this world.⁵⁴
 The ones who buy this world with too much care
 Are apt to lose it for want of enjoyment.⁵⁵ / Do end up losing it for want of joy
 Believe me friend, you don't look like yourself.⁵⁶ / you're not being yourself

—Antonio
 I hold the world but as the world, Gratziano,
 A stage where every man must play a part—
 And mine's a sad[°] one. / grave

—Gratziano Let me[°] play the fool: / me
 With mirth and laughter let old smiles[°] come,[°] {wrinkles}
 And let my liver rather heat with joy[°] {wine}
 Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
 Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,[°] / veins run warm with blood
 Sit like a marble[°] statue[°] of his grandsire,⁵⁷ / granite // carving

51. The meeting Lorenzo is referring to involves the planning to steal Jessica [2.4]. This meeting involves the two Sals, not Bassanio. Hence, Lorenzo's reminder of such a meeting to Bassanio—and the assurance made in the next line by Bassanio [*I will not fail you*—as found in the original, is amiss. [See next note].

52. In the original, this line is attributed to Bassanio, and reads: 'I will not fail you' and is spoken after Salarino and Salanio have already exited. Thus Bassanio is telling Lorenzo that he (Bassanio) will not fail him (Lorenzo) and that he will be there as planned. However, there is no future plan involving Lorenzo and Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.72]

53. Some commentators suggest that the play may have initially opened here, at line 73. Gratziano's opening statement resembles that of Antonio's opening, and the discourse that follows is similar in tone to the previous conversation had with Salarino and Salanio. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.73] [See Appendix: *The Three Sallies*]

54. {You have too much respect upon the world}

55. {They lose it that do buy it with much care}

/ When too concerned about what can go wrong | You can't enjoy all the things that are right.

/ All this concern with loss does have a cost: | You can't enjoy all the great things that you have.

Gratziano is saying that one who buys life with too much care (i.e., spends too much time in worry and sadness), cannot enjoy life. In other words, things usually turn out poorly for one who is too concerned about how things will turn out.

56. {Believe me, you are marvellously changed}

/ Believe me, you are decidedly different / Believe me you look nothing like yourself / Believe me when I say, you're not yourself / Believe me, friend, you are completely changed

57. {Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster}

Sleep when he wakes, and become ill with jaundice⁵⁸ / bring about the jaundice
 By being peevish^o from morning till night? / cranky / sad-faced
 I say Antonio—I speak out of love—⁵⁹
 There are some men who show no expression, / reveal no emotion
 Their face is held in a willful stillness
 Just like the muck cov’ring^o a stagnant pond; ⁶⁰ / atop
 They hope that others will look well upon them ⁶¹
 As men of wisdom, gravity, and depth,^o ⁶² {and profound conceit}
 As who should say,^o ‘I am Sir Oracle, / Who proudly say
 And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!’
 O my Antonio, I do know of those^o {these}
 Who are reputed^o wise for saying naught, / Who are but held as
 When I am sure, if they should move to speak,
 ‘Twould almost^o dam the ears of those who listen ⁶³ / surely
 And cause their brothers to say they are fools.
 I’ll tell thee more of this another time.
 But fish not with this melancholy bait
 For e’er the worthless^o opinion of others, / For the ill-gained / unvalued
 Which one can catch^o as eas’ly as fool gudgeon—⁶⁴ / Which can be caught
 (A fish inclined will bite^o at any^o bait.) / well-known to bite // ev’ry
 Come good Lorenzo. Fare thee well for now; ^o {awhile}
 I’ll finish with my preaching^o after dinner. {end my exhortation}

—Lorenzo
 Well, we will leave you then, till dinner-time.⁶⁵
 I must be one of these same dumb wise men

58. {Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice} / creep into an illness
 / Sleep when awake and give himself an illness

jaundice: a disease related to the liver and caused by an excess of yellow bile; as such, it brings a yellowish complexion to the skin and whites of the eyes. Up until the 19th century, this disease was thought to have a psychosomatic origin. Hence, Gratiano is saying that Antonio is going to get jaundice as a result his depressed disposition (which makes him appear as though he is asleep when awake).

59. {I tell the what, Antonio— | I love thee, and ‘tis my love that speaks:}

60. {There are a sort of men whose visages | Do cream and mantle like a standing pond | And do a willful stillness entertain}

cream and mantle: cover over and mask; become pale and mask-like. This image suggests a) the algae that floats upon the surface of a stagnant pond (covering the interior of the pond), or b) the covering of cream on milk. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.90]

61. {With purpose to be dressed in an opinion}

62. {Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit} / As men of profound wisdom and insight.

gravity: authority, seriousness, weight

profound conceit: deep thinking; those who deeply contemplate the matter

63. {If they should speak, would almost dam those ears}

dam: dam, clog up, block, stop **damn:** damn, curse, foul

64. {But fish not with this melancholy bait | For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.}

fool gudgeon: gudgeon are fish which were thought to be gullible, easy believers in the bait, (and which would bite and anything). Thus they were easy to catch. Some editions use Pope’s emendation of: *fool’s gudgeon*.

opinion: the opinion that others will think you are wise because you look sad and do not open your mouth.

65. There are three direct references that the parties are going meet later for dinner [70, 104, 105], plus a response to those references [72]. Is *dinner* in these references the same as the *supper* which Bassanio has the night he leaves for Belmont or is there some other meeting indicated?

For Gratziano never lets me speak.

—Gratziano

Well, keep my company for two more years
And you'll forget the sound of your own tongue.⁶⁶

/ voice

—Antonio

Farewell. I'll grow in talk next time.⁶⁶

—Gratziano

Please do—

Silence is virtue^o in dried tongue of ox
And in craggy old maids who've got the pox.⁶⁷

/ preferred / better/ prais'ble

Exeunt Gratziano and Lorenzo

—Antonio

He speaks a great deal yet says^o not a thing.⁶⁸

/ a lot yet he says

66. {Fare you well. I'll grow a talker for this gear} / Farewell, I'll grow more of a talker next time

gear: a) discourse, talk. 'Farewell, I'll take your advice and become more of a talker (next time we meet);

b) matter, affair. 'Farewell, now that you're gone, and I'm with Bassanio, I'll become a talker—for this matter, now that there is something relevant to speak about.'

c) reason 'Farewell, 'I'll talk more (with respect to your advice) so that others do not think that I silent (for the reason you mentioned) to try and get others to think I am full of wisdom and profound understanding—which is not the case.'

67. {Thanks, i'faith, for silence is only commendable | In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.}

/ Please do, for silence is best in ox-tongue, | And in craggy old maids no longer young.

/ Please do, for silence's best in ox-tongue dried, | And in a maid too old to be a bride.

neat's tongue dried: the dried tongue of an ox, which is commendable precisely because one does not want this kind of tongue to talk—one wants it to be dead, dried, and ready to eat. (Some commentators suggest that this reference to *neat's tongue dried* may be a bawdy a reference to the dried up penis of an old man which cannot become erect—but why Gratziano would find this commendable is unclear).

not vendible: not saleable. Refers to a maid who cannot be sold (with a dowry) in the way of marriage—and thus a maid who is worthless and unsaleable. The implication is that someone who is old and unwed (and whom nobody wants) would speak with bitter and complaining words—so her silence would be welcomed. Some interpret *not vendible* as referring to a maid who is *too young* and not yet saleable (in the marketplace of marriage)—and whose talk might be witless. It seems more likely that Gratziano would commend silence in a craggy old maid (who is wont to complain) rather than in a young maid who is not yet of a marriageable age. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.112]

68. {It is that any thing now.}

/ He speaks and speaks, and yet says not a thing / He speaks a lot, yet says a lot of nothing.

This line, as it appears in Q1, is missing three syllables and does not fit the standard meter. Editors have treated this anomalous line in several ways: A) Left it as is. B) Deleted the opening 'It' and posited that the line as a question: 'Is that anything now?'—which means: 'What was all that talk about?' This renders the line somewhat intelligible, but does not correct the line structure. (This emendation was first proposed by Rowe). C) Changed *It* to *Yet*: 'Yet is that anything now?' With this emendation, Antonio is apparently referring to the newfound silence (which is being enjoyed since Gratziano, the talker, has just left). This emendation is based upon the supposition that 'Yet' was found in the original manuscript, and somehow became 'Yt' and then 'It.') All these textual contortions do not improve the line. It is most likely that the original contained a full five iambs and part of the line had become unreadable. Thus, the typesetter did his best in setting what part of the line he could read.

We find that the lines of Bassanio, which follow this one, are also corrupt in that they do not adhere to the standard meter. Hence, one possibility is that the name *Gratziano* was originally intended to be part of Antonio's line, and somehow got shifted to Bassanio. If so, the lines might have appeared as follows:

Ant. Did *Gratziano* say anything now?

Bass. He speaks an infinite deal of nothing,

Ay, more than any man in all of Venice . . .

[See Additional Notes, 1.1.113.]

—Bassanio ⁶⁹

Our Gratziano speaks an infinite

Amount of nothing,° more than any man

In all of Venice. His main point is like°

Two grains of wheat, hid in two bushels° of chaff. ^{70 71}

There you must seek all day ere you find them,

And when you have them, they're not worth the search. ⁷²

/ nonsense

/ And, his final point is

/ heaps / mounds / piles / pails

—Antonio

Well, tell me now about this same lady

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage, ⁷³

That you, today, promised to tell me of.

69. Bassanio's opening talk can be seen as a chummy elaboration upon Antonio's previous remark about Gratziano's empty talk. In Q1, these lines do not appear in meter, which is odd since all the verse preceding it and following it, are in meter. Moreover, these are the first lines uttered by our romantic hero, which, though light-hearted and playful, should, at least, be delivered in the standard meter. It could be, however, for no clear reason, that this non-metered opening by Bassanio was a deliberate attempt to first present Bassanio as somewhat awkward with his words. Most likely, however, (and consistent with Antonio's previous line, which is corrupt) this non-metered opening by Bassanio resulted from some problem with the reading of the text and not by original design. Q1 (uncorrected) reads: {*Gratziano* speaks and infinite deale of nothing more then any man in all Venice, his reasons are as two graines of wheate hid in two bushels of chaffe: you shall seeke all day ere you finde them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.}. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.118]

70. {His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff:}

his reasons: his point, his conclusions; the value of what he says

/ All of his wit are as two grains of wheat | Hid in two bushels full of worthless chaff—

71. / In all of Venice. And, his final point

Is like a grain of wheat in'a heap of chaff:

72. / He speaks an infinite deal of nothing, | More so than any man in all of Venice. | His point resembles but two grains of wheat | Hid in two bushels of chaff. You must seek | All day before you find them; and when you | Finally have them, they're not worth the search.

73. {Well, tell me now what lady is the same | To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage}

Some commentators surmise that Antonio's sadness has come about due to Bassanio's secret rendezvous with a woman. However, this conclusion is forced and unlikely. Antonio's sadness is a result of his disposition, which is confirmed by Antonio when he states that the part he has been selected to play, on the world stage, is a sad one [78-79]. Bassanio's potential love interest may have exacerbated Antonio's worrisome condition but this, too, is unlikely, since Bassanio did not even know the identity of the woman with whom Bassanio was meeting. All Antonio knew was that Bassanio was meeting with some woman, whose identity he swore to keep secret—and whom he promised to tell Antonio about (after the meeting was over). Bassanio was well aware of the nature of the meeting, and that the subject discussed involved Antonio in some way, and that is why Bassanio told Antonio about the 'secret' meeting and told him that he (Bassanio) was going to tell him about what he learned from the meeting today. (We can assume that the meeting took place yesterday, as Bassanio would not delay in telling Antonio about it—especially if Antonio's help, with respect to actuating the plan formulated during the meeting, was needed.)

Who was this lady to whom Bassanio swore to meet with in secret (and to keep the whole meeting a secret, and to keep secret the identity of the woman with whom he was meeting)? Certainly it was not Portia, as Portia would not have arranged such a meeting nor would she have any reason to meet with Bassanio. Neither was this a meeting with an irrelevant love interest—or it would not have been so secretive and Bassanio would have no reason to have discussed it with Antonio.

In the meeting we know that Bassanio learned about Portia and the lottery—yet this was not something that needed to be sealed by a vow of secrecy, as this was public knowledge. The meeting had an undisclosed purpose such that Bassanio could not even reveal the identity of the lady with whom he was meeting (for he did not know it) to his dearest friend—nor was he at liberty to tell his dearest friend anything about the meeting, nor what was discussed, nor the identity of the woman with whom he met (after he discovered her identity). All we know is that Bassanio does not talk about whom he met with—the one he promised to tell Antonio about—but only about what he learned from the meeting (which concerns Portia's situation and no other).

So, whom did he meet with and for what purpose? All indications suggest that he met with Nerissa, Portia's trusting handmaid, to discuss Portia and the lottery. He told Antonio about the meeting because as he correctly anticipated, he needed a large sum of money (from Antonio) in order to carry out the plan hatched out in the meeting. [See, Additional Notes, 1.1.120]

—Bassanio ⁷⁴

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have depleted my savings^o {disabled mine estate} ⁷⁵
By sometimes^o showing a more swelling port^o ⁷⁶ {something} / lavish style
Than my faint means could rightfully support;^o {would grant continuance}
Nor do I moan about being deprived^o {abridged} / reduced
Of^o such a noble style.^o Now my chief care ⁷⁷ / From {noble rate} / grand life-style
Is to come fully clear^o of all my debts^o {fairly off} {the great debts}
Wherein^o my years of prodigal^o spending ⁷⁸ / In which // of wastefulness and
Hath left me gagged.⁷⁹ To you, Antonio ⁸⁰
I owe the most in money, and in love,
And by your love, I am granted permission^o ⁸¹ {I have a warranty}
To unburden all^o my plans^o and purposes / To tell you all {plots}
On how to clear myself of every debt.^o ⁸² / On getting clear of all the debts I owe.

—Antonio

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,^o / tell me your plan
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,

74. Bassanio tells nothing of the woman he met with, only about his plan and his need of Antonio's help

75. Bassanio seems to be part of an aristocratic class called 'gentlemen'—a class of young, single men living off their parentage inheritance (or estate). As they do not need to work, their days are concerned with entertainment, parties, feasting, womanizing, etc.

76. {By something showing a more swelling port} / By showing off a more lavish life-style

77. / Nor do I make moan that such noble^o spending / lordly
/ Has been abridged.^o But now my chief concern / cut short

78. {Wherein my time something too prodigal}

too prodigal: too extravagant and wasteful

79. {Hath left me gaged}

gaged: a) engaged (with creditors), indebted, owing, entangled, pledged, bound

b) gaged, bound by a gag, muzzled. The implication here is that Bassanio wasted all his money on high living and feasting (*something too prodigal*) and is now gaging (choking) on this pile debt in the same way as one might gag on biting off more food than he can chew.

80. a) Is to come clear^o of all the debts amassed^o / pay off // accrued
During my time of prodigal spending,^o / improvident waste
Which now I gag upon. To you, my friend

b) Is to come fully clear from all my debts
Which I've amassed from years^o of wasteful spending
Which now I gag upon. To you, my friend

c) Is to come fully clear of the great debts
/ Wherein my time of wonton wastefulness | Hath left me now to gag upon. To you
/ Which all my time of prodigal expense | Hath left me bound and indebted. To you

81. {And from your love I have a warranty}

/ And by your love, I have a guarantee / And now your love does grant me permission

82. Here Bassanio claims: *I will unburden all my plots and purposes* yet he never discloses anything to Antonio about the woman with whom he met nor his true plot—a plot which involves winning Portia by way of a lottery not by customary courtship (as Antonio may be led to believe). Bassanio tells Antonio about Portia, and his sureness of winning her, but does not disclose the means (i.e. the lottery), nor the identity of the woman with whom he met, nor the true reason as to why he is so certain (and 'questionless') of victory. Bassanio (leading Antonio to believe his venture involves a typical courtship scenario) tells Antonio he is sure to win her because she once looked upon him favorably—but such a favorable glance has no bearing on his odds of winning her. It is irrelevant. He can only win her by choosing the right chest, through his own wit and wisdom—or through some other kind of help—and not through anything Portia's favorable glances could bestow.

Within the eye of honour, be assured⁸³
 My purse, my person,^o my extremest means^o
 Lie all unlocked to whate'er you may need.^o ⁸⁴

/ My bank, my body // and my every means
 {to your occasions}

—Bassanio

In my school days, when I had lost an arrow^o
 I shot another one in the same way,
 And in the same direction yet,^o this time,⁸⁵
 With a more careful^o and advised watch;
 Then, in my vent'ring^o for the second arrow,
 I oft found both.⁸⁶ I urge^o this childhood proof^o
 Because what follows is pure innocence:^o ⁸⁷
 I owe you much and, like a wilful youth,
 That which I owe is lost; but, if you'd please^o
 To shoot another shaft the self-same way^o
 As you did shoot the first, <and loan to me
 Again, one more amount,^o I do not doubt—
 Watching the aim with care—that I'll find both: ⁸⁸
 I will return^o the sums that now you risk,^o

{shaft}
 / but
 / and
 / much keener
 / in adventure / my searching
 / give // lesson / story
 / my plan holds the same innocence

 / were

 / another sum

 / bring back // loan / give

83. {And if it stand, as you yourself still do, | Within the eye of honour}
 > if your plan is righteous, honorable, above board, ethical, etc.

Antonio is adding a caveat here: Bassanio's plan must stand within the eye of honour. However, the plan as we know it, which involves a chance lottery (or, as we may surmise, receiving a guarantee of help from Nerissa if certain conditions are met) is not honorable. As such, Bassanio does not tell Antonio the actual plan, nor "unburden all his pots and purposes." He presents what appears to be a normal courtship scenario without any mention of the actual plot or circumstances. (When does Antonio finally learn about the true nature of the chance venture?—and what does he do when he finds out that Bassanio has borrowed the money under a false pretense?) It seems Antonio's blind love for Bassanio causes him to see past all of Bassanio's flaws, even the avoidable action of failing to cure Antonio's bond when he had means enough, and time enough, to do so. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.137]

84. Bassanio asking Antonio for money—yet again—might suggests some kind of abuse. In the past Bassanio has borrowed money from Antonio to 'show a more swelling port' and to live beyond his means—and he made no attempt to repay any of the borrowed money. Here again, knowing that most of Antonio's money is tied up in his ventures, Bassanio again comes to Antonio. It seems that Antonio loves this young man, who is high-spirited and who brings to Antonio a sense of life he is missing—so much so that he is willing to do anything for him. Bassanio is aware of Antonio's love and he uses that affection—perhaps in an innocent or careless way, as opposed to a deceitful or knowingly abusive way—for his own financial benefit. Bassanio, too, has genuine love for Antonio, so the relationship is one of mutual support and friendship.

85. {I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight | The selfsame way}
 / I shot another in the selfsame way | And in the selfsame direction, but then
 / I'd see exactly where the next one fell, | And in venturing forth I oft found both.

86. {To find the other forth, and by adventuring both, | I oft found both}
 / Then I would venture for the second shaft, | And oft found both.
 / Then, by adventuring for the second, | I oft found both.

oft: often—often, but not always; the venture had some risk and sometimes both arrows were lost.

87. Not true! The plan—which is never truly told to Antonio—is far from innocent. In the highest embodiment (and most unlikely scenario) it involves a deceitful appearance and an uncertain choice between three caskets; in the lowest embodiment (and most likely scenario) it involves "cheating" (for good reasons, no doubt) and the unfair winning of another's wealth. The plan, moreover, is somewhat mercenary; it is first proposed as a way to clear up all of Bassanio's debts rather than the defiant and risky action of someone truly in love.

88. {. . . I do not doubt, | As I will watch the aim, or to find both}
 I do not doubt. . .
 / That I will watch the aim and then find both
 / I'll watch the aim with care and find them both

And funds enough^o to clear^o my former debts.^o 89 90

/ And all I need // rest

—Antonio 91

You know me well, yet herein spend^o but time,

/ waste

To try my love with needless circumstance^o: 92

/ burdensome detail

And certainly,^o you offer me^o more wrong, 93

{And out of doubt} // do me now

In doubting^o my utmost desire to help, 94 95

/ questioning

Than if you had made waste of^o all I have.^o

/ laid waste to // my wealth

Then do but say to me^o what I should do,

/ All you need do is say

The most you know that^o may be done by me,

{That in your knowledge}

And I am pressed unto it.^o Therefore speak. 96

/ And I'll be bound to do it

—Bassanio

Alas, there is in Belmont, a lady

/ Alas, there is a lady in Belmont

Who has since come upon a countless fortune;^o 97

/ great wealth and fortune

And she is fair and, fairer than all words,^o 98

{that word}

Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes,^o from her eyes,^o

/ often // with her glance

89. / And funds^o to clear my debtors from the past. / sums

90. {Or bring your latter hazard back again | And thankfully rest debtor for the first.}

or: and

latter hazard: your present loan or risk (which I will watch more carefully than I did your earlier loans).

debtors for the first: all my previous debts, debtors from before (i.e., the first arrow which has been lost).

thankfully rest: pay back (with gratitude); put to rest, clear up

Thus, I will bring back to you all the money you risk on me now (the second arrow) and, finding this second arrow (which is all of Portia's wealth) I will be able to play off all my previous debts (which are the first arrows that I lost). [See Additional Notes, 1.1.151]

91. Antonio is so eager to accommodate Bassanio's plans, that he agrees to help him without so much as hearing it. (He assumes that Bassanio is going to woo Portia in accordance with customary acts of courtship; he hears nothing of the hazardous risk involved). From what we come to know (and something which Bassanio intimates in his proposed scheme to pay off his debts) the plan is decidedly a get-rich-quick scheme; it does not fall within the eye of honor nor Antonio's sense of Christian virtue—which is that money should be earned through the sweat of one's brow.

92. {To wind about my love with circumstance:}

wind: a) blow wind, be long-winded a) wind about, curve, meander, be indirect

wind about my love: not approach me directly; not know that I love you and will give you what you ask (without you needing to waste breath on details).

with circumstance: needless details, circumlocutions, beating around the bush

93. {And, out of doubt, you do me more wrong}

out of doubt: beyond doubt

94. {In making question of my uttermost}

/ In questioning my uttermost compliance^o / abidance

95. / And try my love^o with circuitous pleas^o / strain my heart // long-winded appeals

That one so dear as you need never make;

And now your doubt about my willingness

To give my uttermost,^o does me more wrong / you everything

96. A loose rendering:

/ All you need do is tell me what you want; | Surely you know I will give it to you, | For my heart cannot say 'no': therefore speak.

97. {In Belmont is a lady richly left}

/ Who has recently come upon a fortune

/ Who has been left a fortune beyond measure

98. / And she is fair, and even more than 'fair' / And she is fair, more fair than words can say

I did receive fair hints of her affection.⁹⁹

Her name is *Portia*—and she's worth no less^o

{and nothing undervalued}

Than Cato's daughter, Brutus' *Portia*.^o

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,

For the four winds blow in from every coast

Renowned^o suitors; and her sunny^o locks

/ golden

Adorn^o her temples like a golden fleece¹⁰⁰

{Hang on}

Which turns her country^o estate^o at Belmont

/ beautiful // gardens

Into the promising^o shores of Colchis.¹⁰¹

/ beckoning/ venturous / glistening

Where many Jasons come in quest of her.¹⁰²

O my Antonio,¹⁰³ had I but the means

To hold a rival place with one of them^o ¹⁰⁴

/ along with them

My mind portends^o me of certain success,¹⁰⁵

/ foretells

That I, without doubt, should^o be fortunate.¹⁰⁶

—Antonio

You knows't that all my fortunes are at sea;

Neither have I money, nor sufficient store^o ¹⁰⁷

{commodity} / goods to sell

To raise a present sum.^o Therefore, go forth,

/ To raise the sum right now

99. {I did receive fair speechless messages}

fair speechless messages: beautiful and affectionate glances (which silently told me of her affection)

/ I did receive her^o loving messages

/ I did receive the most adoring glances^o / loving of glances

100. **golden fleece:** Jason was the rightful heir to his father's throne but was deprived of his rights by his uncle. Thus, to settle the matter, Jason and his uncle made an agreement: if Jason could bring back the golden fleece from Colchis (which all believed was an impossible task) then Jason would be restored to his throne and gain back his kingdom. So Jason and the Argonauts traveled to the shores (strand) of Colchis to retrieve the golden fleece. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.170]

101. {Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand}

/ Which now makes Belmont like the shores of Colchis

seat: residence

Colchos' strand (also 'strand'): the shores of Colchis—the land where the Golden Fleece resided. The image evoked is of many suitors (like Jason seeking his fortune) landing upon the shores of Belmont to obtain Portia (who is likened to the golden fleece in both riches and beauty).

102. This line can be added for further clarity: (Each one in quest of her riches and beauty.)

103. This plea of Bassanio takes a few shifts: first from a personal connection to Portia, to a classical description of her beauty, and back to a more personal plea to Antonio, with *O my Antonio*.

104. Why is Bassanio impelled to borrow such a large sum of money and put his friend at risk? [See Additional Note, 1.1.174]

105. {I have a mind presages me such thrift}

/ I have a mind foretells me of success / I have a premonition of success / My mind tells me of assured success

presages: foretells, augurs, give a premonition of

such thrift: such success, such profit (which will come from Portia and her fortune)

106. {I should questionless be fortunate.}

/ That I, without a doubt, shall win her fortune / That I, without question, should win her love.

How does Bassanio come to be questionless, without doubt, about being fortunate—about winning Portia through a chance drawing of one of three chests? Is he so certain of his ability, or does something else tell him of his assured success? And what, exactly, is Bassanio questionless about?—that he will win Portia's love, or the lottery, or both? [See Additional Notes, 1.1.76]

The theory which I put forth is that Bassanio received assurance from Nerissa, in their secret meeting, that she would help him with the lottery if he could win Portia's love. That is why, in 2.9, when Nerissa hears news of an unannounced suitor from Venice, she already knows (and hopes) that it is Bassanio. She says, "*Bassanio*, Lord Love, if thy will it be!" [See Appendix: *The Lottery*]

107. / Nor have I money, nor the extra goods

Try what my credit in Venice can do;^{o 108}
 Let it be stretched^o even to the utmost^{o 109}
 To furnish^o thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go and make inquiries^o—and so will I—
 Secure the funds from wherever^o you must,
 Based on my name, my credit, or my trust.¹¹⁰

/ can bring you in Venice.
 {That shall he racked} {uttermost}
 / provide
 {Go presently inquire}
 / whomever

Exeunt

108. {Try what my credit can in Venice do.}

109. {That shall be racked, even to the uttermost}

racked: painfully stretched, as if on the rack. > Stretch my credit to the utmost; get every ducat you can.

110. {Where money is, and I no question make | To have it of my trust, or for my sake.}

and I no question make: a) and I am sure, I do not question it (that you will get the sums you seek, based upon my credit or my reputation); b) and I will not question (nor place restrictions upon) from where you get the money—get it from wherever you can

a) / Where money is: and I'm sure just the same, | You'll get it based on my credit or name

b) / Secure the funds from whomever you may | Based on my name, my worth, my trust to pay.

Portia's house at Belmont. Enter Portia with her waiting-woman, Nerissa.¹

—Portia

By my word,² Nerissa, my little³ body is aweary of this great world.

—Nerissa

You would be, sweet^o madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as are⁴ your good fortunes. And yet, for all^o I see, those who indulge^o with too much are as sick as those who starve with too little.⁵ It is the means to happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.⁶ Excess is soon accompanied by gray^o hairs, while moderation^o brings longer life.^{o 7 8}

—Portia

Wise words and well-delivered.⁹

—Nerissa

They would be better if well-followed.

—Portia

If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do,¹⁰ chapels would be^o churches¹¹ <to

1. The name *Nerissa* is derived from the Italian root, *ner*, which means dark, thus suggesting that Nerissa has dark hair or a dark complexion, while Portia's complexion is fair and her hair is blond. A waiting-woman is different from a maid: she is not a servant, and she can marry whomever she chooses. Hence, Nerissa, plays the part of a facilitator and confidant for Portia rather than a servant.

2. {by my troth} In truth / I tell you truly / In faith

3. **little body**: a figure of speech which implies that the body is small or frail in comparison to the 'great world' (rather than implying a body that is small in comparison to other bodies).

4. / in equal measure to

5. {they are as sick that surfeit too much as they that starve with nothing}
surfeit too much: live in excess, have too much, over-indulge, (eat too much)
starve with nothing: have nothing, (have too little food).

6. {It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.}
 > A large amount of happiness, therefore, comes to one who is positioned in the middle, between the extremes of life.

mean: meager, medium, small, middle-of-the road

no mean happiness: no meager happiness; no medium happiness; great happiness
 / There is much happiness, therefore, to sit between too much and too little.
 / Therefore, the means to happiness is to be seated in the mean.

7. {Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer}
 / Excess makes you old before your time, while moderation allows you to live longer.

8. **sweet**: dear / fine **all**: {aught} **indulge**: {surfeit} / glut / stuff themselves
gray hairs: {white hairs} > rapid aging, aging before one's time
moderation: {competency} / sufficiency / having what you need
brings longer life: {lives longer}

9. {Good sentences and well-pronounced}
sentences: sayings, sentiments, teachings
well-delivered: well-spoken

10. The sense here is that if doing good were as easy as knowing what were good to do—which it is not—than everyone would be doing good deeds, such as going to church and giving to the poor. This meaning could be further clarified with an added line: 'If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do, <than everyone would do good:>

11. {chapels had been churches} / chapels would become churches

hold all the worshipers) and poor men's cottages (would be as) princely palaces (from all that was given in charity).¹² It is a good preacher who follows his own sermon.¹³ I could easier teach twenty others what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise^o laws to control one's passion,^o but hot desire¹⁴ leaps o'er a cold decree. Such a hare is folly^o—the youth—that skips o'er the traps^o of good counsel—the cripple.¹⁵ But such insight is not going to find me a husband of my choosing.¹⁶ O me, the word, *choose*: I may neither chose whom I would,^o nor refuse whom I dislike.¹⁷ So is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that there is none I can chose, nor none I can refuse?^{18 19}

—Nerissa

Your father was ever virtuous,^o and holy men nearing death have good inspirations.^o Therefore, the lott'ry^o that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, wherein the one who chooses the right chest,^o by its inscription, chooses you, will no doubt, never be chosen rightly by one whom you shall not rightly love.²⁰ But what warmth is there in your affection

12. / . . . to [hold all the worshipers] chapels would become churches; [as result of all those who gave in charity] poor men's cottages would become princes' palaces. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.25]

The images of this passage could be interpreted metaphorically (as opposed to literally). Hence: If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do, then everyone would do good (and practice what they preach); by such truthful and honest actions, a meager person (a chapel) would become a person of great spiritual standing (a church) and a poor person (living in a poor man's cottage) would become princely (living in a princely palace).

13. {It is a good divine that follows his own instruction}

14. {a hot temper} / rash impulses / heated passion

15. {such a hare is madness, the youth, to skip over the meshes of good counsel, the cripple}

/ Such a rabbit is rashness, the youth, which jumps over the traps of good counsel, the cripple.

/ The rashness of youth is such a hare, that jumps over good counsel like a netted trap.

16. {But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband}

/ But all this philosophy is not of any use in my choosing a husband.

not in the fashion: of no use (in helping me chose a husband according to my wishes); not the way I am allowed to choose a husband. In sum, there is nothing Portia can do chose a husband, it all depends upon the test that her father devised. All of her wisdom, charm, and reasoning is of no use (*not in the fashion*) in helping her choose a husband—because the chose is not her own.

17. {I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike}

/ I may neither choose whom I want, nor refuse whom I don't want

18. {that I cannot chose one nor refuse none?}

I cannot choose: Portia is powerlessness; she cannot choose; she is bound by her father's conditions and yet—unlike the submissive fairy-tale princess—she is complaining about these fairy-tale conditions in a real way, secretly wishing there was something she could do to alter the situation. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.26]

19. **chapels would be:** {chapels had been}

<from all that was given in charity>: / because of the great sums given in charity / from all that were given to the needy

devise: / come up with / think up / contrive / produce / invent

to control one's passion: {for the blood} / to keep the emotions in check

that skips o'er the traps: {to skip o'er the meshes} / jumps o'er the netted traps

philosophy: {reasoning} / philosophizing / logic

not in fashion: / not of any use **I would:** / I like **none:** / the other

20. {whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you; will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall love rightly.} / Whereof, the one who chooses the right chest, in accordance with the meaning of its inscription, wins you.

his meaning: your father's meaning—i.e., the right chest, according to the meaning of its inscription.

meaning: the right chest according to the inscription on it

Nerissa is saying that the one who chooses the right chest (and wins Portia) will be one whom Portia rightly loves (and not necessarily the one who rightly loves Portia). Hence, the outcome of the lottery would be the same as if Portia had made her own choice—as she would chose herself a husband whom she rightly loved. So, the intent of the lottery is to deliver to Portia a man whom she truly loves—based upon the premise that she cannot make the choice through her own wits. Here Nerissa is assuring Portia of a positive and desired outcome of the lottery-contest in obeisance to her father's wisdom—yet, it appears, that neither Portia nor Nerissa have real faith in this method.

towards any of these princely suitors that have already come?^o 21

—Portia

I pray thee, name them once again;^o and as thou namest them, I will describe them, and, according to my description, level ^{<a guess>} at my affection. 22 {overname them}

—Nerissa

First there is the Neapolitan prince.^o 23 / prince from Naples.

—Portia

Ay, there's a colt^o indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he counts it a great appropriation to^o his own good parts^{o24} that he can shoe the horse himself. 25 I am much afeard, my lady, that his mother had a good ride upon the blacksmith! 26 27

—Neriss

Then there is the Count Palatine.

—Portia

He does nothing but frown ^{<all day>}, as if to say: 'You would rather not have me choose.' 28 ^{<He courts sadness and that is what he finds.>} He hears a merry tale yet does not smile. I fear he will prove ^{<himself to be>}^o the weeping philosopher 29 when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly^o sadness in his youth.³⁰ I would rather be married to a skull with a bone in its mouth

Later, we see, that Portia comes to rightly love Bassanio and thus she wishes that he choses the right casket—which he does. That side of the story is clear. The reverse position, however, is not so certain: does Bassanio rightly love Portia, does he selflessly love her—or is his chief aim to win her wealth.

21. **ever virtuous:** / a man of great virtue **nearing death:** {at their death}/ on their deathbed

good inspirations: / are well-inspired. **lott'ry:** / lottery / contest / drawing

chooses the right chest: {chooses his meaning} / chooses the right chest (according to the meaning of its inscription) **already come:** / since arrived?

22. {according to my description level at my affection.}

level at: guess at, infer, point to . . . the level of my response will be equal to—and on the same level as—my affection.

23. Neapolitans, during Shakespeare's time, were famed for their horsemanship.

24. / he counts it as some great virtue

25. {and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself.}

/ and he calls attention to his own good breeding that he can shoe the horse himself

/ and he is quick to endorse (/commend) his own talent in that he can shoe the horse himself

/ and he claims himself worthy of some prize (/commendation) in that he can shoe the horse himself.

26. {his mother played false with a smith}

/ his mother fooled 'round with a blacksmith / his mother had a long ride on the blacksmith

In this rather bawdy remark, Portia is saying that he loves horses, and is able to shoe his own horse, because his mother (*played false with*) slept with a blacksmith behind his father's back; thus his father was a blacksmith and not a nobleman.

27. **colt:** unruly youth **good parts:** / talent / qualities / virtue

appropriation to: / addition to / endorsement of / a prize of / a trophy to / a testament of / 'a blue ribbon' to

28. {He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, 'And you will not have me choose.'}

/ as if to say, 'I know you don't want *me* to choose.'

29. **the weeping philosopher:** refers to Heraclitus, who lived about 500 B.C., and was known to weep at the sad condition of humanity

30. / so besieged by the sadness of his youth / entombed in sadness from his early youth / so inclined to sadness since his youth.

than to either of these. God protect^o me from these two! ^{31 32}

—Nerissa

What^o say you of³³ the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

{How}

—Portia

God made him so, 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 and a frown more formidable than the Count Palatine.³⁴ As he is no one, he tries to be everyone.^{35 36} At the song of a sparrow, he dances straight-away like a puppet.³⁷ Afraid of his own shadow, he draws a sword to fence with it.³⁸ If I should marry him, I'd have to marry twenty of him to have one husband. If he would reject^o me I would return the favor;^o but should he fall madly in love with me, that I shall never requite.^{39 40}

—Nerissa

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

—Portia

You know I say nothing *to* him, for he understands me not, nor I him. He speaks^o neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and, as you would swear in court, I have a poor penny's worth of English. He is the picture of a proper man—but alas, who can converse with a picture?⁴¹ And how oddly he is suited! I think he got^o his jacket⁴² in Italy, his stockings^o in France, his round hat^o in

31. {I'd rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth} > I'd rather be dead

32. **unmannerly:** unfortunate / unbecoming / misappropriated / unbridled / unseemly > not fit for a youth
prove {**himself to be**}: {prove} / prove {himself}: / prove {to be}
protect: {defend} / rescue / save

33. / What do you think of

34. {a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine}

35. {He is every man in no man.} / As he is no one (in himself), he must try to be everyone else. / He seems to be everyone but himself.

This line is open to several interpretations: a) as he is no one (having no character of his own) he tries to be like everyone else, to take on the traits and characteristics of those around him; b) as he is no one (and feeling inferior to those around him) he tries to impress and to look better than everyone—more of a horseman than the Neapolitan, more of a sad character than the Count. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.58]

36. Add line: { But what sort of man does this make him? } / { But what manner of man is he? }

37. {If a thrassell sing, he falls straight a cap'ring}

trassell: / thrastle / thrush **falls straight:** begins straight away / starts right away

a cap'ring : merrily jumping about, gayly dancing, frolicking // convulsing in fright
/ he suddenly convulses with fear / he immediately begins shaking / he straight away begins to dance.

The exact meaning of *a cap'ring* is unclear. It could mean a) that the moment he hears the sound of a bird he begins to dance about, suggesting that he is like a puppet and dances to everyone else's tune—but not his own. (It could also be that he is so eager to show off his dancing skills, that the moment a bird sings he will take that as his opportunity to dance); b) when he hears the song of a bird, a thrastle sing, he falls to the ground in a frenzy—so lacking in manhood and courage that even the sound of bird can cause him to shiver in fright.

38. {He will fence with his own shadow}

> The possible implication of this image is that his shadow is as real as he and/or that he is afraid of his own shadow.

39. {for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.}

40. **a-shaking:** {a cap'ring} / cowers / shivers / convulses **fence:** / duel / battle / do battle
reject: {despise} **return the favor:** {forgive him} / give him the same

41. {dumb-show} / pantomime / 'someone in a silent show'

42. {doublet} / suit (double-breasted suit) / vest / > referring to a tight-fitting upper-garment

Germany, and his behavior from everywhere.^{43 44}

—Nerissa ⁴⁵

[What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?

—Portia

That he shows himself as a charitable neighbor: for he borrowed a punch in the ear from the Englishman, and swore that he would pay him back when he was able. I think the Frenchman secured^o the debt, saying he would punch the Englishman on behalf of the Scott if the Scott were unable to do so himself.] ⁴⁶

secured: / {became his surety} / underwrote

—Nerissa

How do you like the young German, nephew to the Duke of Saxony?

—Portia

With much vile⁴⁷ in the morning when he is sober; and with great vile ⁴⁸ 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. Should the worst fate that ever fell, now fall (and I ne'er see his face again), I hope I shall make do⁴⁹ to live^o without him.

to live: {to go} / to go on living

—Nerissa

If he should decide^o to choose, and should he choose the right casket—you would refuse to perform^o your father's will should you refuse to accept him.

decide: {offer}

perform: / carry out

—Portia

('Tis a fate of which I am well aware.)⁵⁰ Therefore, for fear of the worst, ⁵¹ I pray thee set a full^o glass of white^o wine on the contrary^o casket; for if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will chose it. I will do anything, Nerissa,⁵² ere I will be married to a sponge.^o

43. {and his behaviour everywhere} / from who knows where.

> He procures his manners from all those around him, just like his clothes.

behaviour: manners / mannerisms / affection

Compare Greene, *Farewell to Follie* (1591): 'I have seen an English gentleman so diffused in his suits, his doublet being the wear of Castile, his hose from Venice, his hat from France, and his cloak from Germany.'

44. **speaks:** {hath} **got:** {bought} **stockings:** {round hose} / tights **round hat:** {bonnet}

45. This outdated political reference is somewhat obscure (and confusing) and should be deleted. Hence, the deletion of Nerissa's question about the Scottish Lord, and Portia's response to it would make for a more cogent exchange and not tax the audience with something it clearly recognizes as being partial to another time and place. It is likely that this reference, as well as the previous one, were later additions to the original text—perhaps to suit the temperament of a specific audience. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.75]

46. {That he hath a neighborly 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.}

47. {very vilely} / with disgust / with much vile

48. {most vilely} / with loathing

49. **make do:** {make shift} / make the needed adjustments

50. / A thing of which I am too well aware.

51. / to prevent my worst fears from coming true

52. 'I will do anything,' says Portia—anything short of going directly against her father's will. In her playful suggestion that Nerisaa dupe the German suitor into picking the wrong casket, Portia is expressing her unspoken wish that Nerissa somehow intervene. Nerissa, as a loyal servant, may feel the need to act upon this unspoken wish and alter the outcome of lottery in favor of Portia's choice (and allow someone whom Portia loves to win her). Thus, Portia can have her wish *and* remain faithful to her father's will.

[Enter a Servingman; Nerissa meets with him. Servingman exits. ⁵⁴]

—Nerissa

You need not fear, lady, in having any of these lords. They have all come to the same decision, ⁵⁵ which is indeed to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some means^o other than your father's condition,^o of having to choose the right casket.⁵⁶

means: {sort} / method

condition: {imposition} / imposed contest

—Portia

If I live to be as old as the Prophetess of Cumae, <whose years were as many as grains of sand she could hold in her hand> ⁵⁷ 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, ⁵⁸ <in deciding to depart> for there is not one among them, whose very absence I do not dote upon—⁵⁹ and I pray God grant them a fair departure.⁶⁰

—Nerissa

Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in the company of Marquis of Montferrat? ⁶¹

53. **full:** {deep} **white:** {Rhenish} > a fine, white German wine, superior to the common table wine, which is red
contrary: / wrong **drunkard:** {sponge} / sop / one who soaks up liquor like a sponge

54. In the original, no Servant enters in to bring news (from the suitors) and Nerissa's next line reads: *You need not fear, lady, the having of any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home . . .* This indicates that the lords had informed Nerissa about their intention to leave before the scene opened—which is suspect. Nerissa knew of Portia's distaste for this parcel of suitors and so she would have told Portia about the good news as soon as it arrived. If Nerissa did know of the lords's departure beforehand then the scene could only be played out in a teasing fashion, with Nerissa prolonging Portia's misery by having her believe that all the suitors are still vying for her. Thus, to remedy this situation, a Servant enters with the news. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.96]

55. {they have acquainted me with their determinations}

With the entrance of a *Servant* to break the news to Nerissa, the pronoun 'me' would be removed, as the suitors have not stated their determination directly to Nerissa.

acquainted me: / apprised me of / told me of

their determinations / what they have determined / what they've decided to do / their decision / their determined course of action

56. {than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets}

/ than your father's contest of having to chose the right casket.

imposition: condition, demand, imposed methodology

depending on the caskets: contingent upon the contest he devised (whereby a suitor must choose the right casket to win Portia).

57. {If I live to be as old as Sibylla} / If I live to be as old as <the prophetess> Sibylla

Sibylla was the prophetess of Cumae, and Apollo's lover. Apollo granted her as many years of life as the grains of sand she could hold in her hand. From Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 14.129-53

58. {are so reasonable}

reasonable: a) amicable, in that they are doing what Portia wants and leaving, b) swayed by reason; a true lover would not be reasonable and would take any risk to win his beloved

59. {there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence}

dote upon: {dote on} / take delight in / cherish / long for

60. Q1 = {and I pray God grant them a fair departure.} F1 = {and I wish them a fair departure.}

61. Here Nerissa 'tests the waters' to see if Portia favors Bassanio, as Nerissa assumes she does. Portia confirms her high opinion of Bassanio. (This confirmation lets Nerissa know that her plan to have Bassanio come to Belmont, and win Portia, is on target.)

Why does Nerissa even mention Bassanio—who is said to be a soldier and a scholar (which he is not)—when there is no hint that he would be a likely suitor? [See *Essays: The Lottery*]

—Portia

Yes, yes, it was Bassanio—as I think so was he called.⁶²

—Nerissa

True, madam. He, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the most^o deserving of a fair^o lady.

most: {best} **fair:** beautiful

—Portia

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

Enter a Servant

—⁶³

—Servant

The four foreigners⁶⁴ seek for you, madam, to take their leave—and there is a messenger^o come from^o a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the Prince, his master, will be here tonight.

messenger: {forerunner} / herald **from:** / to announce

—Portia

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good^o a heart⁶⁵ as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. And if he had the temperament of a saint and the complexion of a devil,⁶⁶ I had rather he should hear of my strife than take me as a wife.⁶⁷

62. {Yes, yes, it was Bassanio—as I think so was he called} Portia clearly recalls his name, with enthusiasm—but quickly tempers her feelings with a seeming uncertainty. The original, ‘as I think so was he called’ is a bit jumbled and confused, suggesting that she is not thinking straight and/or talking very quickly in order to mask her excitement.

63. The following line by Portia, which appears in Q1 {How now! What news?} has been deleted: Most commentators hold that this line is superfluous and out of place: Portia is not likely to greet her servant in such a way. This line is omitted in F1—either in error or, more likely, with the intention of ‘enhancing’ the text. If the *Servant* is made to enter before [line 96] then this short greeting might come as a result of Portia’s surprise—and perhaps in slight apprehension that there is some additional news which is contrary to the good news previously delivered (which is that all the suitors intend to leave). Hence, if this innocuous line is preserved (and if, the *Servant* had come once before) then Portia’s line would read: ‘How now, more news?’

64. {four strangers} Actually, six suitors are named in the original, and the mention of four is probably a remnant of an earlier draft. As discussed in a previous note, it is likely that the original scene had four suitors, with the Englishman and Scottish suitors added in a later draft. Several references to *four* suitors—and a reference to a *fifth*, who comes after the *four*—are made by Portia.

One could rectify this discrepancy by a) changing all references to *four* to *six*, and the reference to a *fifth*, to a *seventh* (which is somewhat cumbersome); b) changing the references to *five* suitors and a *sixth* (and delete the Scottish suitor), or c) leaving the references as they are, to *four* (and delete the English and Scottish suitors). One could also leave the inaccurate references as they are, without harming to the text. In this version, five suitors are named yet the reference remains at four suitors—the implication being that the French suitor is not extant enough to be counted as a suitor.

65. {with so good heart} / as whole-heartedly / with the fullness of heart / with the same warmheartedness / with the same warm affection

66. {if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil}

condition: / virtue / character / temperament / affection

the complexion of: / the dark color of / the dark skin of [See Additional Notes, 1.2.127]

67. {I had rather he should shrive me than wive me}

> If he has a dark complexion (like the devil) and a disposition like a saint, I would rather that he be my priest, and hear my confession (*shrive me*), than marry me (*wive me*).

shrive me: hear my confession, absolve me of my sins (as would a priest) > the precise meaning is uncertain / I had rather he absolve me of my sin, then wive me herein

Come Nerissa, 'tis^o just like before: ⁶⁸
 Whiles we shut the gate upon one^o ⁶⁹
 Another now comes to knock at the^o door. ^{70 71}

/ it's / it is
 / upon one more
 / on my

Exeunt

68. {Come Nerissa, sirrah, go before}

sirrah: a term used to address someone of low standing, such as a servant, or a boy

69. {Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer}

wooer: in the original, *wooer* may have rhymed with *before* and *door*, and thereby provided for a triplicate rhyme scheme. In modern pronunciation the rhyme is only between *before* and *door*.

/ Whiles one suitor leaves, and chances^o no more, / Whiles one suitor leaves to depart my shore

/ We go and shut the gate upon one more

70. {Another knocks at the door} / While comes another to knock at the door

71. As mentioned (in a previous note), the original may have been pronounced with a triplicate rhyme scheme, involving *before*, *wooer*, and *door*. The meter of the rhyming lines, however, is not certain, (and is not part of the standard iambic meter): the first two lines have nine syllables and the third, has seven. If a triplicate rhyme was intended, then the third line would contain nine syllable and could be emended as follows: 'Another suitor knocks at the door' or 'Another comes to knock at my door.'

The rectification above, contains three rhyming lines of ten syllables each, yet the meter does not conform to the standard iambic pentameter. In the standard iambic pentameter, there is an emphasis on the fourth syllable, in the above meter, the emphasis is on the fifth syllable.

ACT ONE - Scene Three 1.3

Venice. Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

—Shylock

Three thousand ducats¹—yes?²

{well} / good / alright

—Bassanio

Ay sir, for three months.

—Shylock

For three months—yes?³

{well} / good / alright

—Bassanio

For which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.³

—Shylock.

Antonio shall be⁴ bound—yes?⁵

{become} {well} / good / alright

—Bassanio

Can you help me?⁴ Will you do me this favor?⁵ Shall I know your answer?⁶

—Shylock

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

—Bassanio

Your answer to that?

—Shylock

Antonio is a good man.

1. **ducats:** (lit., ‘of the duke’); gold coins. These were first struck in Venice in the thirteenth century and came to signify a wealthy currency (such as the South African Kugerrand does today). Three thousand ducats, during that time, was an extremely large sum of money. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.1]

2. {Three thousand ducats, well}

well: good / alright / OK // yes? / is that right?

The repeated use of the term, ‘yes?’ or ‘good’ after each condition would be like a person going over a checklist and acknowledging that the stated condition is clear and understood—and agreed upon. A question is indicated by Bassanio’s response in the next line, which is: ‘Ay sir, for three months.’ If the term *good* is used, it would be spoken three times, in the same matter-of-fact style, as one going over a checklist. The term *well*, which is found in the original, is an imprecise fit. Many productions, in trying to make the term *well* sound ‘natural,’ have added different inflections and tonalities to it. Thus, instead of the term being repeated in the exact same way each time, the word is intoned as a question, a note of surprise, a sense of disbelief, etc.

3. **shall be bound:** shall cover the loan, shall sign the bond

4. {May you stead me?} / Can you cover me? / Can you supply the money for me?

5. {Will you pleasure me?} / Will you meet my needs? / Will you please me with your reply? / Will you fulfill my request / Will you help me?

6. Shall you say, ‘yes’? / Shall your answer be ‘yes’? / What is your answer?

—Bassanio

Have you ever heard any imputation^o to the contrary?

/ accusation / charge

—Shylock

Oh, no, no, no, no. What I mean in saying, ‘he is a good man,’ is to have you understand that he is sufficient (to cover the loan). Yet his means^o are in question.^o He hath an argosy^o bound for Tripolis,^o another to the Indies. I understand, moreover, from word on⁷ the Rialto,^o he hath a third at Mexico, a forth for England, and other ventures he hath scattered about.^{8 9} Yet ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, land thieves and water thieves—I mean pirates.¹⁰ And then there is the peril of the water, wind, and rocks. The man is nonetheless sufficient.¹¹ Three thousand ducats—I think I may take his bond.¹²

—Bassanio

Be assured you may.^o

/ With assurance you may

—Shylock

I will be assured I may; and that I may be assured, I will think it over.¹³ May I speak with Antonio?¹⁴

—Bassanio

If it please you to^o dine with us.

/ come

—Shylock

Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the swine^o which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil

7. {upon} / from news on / as heard upon / upon word at

8. {squandered abroad} / extended abroad / flung about / at risk in foreign waters / ‘scattered recklessly’ (Onions). *Squander* in this context does not carry the negative connotation of being ‘wasteful’ but pertains more to a sense of ‘over-reaching.’

9. There is no factual accuracy in this description, as no merchant of Venice would have such a varied range of ventures. This long description serves to show Antonio’s standing as a grand merchant, and also to show that Shylock is well aware of everything concerning Antonio and his ventures.

10. The original reads {there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean pirates.} *Pirates* may be a ‘bad’ pun for *pier-rats*, which would indicate the rats which run about the pier and steal food. In this emendation the terms *land thieves* and *water thieves* have been reversed. With this new order the term *pirates* is clearly related to *water-thieves*. (The pun on pirates could also be made by the following word order: “There be land rats and land thieves, water rats and water thieves—I mean pirates.” In some productions the term *pirates* is pronounced as *pie-rats*; the meaning and reason for this emphasis is uncertain but it may indicate petty thieves who steal crumbs (as rats steal the crumbs from pies).

11. **is sufficient:** has adequate wealth (and means) to cover the debt

12. **his means:** his business, his ventures, his means of making money

in question: {in supposition} / in doubt / questionable

an argosy: a merchant ship **Tripolis:** a port in Libya or Lebanon **Rialto:** merchant exchange in Venice

nonetheless: {notwithstanding} / nevertheless / despite all that

13. {I will bethink me}

14. Shylock already knows Antonio’s store and need not think it over {*I will bethink me*} to be assured; nor does he need to discuss anything with Antonio to be assured. As we will see, none of the subsequent conversation with Antonio leads to Shylock’s further assurance as he never once asks Antonio about the state of his ventures (or other collateral that Antonio may have). Shylock is using this notion of needing to be assured as a ruse whereby he can speak directly with Antonio both from a position of equals and from the position of superiority, where Antonio needs his help. Shylock is taking this rare opportunity of engagement to confront Antonio about personal matters—such as Antonio’s mistreatment of Shylock.

into.¹⁵ I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so forth^o—but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. [What news on the Rialto? ¹⁶] Who is he comes here? ¹⁷

Enter Antonio

—Bassanio
It is^o Signior Antonio.

{This is} / Here comes

[*Bassanio goes over to Antonio and they converse in private.*] ¹⁸

—Shylock [*aside*]

⟨Here comes the royal merchant⟩—how much more^o

/ closer / keener

Does he resemble^o a fawning innkeeper,^o ¹⁹

/ look like / an obsequious servant

⟨So eager^o in serving the needs of others.⟩ ²⁰ ²¹

/ Seeking / Ready

How I despise his Christian haughtiness^o ²²

/ charity

15. Sometimes this line is staged as an ‘aside,’ rather than a direct comment (and insult) to Bassanio. Reference is to Jesus of Nazareth who conjured a demon out of two men and cast it into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8:28-33); or to the story where Jesus cast out unclean spirits from a man named Legion into a herd of pigs (Mark 5:1-13). In both stories the pigs were driven off a cliff into the sea.

16. Shylock could not be asking this of Bassanio since Bassanio has no knowledge of what is happening on the Rialto. In a staging, Shylock could look up and see a fellow merchant, and instinctively ask him about news on the Rialto—and then notice Antonio’s arrival. This, however, would require the scene to be staging in the market, with additional characters moving on stage. Another option would be to delete this line, which is irrelevant to the action, and which would not make sense if the scene is staged between Shylock and Bassanio (with no additional characters on stage).

17. **swine:** / pigs {habitation} > dwelling place **so forth:** {following}

18. From his opening bombast (in this revised version) we know that Antonio despises usurers and here, though necessity we find him thrust into a usurer’s domain. Antonio cannot be pleased with the situation—rather he is dismayed and taken aback—yet, for the love of his friend, he is willing to endure this unfortunate convergence. (Without understanding Antonio’s hatred of usury—and now seeing him thrust into the liar of one whose practice he despises—the scene would fail to hold the tension that was intended by the author, a tension surely felt and understood by an informed Elizabethan audience.)

19. {How like a fawning publican he looks}

/ How like an over-eager servant he looks / How like an eager inn-keeper he looks / How he looks like an all too eager innkeeper.

fawning: humble, cowering, accommodating, obsequious

publican: innkeeper, ‘pub’-keeper. Sharing similar roots with: *pub*, and *public*.

A *fawning publican* refers to an obsequious and ‘ever-ready-to-serve’ inn- or bar-keeper. The image here is that of Antonio, the well-respected ‘royal merchant’ who, in this capacity, looks like a lowly innkeeper so ready to accommodate the needs of his friend. This image is supported by Shylock’s later description of Antonio as one who acts in ‘low simplicity.’ There is something about this all-too-willing posture which is alien to Shylock and both offends and threatens his concept of life. A publican could also be a reference to those who served as tax-collectors for the Romans [Luke 18:9-14]—and in so doing oppressed the Jews—but this is a more remote possibility. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.38]

20. / ⟨Ever so eager to be of assistance⟩ / ⟨Ever so willing to help out his friends⟩

21. / —how he looks

More like a fawning slave, ⟨the way he tries to^o
Accommodate the wantings of his friend.⟩

/ lowly servant, ⟨as he tries to

22. {I hate him for he is a Christian}

/ I hate his Christian kind^o of charity

/ breed / acts / show

/ I hate his Christian meddling, but more so

But more, for that in ^o low simplicity, ²³	/ for in his / simple ignorance / simple-mindedness
He lends out money gratis and brings down	
The rate of interest ^o here with us in Venice. ²⁴	{usance}
If I can catch him once upon the hip ^o ²⁵	/ at a disadvantage / at my advantage
I will feed fat ^o the ancient grudge I bear him. ²⁶	/ exploit / I'll gratify
He hates our sacred nation; and even	
Where merchants most do congregate ^o , he rails	/ meet to do business
On me, my contracts, ^o and my well-earned profit, ²⁷	{bargains} / business {well-won thrift}
Which he calls, <i>usury</i> . ^o Cursèd be my tribe ²⁸	{interest}

/ I hate his feigned Christian goodness, but more

This is a highly controversial line which, as it stands, seems to portray Shylock as a Christian-hater. What Shylock hates, is not Christians, per se, but something about Antonio's form of Christianity—perhaps what he sees as Antonio's Christian affect—which is here seen as one who is ever-ready to serve and accommodate others—and it is this form of Christian charity, practiced by Antonio, which undermines Shylock's business.

Some productions, in trying to put forth a pro-Shylock sentiment, delete this line (and the entire section), and preserve only the first line, {How like a fawning publican he looks}. When this line about Shylock's hatred is taken at face value (and without the conditions offered by Shylock in the later lines of the section) it might suggest that Shylock hates Antonio for no other reason than that he is a Christian—which is clearly not the case. (Shylock makes no such negative comment about Bassanio nor any other Christian—nor has reason to.) Shylock hates something about Antonio's version and practice of Christianity (especially as it interferes with Shylock's business), but also personally, as Antonio rails at Shylock (where the merchants meet) and does whatever he can to undermine him. Antonio, on the other hand, does not hate Shylock personally, but moreover the institution he represents. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.39]

23. {But more, for in low simplicity} / But more his simple-minded view, wherein
low simplicity: naivety and ignorance

24. / I hate his Christian pretenses, but more | For that in low simplicity he lends
 | Out money gratis and brings down the rate | Of interest for all us here in Venice.
 | Out money gratis and thereby brings down | The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

The sense here is that Shylock hates something about Antonio's version or breed of Christianity, but most specifically his naive and simple-minded understanding of Christian values, whereby he is quick to loan out money, without interest (to those in need)—which hurts Shylock's business by bringing down the rate of interest for the moneylenders in Venice. So, the primary hatred, it seems, is over money, not values or personality.

25. **catch upon the hip:** a wrestling term which means to grab hold of or gain advantage over one's opponent; to be in a superior position or have one's opponent at a disadvantage. Having an opponent by the hip, in wrestling, indicates that you are in a good position to score points by a 'take down.'

/ If I can once, and gain an advantage / If I can catch him once when he's off-guard

26. **feed fat:** indulge in, exploit, gratify, delight in; take full advantage of

Shylock is hoping to find a way to entrap Antonio, to gain an advantage on him, then to use that opportunity to exploit his long-standing resentment. *Feeding fat* indicates that Shylock will take delight in, and indulge in, his revenge against Antonio.

What exactly is Shylock's plan to 'catch Antonio upon the hip' and gain an advantage over him?—so much so that he (Shylock) may exploit (*feed fat*) his ancient grudge? Most likely (and not so obviously), Shylock's 'advantage' over Antonio would be in having him sign a bond with humiliating terms. (The idea of Antonio defaulting on the loan is too long of a shot; and this would not have been part of Shylock's initial plan.) It seems that Shylock's initial intention was to humiliate Antonio, and to put him at a moral disadvantage, which later turned more sinister when Antonio, unexpectedly, defaulted on his loan.

27. / He hates our sacred nation; and he rails
 At me where merchants most do congregate,^o / meet to do business
 Cursing my contracts^o and my well-won thrift, / business

28. {Cursèd be my tribe | If I forgive him}

Shylock—perhaps as a compensation for his own sense of lack—(and this is something we also see later in the play) is invoking something larger than himself in his vows against Antonio. Here he lays the curse on his tribe (not himself) should he forgive Antonio. Thus, by brining in his tribe (ND the nation of Jews) Shylock invokes the position that Antonio's harsh treatment of him represents the harsh treatment levied by Christians against all Jews. Shylock links his oppression solely to his Judaism and fails to see (or conveniently refuses to see) that Antonio's harsh actions are based upon Shylock's practice of usury, not his Judaism. Shylock is never able to personally 'own' the oppression, nor ever singularly link it to his practice of usury—as he always defends his usury (and Antonio's mistreatment of him) in the context of Judaism. One could say that he is playing the 'religious' or 'Jew' card and trying to displace the conflict away from its true source, which is his ruinous practice of usury.

33. Antonio's first words to Shylock—without even so much as a greeting—are an outright rejection of Shylock and his business. Antonio is in need of Shylock's money to help Bassanio yet Antonio wants to make it clear, from the onset, that he is doing this out of duress, as an exception—and still upholds his harsh opinion of usury. Shylock, of course, is ready to expose—and use to his advantage—this hypocrisy.

/ born with streaks or spots

And all the offspring rightly went to Jacob.³⁸
This was the way he thrived, and he was blessed;
And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.³⁹

—Antonio⁴⁰

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for,⁴¹
A thing not in his power to bring to pass
But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven⁴²
<Which naturally allows all creatures^o to breed—
The same of which does not apply to money.^o>⁴³
Was this inserted^o to justify usury?⁴⁴
Or is your gold and wealth^o like Jacob's sheep?⁴⁵

/ Which allows all creatures to reproduce
/ gold
/ Was this a story / Did you tell this
/ Or are your golden coin

—Shylock

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.

38. Shylock cites this story in support of Jacob's wise actions which allowed him to prosper. Antonio says that the spots were brought about by 'the hand of heaven'—in accordance with divine dispensation (impelled by Jacob's purity and faith). This was done so that Jacob could prosper after having been deceived by Laban.

39. {And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.}

/ Such thrift is seen as a blessing, if men | Gain it through cleverness and not through theft.

40. A line could be added here: <Your story tells of human trickery:> This line would show that Shylock's version of the story is based upon that which pertains to human deception, not the hand of God.

41. {Such was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for}

Here Antonio is pointing out that Jacob worked for the sheep, that he earned them from the sweat of his brow (both in tending the sheep and serving his uncle). The part of the story that Shylock and Antonio shy away from—including the prelude story where Jacob deceives Isaac and gains his land—is that Jacob used deception to gain Laban's sheep.

42. {A thing not in his power to bring to pass | But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven.}

a thing: a) his venture, which was based upon the natural reproduction of his sheep.

swayed: determined, directed, shaped

fashioned: brought about, created, produced

the hand of heaven: God's Will

Such 'a thing'—i.e., the creation and reproduction of life—is only in the power of God to bring to pass. As such, the reproduction of money is unnatural and contrary to the natural laws of God, and what God brings to pass. Thus, Antonio is refuting Shylock's story (and its justification of his business) on two accounts: a) that Jacob earned the money by working for it, and b) that the hand of heaven—not Jacob's own power and skill—allowed Jacob to prosper through its power by which animals naturally reproduce. Antonio is saying that the reproduction of money—where money reproduces on its own, through the charging of interest on a loan—is unnatural, Godless, and cannot be compared to Jacob's venture. (Some scholars argue that this also goes against Jewish law in that the money earns interest, or "creates," on the Sabbath).

43. <For living creatures are sanctioned by God | To breed—and such does not apply to gold.>

<Which allows creatures to naturally breed— | Such laws as these do not apply to money.>

[See Additional Notes, 1.3.90]

44. {Was this inserted to make interest good?}

/ Was this a story to make usury right? / Was this a story in defense (/support) of usury?

was this inserted: was this story told; was this biblical reference inserted into our conversation

interest: Antonio uses the term *interest* (which means the practice of loaning out money which carries interest) but he is using it to implicate the practice of usury—a practice which involves loaning out money with interest but, more villainous, usury often involves a stiff penalty or forfeiture (if the loan is not repaid in time) and also involves some measure of deception, exploitation, and entrapment. Usury is something far more nefarious than the simple loaning out money with interest.

45. {Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?} / Or does your gold and silver breed like sheep?

This relates to the Augustinian argument (previously invoked by Antonio) that the loaning of money which bears interest is an unnatural act and goes against God's law since only living things have God's sanction to reproduce. Loaning money which bears interest causes barren metal (gold and silver) to breed like living things.

But hear^o me, signor—⁴⁶

{note}

—Antonio Mark you this, Bassanio,

The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness^{o47}

/ that cites the holy books

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A goodly^o apple⁴⁸ rotten at the heart.^o

/ shiny // to the core

O, what a goodly^o outside falsehood hath! ^{49 50}

{goodly} / tempting

〈 [aside] Of all the men in Venice, good Bassanio,〉

〈Could ye not find a one but this vile usurer?〉 ⁵¹

—Shylock

Three thousand ducats. ‘Tis a good round sum.

Three months from twelve; now,^o let me see the rate. . . .

{then}

—Antonio

Well, Shylock, shall we be indebted^o to you?

{beholding} / beholden

—Shylock

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you berated^o me,

{have rated}

About my monies^o and my usances—

/ business

Yet^o I have borne it with a patient shrug,

{still} > always

46. What was Shylock going to say before he was interrupted? Clearly he is derailed by Antonio’s harsh comments—or perhaps by some extraneous distraction, such as the knocking over of some money or some paper on his table. In the next line, Shylock composes himself by stating something obvious and bland {Three thousand ducats, ‘tis a nice round sum} then he regains his previous line of thought—where he expresses his deep resentment at the way Antonio has treated him. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.93]

47. **witness:** accounts, testaments, evidence (to support his evil views)

48. {goodly} > appearing good on the outside

49. Antonio’s harsh words—if spoken directly to Shylock—reflect his true feelings (which he is not able to hold back) even though such an outburst jeopardizes Bassanio’s chances of getting the loan. To paint Antonio in a more sensitive light, these words could be spoken as an ‘aside’ to Bassanio.

If Shylock is meant to hear these words it would come as a frontal attack, referring to him as a *devil*, an *evil soul*, a *rotten apple*, and a *villain*. Antonio says this unabashedly, with impunity, as if somehow he is entitled to speak to Shylock in such a way—even when he is in the situation of disadvantage and in need of Shylock’s help. (Later in the conversation Antonio continues his stance by saying, *I am as like to call thee so again, to spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too*. [126-27]) Shylock never speaks to Antonio in this way as he does not feel the same kind of entitlement or superiority as does Antonio. Even later, when the tables turn and Shylock has full power over Antonio, he does not attack him with words, nor does he use any disparaging terms. He only refers back to what Antonio has called him, *thou called’st me dog*, yet he does not attack Antonio nor call him a dog. What Shylock does when in a position of power, rather than attack and abuse, is to retreat, to refuse Antonio the right to speak [3.3.12;13;17]. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.99]

50. / O, how these lies are wrapped in good appearance. / Oh what a good appearance falsehood wears!

51. These lines could be added to reveal Antonio’s discomfort at being in the presence of a usurer—and tangentially show that his hatred is toward the vile practice of usurers, not Jews (otherwise the line might have read: ‘Could ye not find a one but this vile Jew?’)

To more forcefully show Antonio’s position, and specifically show that his hatred against Shylock is in regard to his practice of usury and not his Jewishness, Antonio could praise the Jews while pointing out that Shylock’s actions are at odds with those of his own people. Thus, the following lines could be added instead:

〈Now here is one who serves his own interest〉

〈And thus befouls the honor of his own people.〉 / And fouls the righteousness of his own people

For sufferance is the badge^o of all my people.^o 52 / mark, sign > hallmark {tribe}
 You call me misbeliever,⁵³ cut-throat,⁵⁴ dog,
 And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
 And all for use of that which is mine own.
 Well then,^o it now appears you need my help— / Well, well
 To hell with that!^o 55 You come to me and say: / Well spit on that
 ‘Shylock, we wish for^o monies.’^o You say so— {would have} / need some
 You that did void your spit^o upon my beard^o {rheum} // face
 And kick me as you’d spurn a worthless dog^o {stranger cur} / ling’ring dog
 Out from your doorway.^o Now you ask for money: 56 {over your threshold}
 What should I say to you? Should I not say,
 ‘Hath a dog money? Is it possible
 A cur^o can lend three thousand ducats?’ Or / dog / mutt
 Shall I bend low, and in a servant’s voice,^o 57 / lowly tone
 With bated breath and whispering^o humbleness, 58 / whispering
 Say this: ‘Fair^o sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last— / kind
 You spurned me such a day. Another time
 You called me ‘dog’—and for these courtesies
 I’ll lend you thus much monies’?

—Antonio
 I am as like^o to call thee so again, / And I am wont

52. {For suff’rance is the badge of all our tribe}

suff’rance: forbearance, patient endurance (of abuse), long-suffering.

the badge of our tribe: refers to the distinguishing trait of Jews which is their ability to endure the hardship piled upon them by Christian oppression. It could also refer to the *badge*, a distinguishing yellow ‘O,’ that Venetian Jews were compelled to wear. In 1.3, the term *tribe*, designating the nation of Jews, is used by Shylock three times: cursed be my *tribe* [1.3.48]; a wealthy Hebrew of my *tribe* [1.3.54]; sufferance is the badge of our *tribe* [1.3.107]. The term, however is misplaced and it is unlikely that a Jew would refer to the nation of Jew by that term.

53. **misbeliever:** infidel; one who believes in a mistaken God or path to salvation—as opposed to a ‘disbeliever’ which refers to one who has no belief in God.

54. **cut-throat:** one who cuts the throat of others. The terms would refer to the usurer who cuts the throat of, or kills, the livelihood of others—and is therefore likened to a murderer.

55. {Go to, then; you come to me and you say}

go to: an expression of annoyance and disbelief which, in extreme cases, could mean ‘go to hell’ or ‘get lost.’ It could be more vaguely, and less forcefully, expressed as: ‘come on now,’ ‘you must be kidding,’ or ‘what’s up with that?’ The forceful expression of ‘go to hell’ (or ‘get lost’) serves to prompt Antonio into anger, into a storm—which works to Shylock’s advantage—whereas ‘go to, then’ ‘come on now,’ is less prompting in its effect. ‘Spit on that’—which means to reject something—relates to Antonio’s action of spitting on Shylock (which Shylock cites later in his complaint).

56. {Over your threshold, monies is your suit.} / Outside your house; now money is your suit.

57. {in a bondman’s key}

bondman’s key: sounding like, with the voice of, in the feeble tone of a serf or servant (bondman).

58. / With a gentle breath, and a humble whisper

To spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too.^{59 60}
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not° / don't lend it
 As to thy friend—for when did friendship make° {take}
 Profit° on barren metal,⁶¹ <breeding it° / Interest //as if it
 As if° the offspring of a living creature?>°⁶² / Just like / would / 'twere
 Nay,° lend it rather to thine enemy {But}
 Who, if he breaks, thou may'st with better° face / sterner / rigid
 Exact° the penalty. / Demand

—Shylock Look how you storm!⁶³
 I would be friends with you and have your love,° / favor / grace
 Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
 Supply your present wants, and take no drop° {no doit} / no hint
 Of interest° for my monies⁶⁴ —and you'll not hear me.⁶⁵ {usance} / profit

59. Antonio's likely response, being that he is in need of Shylock's help, is to apologize, pay Shylock the lip-service he desires. But Antonio refuses to acknowledge his mistreatment of Shylock or apologize for it—even though such an apology would better his chances to help Bassanio. Antonio is willing to give up his life for Bassanio, but he is not willing to treat Shylock as an equal nor approve of any manner of usury or usurer.

As part of a staging, Bassanio could intervene (for his own benefit, to insure that the loan is not jeopardized) and calm Antonio down.

60. Optional lines to add:

<And every usurer as well! You beguile°	/ deceive
And cozen men of their rightful possessions	/ out of their livelihood
Leaving them hapless° and in total ruin.	/ stricken / helpless
You call this 'thrift,' though it be none but theft.°>	/ I say it is thievery
<Your baneful°practice of usury affronts	/ harmful / sinful / wretched
All that is righteous in the eyes of God.>	

These lines could be added here to explain Antonio's loathsome attitude toward usury (which usually involves trickery and deceit more so than simply loaning money which carries interest). Antonio's attitude toward usury was already made know in the revised opening lines and would not be necessary here (unless the production wanted to emphasize this point).

This passage indicates the true grievance Antonio has against Shylock—which involves his ruinous practice of usury, not his Jewishness. However, Shylock is quick to implicate Antonio's hatred as being that against Jews (as opposed to a usurers), saying: 'He hates our sacred nation'[1.3.45]. Obviously Shylock is mistaken in this regard. Usury was seen as an 'ungodly' practice, founded upon deception and exploitation, which often led to the loss of all one's wealth and property—and that is why the good Antonio was so adamantly set against it. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.127]

61. {As to thy friends, for when did friendship take | A breed for barren metal of his friend?}

breed: offspring. Charging interest on a loan (i.e., making money from money, producing 'offspring' from barren metal) was viewed as unnatural (and going against divine law); for money, made out of metal, cannot breed and multiply (its own kind) like a living thing. Jews, at the time, could not own property and loaning of money, with interest, was one of the few ways they could earn a profit. Some argue that the charging of a full seven days of interest (per week) went against the laws of the Sabbath since one's money was 'working' and 'creating' on the day when man was commanded to rest.

62. / —for when did friendship breed | Barren metal <as 'twere a living thing? | Such a perversion goes against nature.>

/ —for when did friendship charge | Interest on barren metal <as if it were | The offspring of a living creature. 'Tis | A perversion which fouls divine law.> / frustrates / offends

63. {Why look you how you storm} / Why how you storm

The line, as it appears in Q1, is somewhat awkward, as it repeats the term *you* twice, and contains 6 + 6 iambs (instead of 4 + 6). Both suggest some kind of error in the text or typesetting. The emended contains a singular reference to *you*, and is made to fit the standard meter of 5 iambs (instead of 6).

64. {And take no doit | Of usance for my monies}

/ And take no drop | Of profit° for my monies / interest

65. What does it mean: 'you'll not hear me'? If could mean: and you will not hear my offer, my proposal (for the loan). More deeply, it could mean: and you will not hear me, you will not accept me as a person, as an equal, as a friend. Antonio never 'sees' or 'hears' Shylock as a person; likewise, when Shylock has power over Antonio, he

This is kind I offer. ⁶⁶

—Bassanio This were^o kindness. ⁶⁷

/ is / would be / is

—Shylock

This kindness ⁶⁸ will I show:

Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your guarantee,⁶⁹ and, in a merry sport,^o ⁷⁰

/ jest / game

If you repay me not on such a day,

In such a place, such sum or sums as are

Expressed^o in the condition, let the forfeit

/ Set forth

Be designated as an equal pound ⁷¹

{Be nominated for} / Be thereby named for

Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

From^o what part of your body pleaseth me.^o ⁷² ⁷³

{In} {It pleaseth me}

⟨—Bassanio ⁷⁴

This is more beastly than bizarre. Ne'er have

I heard of terms so odd and ill-conceived. ⟩⁷⁵

refuses to hear him: [Ant: I pray thee, hear me speak. Shy: I'll have my bond: I will not hear thee speak. 3.3.11-12]
[See Additional Notes, 1.3.137]

66. {This is kind I offer}:

kind: a) kindness, benevolence, b) kinship, friendship, c) something natural (as opposed to something 'unnatural'—which is Antonio's objection to charging interest on a loan, which allows barren metal to produce 'offspring' of metal.

What is Shylock offering? "This is *kind* I offer—I am offering to loan you the money on your terms, in kind (likeness) with your sentiments, and to loan you money (as would a friend) without charging interest. I am going to offer you that, but you storm and interrupt me, and not even allow me to make such an offer—since you are assuming that I am your enemy, and not your friend, and that I am going to charge you interest. Now, I am offering to loan you this money as a friend, without interest, but you will not hear me, you will not allow me to speak." [See Additional Notes, 1.3.138]

67. / This *is* kindness!

Here Bassanio is confirming that such an offer (as this point—without having yet heard the grotesque terms of the bond) is kind. Some productions present the care-free Bassanio as a skeptic and have him pose the line as a cynical question or remark.

68. Shylock is here building upon Bassanio's interpretation of the, 'kind,' to mean kindness, even though Shylock may have intended the term to mean, 'kinship.'

69. {seal me there | Your single bond} / Your fullest guarantee

single bond: implies a bond that Antonio would singularly guarantee; an unconditional bond.

70. / and, in light-hearted fun

71. / Be such that I may have an equal pound

72. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.148a]

73. This grotesque term closely follows that found in *Il Perecone: una libra di carne d'addosso di qualunque luogo e' volesse* (a pound of flesh from whatever place you wish).

How does Shylock (or the Jew in *Il Perecone*, or in *The Ballad of Gernutus*) come to nominate this term of a pound of flesh?—"to be cut off and taken from what part of your body pleaseth me." And how/why does the condition come to change?—and come to read, 'nearest his heart'? {Ay, his breast, | So says the bond, doth it not noble judge? | 'Nearest his heart,' those are the very words. [4.1.249-251]} [See Additional Notes, 1.3.148b]

74. There is likely to be some emotional reaction (on the part of Bassanio) to such a grotesque, alien, and bizarre condition—especially one that puts Antonio's life in danger. Hence, to make known this sentiment, two lines have been added.

75. / These terms are beastly and bizarre What dwells | In a man's heart to contrive^o such a thing?
 / These terms are bizarre and ludicrous. | Ne'er have I heard a thing so ill-conceived.

—Antonio

I have no doubts;° I'll seal° to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

{Content in faith} // sign

—Bassanio

You shall° not seal to such a bond for me;
I'd rather dwell within° my present needs.° 76

/ must

/ suffer in // in mine own neediness

—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.

/ a profit

—Shylock

O father Abram, how these Christians are:

Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect°

/ mistrust > be suspicious of

The thoughts of others! [*to Bassanio*] Pray you, tell me this:

If he should break his day° 77 what should I gain

/ If he can't pay on time

By the exaction of° the forfeiture?

/ By my demanding of

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

Has neither worth nor can afford° a profit 78

/ command

As° flesh of mutton, cow, or goat. 79 I say,

/ Like

To buy his favour, I extend this friendship: 80

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

And for this gesture, for this act of kindness,

I pray you, wrong me not with evil motives. 81 82

76. {I'll rather dwell in my necessity} / I'd rather suffer in my present needs

77. {break his day}: miss his payment when it is due (on such and such a day)

78. {Is not so estimable, profitable neither}

/ Has neither worth nor can it bring a profit / Brings neither value nor the same profit / Has but no worth; one cannot even sell it

79. This argument is, of course, specious. Shylock argues that the pound of flesh has no value—so why would he take it? Yet, the value gained by taking of a pound of Antonio's flesh, is in killing Antonio. So, Shylock should rightfully say, 'What would I gain from taking the forfeiture, and thereby killing Antonio?'

80. Shylock may be somewhat sincere in what he says here—but the notion of buying Antonio's friendship, rather than gaining in through natural means, is misplaced. Below all this talk, however, we sense Shylock's deceitfulness and we see him using the ploy of a usurer to somehow entrap Antonio; Shylock himself revealed his intentions when he expressed a deep desire to 'catch Antonio upon the hip,' i.e., gain an advantage over him. Hence, we know that Shylock has a hidden agenda—to put Antonio at a disadvantage. So, what is Shylock trying to accomplish by having Antonio sign this bond? The possibility that Antonio would default on the bond is too remote to be part of a viable plan (and, besides, Shylock is not a gambling man). Why would Shylock hold up 3000 ducats (which could command a good profit otherwise invested) on something so remote. It is more likely that having Antonio sign such a bond—with such grotesque and unflattering terms—is Shylock's agenda, for such a bond debases Antonio and brings Shylock to an equal or superior status with Antonio (in Shylock's mind). [See footnote for 1.3.148]

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

/ I pray, don't wrong me with an evil motive / Please don't assign to me an evil motive

for my love: for this act of kindness

wrong me not: / blame me not / don't blame me / > don't attribute or assign to me some wrong

This last part of Shylock's speech (or argument) is a clear example of the 'deceptive art' employed by usurers: first he says that a pound of human flesh is worthless, and so he would have no reason to take it; then he contends

—Antonio
Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

—Shylock
Then meet me forthwith^o at the notary's, / right away
Give him direction^o for this merry bond; / instructions
And straightaway I'll go to purse^o the ducats, ⁸³ / go collect
See to^o my house—left in the bumbling care^o ⁸⁴ / Check on {fearful guard}
Of an unthrifty knave ⁸⁵—and soon thereafter,^o {and presently} / and right away
I'll be with you.

Exit Shylock

—Antonio Hurry thee,^o gentle Jew. {Hie thee} / Go with speed
The Hebrew will turn Christian—he grows kind. ⁸⁶

—Bassanio

that he is acting out of love and kindness—and so much so that he does not want his actions to be misinterpreted as harmful—yet the exact opposite is true: the bond of a pound of flesh (which is humiliating) is worth a lot to Shylock, and his real intention is not motivated by love (as contended) but by hatred (as clearly revealed by Shylock earlier in the scene.) [38-49].

82. / If he will take it, so be it; if not, | Adieu. And for this kind and friendly gesture, | I pray, don't wrong me with an evil motive.

83. {And I will go and purse the ducats straight}
/ And I'll go straightaway to purse the ducats,

Previously Shylock stated that he would have to get the ducats from Tubal [55]; here he says that he has the ducats and will get them straightaway. Obviously his previous mention of needing to get the ducats from Tubal was part of a rouse.

84. **fearful guard:** / terribly poor guard / inept hands

The implication here is that Shylock's inept servant (Launcelet) is not guarding the house, that he is asleep on the job; but more than that Shylock is going to check on the 'unthrifty' Launcelet to make sure he is not wasting things (and/or eating too much).

85. {Of an unthrifty knave} / Of a do-nothing knave / Of an e'er wasteful knave

unthrifty: wasteful, unproductive, unprofitable, good for nothing; lazy

The term *thrift*, as is most often used, refers to success and profit. To a lesser degree it means, as it does today, one who is frugal and careful about his spending. Thus, *an unthrifty knave* would refer to someone who is unprofitable, someone who wastes one's profit.

Bass: 'I have a mind presages me such thrift' [1.1.175]; Shy: 'On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift' [1.3.47]; Shy: And thrift is blessing if men steal it not' [1.3.87]. Shy: 'Fast bind, fast find— | A proverb never stale in a thrifty mind.' [2.5.53-54]

knave: fool, imbecile

It is doubtful that Shylock would be commenting to Antonio and Bassanio about his 'unthrifty knave' (Launcelet) nor would Shylock have any real reason to check on his house (left in 'fearful guard.')

This line comes, however, as an unflattering introduction to Shylock's foolish servant, Launcelet, so that when the knave first appears in 2.2 the audience will have some sense of who he is.

86. By all conceivable reckoning, Shylock has agreed to loan Antonio a substantial sum of money, 3000 ducats, interest-free, for three months. This money would have been more profitably used by Shylock if he loaned it out to another party. In this transaction he makes no profit, and the odds that Antonio will break his day (not repay the loan on time) is next to none. So what is Shylock's motivation in making this merry bond? What advantage does he gain?

I like not fair terms from^o a villain's mind.^{87 88}

{and} / in

—Antonio

Come on, in this there can be no dismay,
My ships come home a month before the day.⁸⁹

Exeunt

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

fair . . . villain: these terms are contrasted, with *fair* referring to the fairness of Christian values and *villain* referring to a Jew. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.176]

88. Possible addition of one line:

I like not fair terms from a villain's mind / I like not straight terms from a crooked mind.
(Nor have I comfort in the terms we find.)

The virtue of this added line (though it weakens the overall rhyme) would be to further express Bassanio's uneasiness. Bassanio's scepticism concerning Shylock's villainy could alternatively be expressed as a concern:

Ant: The Hebrew turns Christian, 'tis what we find.

Bass: I have no comfort in these terms so kind.

89. / Come now, in this there can be no concern,
A month before the day my ships return.

Portia's house in Belmont.

A flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince from Morocco (a dark-skinned Moor dressed in white), and three or four followers (of similar complexion) with Portia, Nerissa, and attendants

—Morocco

Mislike ^o me not for my complexion; ^{o 2}	/ Dislike
This darkened raiment ^o of the burnished ^o sun ³	{shadowed livery} // burning
Is worn by all who breed ^o so near ^o its fire. ⁴	/ who live // beneath
Bring me a man whose skin is light and fair, ⁵	
Born ^o from the coldest regions of the north, ⁶	
Where the sun's heat ^o can scarce thaw an icicle, ^{o 7}	/ rays / fire // scarcely thaw the ice
And let us make a cut, ^o at love's behest, ⁸	/ cut our skin // request
To prove whose blood is reddest—his or mine.	
I tell thee, lady, ^o this aspect ^o of mine	/ I say, dear lady // feature
Has brought much fear to brave and valiant men. ⁹	
And by my love, I swear, it too was loved ¹⁰	
By the most-honored ¹¹ virgins of our clime. ^o	/ region / climate
I would not change this dark and noble hue,	
Except to steal ^o your thoughts, my gentle queen. ^{12 13}	/ know ¹⁴

1. This is a short, filler scene, which helps alternate the action between Venice and Belmont. In deference to time, many productions delete this scene or merge elements of it with Morocco's next appearance in 2.7.

2. / Do not disfavor me for my complexion

my complexion: my complexion which is dark. A light complexion was held (be Europeans) to be fair or beautiful, whereas a dark complexion was thought to be attractive (and the color of the devil). To fit the meter, *complexion* is pronounced with four syllables: comPLEXeeON

3. / . . . bestowed by the sun

4. {To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.}

/ Near which I live and near where I was bred / Which all my kin, bred near its heat, do wear.

5. / Bring me a fair creature born in the north / Bring me a man with light and frosty skin,

6. / Who comes from cold and ever-dark regions. / One who was born in the northernmost region

7. {Where Phoebus's fire scarce thaws the icicles}

Phoebus's fire: the sun's heat. Phoebus was god of the sun.

8. {And let us make incision for your love}

9. / Has wrought great fear in the hearts of the valiant / Has prompted many heros to run in fright.

10. / By my love, I swear, it too has been loved

11. {best-regarded} / most respected / most revered

12. It seems the whole of Morocco's plea is designed to overcome or appease the sure prejudice (and dislike of those with dark complexions) which he knows Portia possesses. Even though Portia's opinion of him has no effect on the outcome of his drawing, he may be testing her, to see if she likes him—for what is the purpose of winning a woman who cannot stand your sight? Portia's positive response to Morocco's plea—which is polite to the point of being misleading—leads Morocco to believe that she accepts (and even likes) his dark complexion. Thus, with this 'OK' he proceeds with his choice.

13. We see that Morocco's bases himself upon the virtue of his strength and physical attributes. His first reference is to his outer appearance; thereafter all his references are to his strength and physical prowess: swearing upon his sword (that slew great rulers and won three battles), he tells how he would outstare and outbrave the most daring men, defy bears and lions; then he likens himself to Hercules, the strongest man on earth. In this context (dependent solely upon physical prowess) he does not comprehend the 'skill' involved in the lottery and sees it in terms of pure

—Portia

In terms of choice, I am not solely led¹⁵

By that which gratifies^o a maiden's eye.¹⁶

/ By what is pleasing to

Besides the contest rendered^o by my father¹⁷

/ devised / designed

Bars me the right^o of voluntary choosing.¹⁸

/ Prevents my right

But if my father had not scanted^o me,

/ thwarted / shorted

And hedged^o me by his wit^o to yield^o myself,¹⁹

/ bound / forced // will /// give

As wife, to he who chooses^o the right casket²⁰

/ whom so chooses / whom doth choose

Then you great prince, would stand as fair a chance²¹

chance, like the roll of a dice.

In terms of the three suitors, Morocco represents the physical dimension and its superior position (in terms of strength over others). This is the exterior or outermost garment; thus, according to his own disposition, he chooses the gold chest. Arragon, represents the mind and its superior position (in terms of intellect). This is still exterior to the true essence or the heart of a man, but more internal than the body. Accordingly, he chooses the silver casket, which represents the shine of the mind. Bassanio, represents the heart, the innermost being of a man—and that which is not swayed by outer show—and, accordingly, chooses the lead. Bassanio's speech, however, belies the true sentiment of the heart; it appears critical, riddled with discordant images, and it makes not one reference to Portia (or her attributes) which does not seem consistent with a true-hearted hero. Morocco is true to himself, and chooses accordingly; Aragon is true to himself, and chooses accordingly. With Bassanio, however, there seems to be a mismatch between himself (and what we know of him) and his outer presentation (presenting himself as a rich man) and his choosing the lead casket (and not being prompted by outer show). [See Additional Notes, 3.2.73]

14. **to steal your thoughts:** to gain access to, or win. your thoughts; to 'win your affection,' to have you think highly of me. (In other words, I would give up my dark appearance, which is my dearest possession, to win your affection). A literal interpretation might be that Morocco wants to *steal* Portia's thoughts (to know what she is thinking) so he could know which casket to choose—but this is not in keeping with his noble character.

15. **soley:** The word is somewhat askew in this context. In normal usage, this would read, "I am not *exclusively* led," but in this context would better read, "I am not *at all* led" *in terms of choice*. Nothing has a bearing on Portia's *choice* (of a husband) so she is here referring to her personal choice, her affection.

16. {By nice direction of}

/ By that which oft' persuades / By sights that often sway / By what is pleasing to / By sights that oft' allure / By that which captivates / By every fancy of

nice direction: attraction toward what is nice. It is surmised by Morocco that Portia (being a maiden) has the same sense of beauty as a maiden—which is usually directed toward (in the nice or pleasant direction of) those who are light-skinned (as opposed to Morocco, who is dark-skinned). However, Portia tells Morocco that she is not *solely* swayed by outer appearance (which he assumes to mean that his looks are acceptable to her). Then she refutes all relevance to this line by adding a caveat: that her opinion bears no value in terms of her choice, nor does it have any bearing on the outcome of the lottery. Morocco, however, is not so much concerned with winning Portia as a prize but wants to know (before he chooses) if she finds him attractive—so that if he does win her, he will have a wife who loves him (and not someone who despises the way he looks). Clearly Portia dislikes the way he looks—his dark skin being in such contrast to her light skin—but she does not reveal this. She allows Morocco to interpret her leading (yet not definitive) remarks in the way which most suits him.

17. {Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny}

/ Besides, the lott'ry of my father's will / Besides, the lottery that deems my fate

18. / Prevents me from effecting mine own choice / Prevents me from a voluntary choosing / Denies me from the right of mine own choice

19. {And hedged me by his wit to yield myself}

hedged: hedged me in, restricted me, bound me (by oath)

his wit: his wisdom, his ingenuity (by which this lottery was devised)

to yield myself: to give myself as wife (in way of marriage)—but not necessarily give in way of love

20. {His wife who wins me by that means I told you} / As wife to he who chooses the right casket / As wife who wins me by the means described

21. {Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair} / Then you, renowned prince, would stand as fair

then stood as fair: a) stood as favored, worthy; occupied an equally favorable position b) were as appealing, attractive, c) stood as fair a chance

Portia tells Morocco that he stands as fair (a chance) as any suitor she has looked upon (for her affection). Morocco ingenuously assumes this as a high complement. What Portia does not tell Morocco is that she has found all the previous suitors to be deplorable—Morocco, looking like a devil to her, stands equal to the German 'sponge,' the French 'no man,' the dreadfully sad Count, the self-promoting Neapolitan, and the ill-suited Englishman. In the instance where *fair* refers to Morocco's equal chances of winning her, she is not saying anything either: she is saying

As any comer^o I have looked on yet^o
For my affection.^o

/ suitor // I've yet looked upon
/ To win my favor

—Morocco Even for that I thank you.

Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets

To try my fortune. By this scimitar²²

/ Arab(ian) sword

That slew a Sultan^o and a Persian Prince,

{Sophy} / Emp'ror / great Shah

That thrice defeated the great Suleiman,^{o 23}

/ the Sultan of Turkey

I would o'er-stare the sternest^o eyes that look,

/ harshest

Outbrave the boldest heart that e'er did beat;²⁴

Pluck^o the young suckling cubs from the she-bear,

/ Snatch / grab

Yea, mock^o the lion when it^o roars for prey,²⁵

/ Defy {he}

To win thee, lady. But alas the while,

If Hercules and his servant play dice,²⁶

The hand of chance²⁷ decides the better man^o

/ determines the victor / winner

Which may grant victory^o to the weaker hand:

/ fortune / triumph

So is the hero beaten^o by his page.²⁸

{bested}

And so may I, blind fortune^o leading me,^{29 30}

/ with mere chance

Miss that which one of lesser worth^o attains—³¹

{one unworthier may}

And die with^o grieving.

/ from

—Portia You must take your chance,^o

And either not attempt to chose at all,³²

Or swear before you choose,^o if you choose wrong,

/ beforehand, that

that Morocco has as fair (equal) a chance of winning her (and her affection) as any suitor she has thus far looked upon.

22. scimitar: a curved, single-edged sword. In a possible staging, Morocco could draw and flourish his scimitar (much to the surprise of Portia's attendants). This would make clear the reference his sword (for those who are not familiar with the term *scimitar*). A blander, yet more recognizable term for *scimitar* could be *Arab sword*, *faithful sword*, *constant sword*, etc.

23. {That won three fields of Sultan Suleiman} / That won three battles against Suleiman.

24. {Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth}

25. / And grab the prey from a hungry lion

26. {If Hercules and Lichas play at dice}

Lichas: Hercules's (somewhat low-minded) servant. Lichas was thrown into the sea by Hercules after he (Lichas) unwittingly brought Hercules a poisoned shirt which killed him (Hercules).

27. / A throw by chance / A random throw / A chanced toss

28. {So is Alcides beaten by his rage}

Alcides: Hercules

rage: wanton behavior, wild folly, anger. Although Hercules was known to display rage, the notion of him being defeated by his rage—with respect to the chance drawing of the lottery—does not really fit. Pope emends *rage* with *page*, which is similar to the emendation of *rogue* (derived from *roge*.) Both apply to a servant of Hercules, one who is weaker and a lesser man. Hence, the intended meaning would be that Hercules is beaten by his *page* or his *rogue*—which is possible when the competition is based upon a pure chance throw of the dice, rather than skill.

29. / And so may I, led forth by blinded^o luck / simple

30. Add line: <And not the prowess held by mine own hand> <And not the skillful means of mine own hand^o> / endeavors / own effort

31. / And I, now being led by blind fortune, | May miss the prize that lesser ones may win.

32. / And either vacate all your rights to choose

To ne'er thereafter ° take a lady's hand ³³
By ° way of marriage. Therefore, be advised. °

/ propose to a lady
{In} / ponder well / be so warned

—Morocco

I need not. ° Come, bring me unto my chance. °³⁴

{Nor will not} // the caskets / my choice

—Portia

First forward to ° the altar, ° 〈there to take
The solemn oath required.〉 After dinner ³⁵
Your hazard shall be made.

/ go ye to / go unto {temple} / chapel

—Morocco

Good fortune then,

To make me ° blest or curséd'st among men.

/ To be most

Flourish of cornets. Exeunt

33. {Never to speak to lady afterward} / Ne'er thereafter to propose to a lady / Never to ask a woman after that

34. / I do accept—now bring me to the caskets / I will accept—bring me unto the caskets

35. / First, make you oath at the chapel. This evening / Make first your solemn vow. Then, after dinner,

ACT Two, Scene One, A

2.1A

Venice. Enter Shylock and Tubal

—Tubal

Three thousand ducats, with no profit—and to Antonio?

—Shylock

Indeed he loathes me, my means, my presence. He spits upon my face; he calls me usurer, a cut-throat, a dog. And why? Because I loan money to those who need it. Well, now Antonio is the one who needs it.

—Tubal

But you are tying up so many ducats?

—Shylock

Let him revile me at the mart. Let him peddle his Christian virtue. Then, how will I respond? I will politely ask: ‘Antonio, did you not once borrow money from *me*? Did you not need the money which *I* had? Did *I* not loan you money, gratis, as a friend, which you requested of me?’ What then could he say to that? Would he open his mouth to speak? Would he spit on me again? Nay. The moment Antonio seals this bond we are equals. He will never again have anything over me.

—Tubal

And what will come if he forfeits? What then?

—Shylock

Nay, nay, Antonio will not forfeit. Nay, there is no chance that Antonio will forfeit. The only thing he will forfeit is his Christian arrogance—and he will forfeit that the moment he seals unto my bond.

—Tubal

But why a pound of flesh? Such terms are strange and most unseemly?

〈—Shylock

What use are gold and ducats to a dog? Would not a dog prefer a pound of flesh over a case of ducats? Well then, if he would see me as a dog, then give me something of value—a pound of flesh.

—Tubal

You are no dog, ay, Shylock take the gold.〉

—Shylock

I offered friendship—yet he refused. I offered love, and to forgive his years of abuse—yet he refused. He would not even hear me. All he offered in kind was to spit on my face and call me ‘dog’ once again. I offered—yet he refused. He wanted to be my enemy, for me to loan him money on those terms. So you ask, ‘why a pound of flesh? Why something so grotesque?’ I say, if nothing else then to humiliate him—to debase him as he has debased me. Let him call me *usurer*; I will call him *harlot*.^o He has put up his body for money, my money—I bought it. Now tell me, what could the good Christian say to that?

harlot: / a whore

Exeunt

*Venice. Enter Launcelet Gobbo, the clown, alone.*¹

—Launcelet

Certainly my conscience will not permit me to run from this Jew, my master.² The fiend at mine elbow³ tempts me, saying, ‘Gobbo, Launcelet Gobbo, good Launcelet,’ or ‘good Gobbo,’ or ‘good Launcelet Gobbo’—‘use your legs, take the start,⁴ run away.’ My conscience says, ‘No, take heed, honorable^o Launcelet; take heed honest Gobbo,’—or as aforesaid, ‘honorable Launcelet Gobbo’—‘do not run; scorn running^o with thy heels.’ Well the most courageous fiend bids me pack^o my things. ‘Get going!’⁵ says the fiend. ‘Away!’ says the fiend. ‘For the sake of heaven,^o’ says the fiend, ‘rouse up a brave mind⁶—and run.’ Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,⁷ says very wisely to me, ‘My honest friend Launcelet’—being an honest⁸ man’s son, or rather, an honest woman’s son—for indeed my father did something lewd, something sticky, he had a kind of taste (for women who would . . .)⁹—well, my conscience

1. Launcelet’s soliloquy, which provides a comic interlude, may have more significance than immediately realized. This is the only time a character appears alone on stage (apart from the two exiting lines delivered by Jessica in 2.6.55-6). This is not significant in itself but may echo the larger issue of Shylock’s internal battle with his own conscience (and his own fiend) with respect to his actions against Antonio. Shylock, tries to resolve his inner turmoil by making an oath to God that he will have his bond even though his conscience and Jewish sense of righteousness bids him to do otherwise. Ironically, Shylock makes his oath to God so that he may have the resolver to support the fiend and go against his conscience. Thus, in the end, both Shylock and Launcelet give into their fiendish side.

Clearly this soliloquy can be seen as a parody on the grand confrontations of the human soul—perhaps suggesting that no matter what we plan on doing, no matter what we decide, God’s plans are ultimately actuated. Here we see Launcelet musing over what appears to be a minor decision in the scheme of things and more than likely moot: no matter what Launcelet decides, he can only ‘go’ if Shylock allows him to go. The moment Launcelet decides to run (and give into the fiend) he collides with his father, his higher sense of conscience. [See Additional Notes: 2.2.1]

2. {Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master}

/ will not allow me to run / will serve me [if it allows me] to run / will try an prevent my running

certainly: Launcelet opens the scene with the word, *certainly*, which tells us that he is certain about his own uncertainty. Such an ironic certainty is also had by Shylock.

serve: a) permit, allow, b) prevent, not permit, not allow, ‘say nothing against’ In the context of the following monologue—where Launcelet’s *conscience* is bidding him to stay while the *fiend at his elbow* is telling him to go—the term *serve* would more likely mean *prevent* than *serve* (or allow). (It could also be a error for *sever*—an odd form meaning *prevent* or *keep me from*—but this is unlikely). Various explanations have been offered as to what this line might mean, such as: ‘I’m sure I’ll feel guilty if I run from this Jew,’ (Crowther); ‘I can run away from my master the Jew with a clear conscience,’ (Durband); ‘although conscience speaks against it, he will show good reason why he should go,’ (Brown).

3. / by my good side

4. / get them going

5. {Via!} / Get ye gone!

via: Italian for ‘away’

6. / let bravery enter your mind

7. **my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart:** an anatomical mix-up, signifying timidity, ‘a clinging, affectionate attitude,’ or perhaps a reference to ‘being all choked up.’

8. **honest:** in the sense one who is faithful, one who keeps his marriage vows of fidelity.

9. {for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste—well . . . }

/ did something which smacked of the lewd, something gross / did something smack, something gross, it left a bad taste (in the mouth)—well . . .

smack: pertaining to vice, lecherous, lewd. It also means a) to kiss noisily (verb); b) flavor or trait (noun); inclination.

grow to: an expression that generally referred to burnt milk which gets stuck to the bottom of a pan or to that which has the taste of burnt milk—and by extension it could mean something which has been ruined and/or which has a bad taste; also something sticky (like milk sticking to the bottom of a pot)—which might carry a lewd reference to semen. The term could be rendered as: *something sticky; something gross* (which sounds like grow to);

says, ‘Launcelet, budge not.’ ‘Budge,’ says the fiend. ‘Budge not,’ says my conscience. ‘Conscience,’ I say, ‘you counsel well.’ ‘Fiend,’ I say, ‘you counsel well.’ If I were ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew, my master, who—God forgive me for saying—¹⁰ is a kind of devil. And, if I were to I run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who, with all due respect,¹¹ is the devil himself.¹² My conscience is but a kind of hard conscience which counsels¹³ me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. O fiend, I will run. My heels are at your command^o—I will run.¹⁴

*Enter Old Gobbo, gravel-blind, with a basket*¹⁵

—Old Gobbo

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

—Launcelet [*aside*]

O heavens, this is my true-begotten father¹⁶ who, being more than sand-blind—high-gravel-

something which leaves a bad taste; something of bad taste (which means *tasting bad* and of *poor taste*, lacking judgment); *rather unsavory; ruinous* (as in a dish ruined by burning), etc. Some commentators hold the term to mean, ‘to grow or get larger,’ implicating a male erection—but such an interpretation is a bit of a stretch and does not really fit this context.

taste: a) inclination toward; b) enjoyment, relish in; c) funny smell about him; d) taste for woman

The three references in this line (*smack*, *grow to*, and *taste*) all suggest some kind of lechery and untoward sexual conduct—all of which makes Launcelet the son of a not quite honest man.

10. {God bless the mark}

11. {saving your reverence} / pardon me for saying

12. The line found in the original (“Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and in my conscience—”) is uncertain, misplaced, and was likely inserted into the text as an afterthought (by someone other than the Author). In addition, this unlikely addition weakens (and contradicts) the word play found previous line—which states that the Jew is a kind of devil and the fiend is the devil himself. The repetition of the word ‘certainly,’ which begins the soliloquy is also suspect. The term, *incarnation* is a poor pun for *incarnate*. All said, the line is weak and suspect and therefore it has been deleted.

13. {my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew}

14. **will not permit:** {will serve} / will not allow **honorable:** {honest} **scorn running:** scorn such running
bids me pack: urges me to pack **for the sake of heavens:** {for the heavens} / for heaven’s sake
command: {commandment}

15. Launcelet’s exit could be staged by his running into his gravel-blind father, who is just entering. His being stopped by his father could be seen as a symbolic representation of his conscience (superego) stopping him, despite his ‘final’ decision to follow the fiend’s counsel and run away.

This scene between Launcelet and his father takes up over 75 lines, and then involves Bassanio for another 50 lines, for a total of 125 lines [30-161] yet none of this moves the story. Thus, most productions edit down or even delete this first portion of the scene. For instance, the entire interaction between Launcelet and his father could be cut, with the scene opening at line 162. Thus the scene would open with Bassanio instructing Lorenzo (to get things ready for his voyage) and where Gratiano enters a few lines later. Another way to edit the scene would be to remove Old Gobbo altogether: such would include Launcelet’s opening monologue [1-30], then have Launcelet exit the stage, running into one of Bassanio’s men (instead of Old Gobbo). With no actual father present, Launcelet (unable to muster his own courage to speak directly to Bassanio) could invoke (and play the part of) an imaginary father to help him; as such, we would see the same kind of split-personality he displayed in the opening of the scene. [For such a line by line editing of this scene, see Additional Notes 2.2.29]

16. **my true begotten father:** a mix-up for, ‘my true begotten son.’ Launcelet was begotten by Old Gobbo not the other way around. The phrase is backwards, yet we clearly understand this to mean that Old Gobbo is Launcelet’s true father.

blind,¹⁷— knows me not. I will try confusing him.¹⁸

—Old Gobbo

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

—Launcelet

Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning after that, turn left. Then!—(pay careful attention)¹⁹ —at the very next turning, don't turn at all but veer off indirectly to the Jew's house.

—Old Gobbo

By the saints of God²⁰ 'twill be a hard place^o to hit.^o Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, still lives with him or no? ²¹

—Launcelet

Talk you of young Master Launcelet? [*aside*] Watch me now—I will raise a few tears!^o Talk you of young Master Launcelet?

a few tears: {the waters}

—Old Gobbo

No 'master,' sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say it, is an honest, exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, in good health.^o

{well to live}

—Launcelet

Well, let his father be what he will, we talk of young Master Launcelet.

—Old Gobbo

Is he your worship's friend, my Launcelet, sir? ²²

17. **sand-blind, high-gravel-blind:** blindness comes in gradations and Launcelet makes up a some new terms: *sand blind* is someone partially blind; *gravel-blind* is someone midway between sand-blind and stone-blind (total blindness), *high-gravel blind*, is somewhere between gravel-blind and stone-blind, which means he can barely see at all.

18. {I will try confusions with him.}

confusions: Q2 renders this as *conclusions* which means 'experiments'—'I will try experimenting with him (to see how he reacts.)' Launcelet, however, seems more intent on playfully *confusing* his father.

19. **Then!:** {marry}: The term marry has the force of 'verily,' 'indeed' and by extension, 'now listen carefully' or 'pay attention,' etc.

20. {By God's sonties} / By God's little saints / Even with God's favor / Even with God's help / Even with the blessings of God

sonties: a) little saints, b) sanctity, blessedness.

21. {Can you tell me whether one Launcelet that dwells with him dwells with him or not?}

/ Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, lives with him or not?

place: {way} **hit:** / find

22. {Your worship's friend and Launcelet, sir.} / My worship, do you know my boy Launcelet, sir?

your worship: honorific title for someone of high standing

your worship's friend: this could be interpreted as a polite rejection of the title of 'master' (when applied to Launcelet), who is not a master. This resembles the previous line, where Old Gobbo rejects the term 'master' when applied to Launcelet ['No 'master,' sir, but a poor man's son. [47].] Here, again, he makes the same correction so that there is no confusion and to insure that the two parties are referring to the same Launcelet—who is not a master.

—Launcelet

But I pray you, *ergo*,²³ old man, *ergo* I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelet?

—Old Gobbo

Of Launcelet, if it^o please your mastership.

{ant} / should it

—Launcelet

Ergo Master Launcelet. Talk not of Master Launcelet, old man,²⁴ for the young gentleman—according to his fate and destiny, and various legends which include the three sisters²⁵—〈who measure out and cut the thread of one’s life〉²⁶—and such branches of learning—is, indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

—Old Gobbo

Mother of God—forbid! The boy was 〈to be〉 the staff of my older years, my very prop.

—Launcelet

Do I look like a short stick or a post to hold up a sagging hovel? Am I but a staff or a prop?²⁷—Do you not know me, father?²⁸

—Old 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?

—Launcelet

Do you not know me father?

—Old Gobbo

Alack sir, I am all but blind.^o I know you not.

{I am sand-blind}

—Launcelet

Nay, indeed, even if you had your eyes, you might still fail in knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child.²⁹ Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. [*he kneels*] Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light, just as a crime cannot be hidden for long. A man’s son may 〈also hide〉 but in the end the truth will come out.^o

/ be known

—Old Gobbo

23. *ergo*: Latin term which means, ‘therefore,’ herein used by Launcelet to impress his father with his knowledge Latin, and also to mock scholars who were wont to overuse the term.

24. {father}

25. {Sisters Three} The three old women of classical mythology who spin, measure, and cut the thread of a person’s life, thus determining the length of one’s life span.

26. / who measure the length of a man’s life / who determine the length of one’s life

27. {Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop?}

cudgel: short branch, club

28. {Do you know me, father?}

29. Inversion of the proverb: ‘It’s a wise child who knows his own father.’

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

—Launcelet

Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it,³⁰ but give me your blessing: I am Launcelet, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

—Old Gobbo

I cannot think you are my son.

—Launcelet

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

—Old Gobbo

Her name is Margery, indeed. I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelet, thou are mine own flesh and blood.

Old Gobbo reaches out to feel Launcelet's face

*Launcelet offers the back of his head*³¹

All praise the Lord,³² what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin, my cart-horse, has on his tail.

—Launcelet

It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows from long to short:° I am sure he had more hair on his tail than I have on my face, when I last saw him. {backwards}

—Old Gobbo

Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master get along?° I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now? {agree}

—Launcelet

Well, well, but for mine own part, I have decided to risk it all³³ and run away, so I will not rest

30. / stop all the pretending

31. The action parallels of the same trick played on Isaac by Jacob and his mother (a story referenced by Shylock in his first meeting with Antonio). In this story, Jacob substituted himself for Esau (Jacob's older brother) in order to receive his father's blessings. Jacob, who was smooth-skinned, placed lamb wool over his face and hands—to 'feel' hairy like his brother. When his blind father touched his face, he believed that he was touching Esau (not Jacob) and thereupon blessed Jacob and bequeathed to him all his land and possessions.

32. {Lord worshiped might he be} / What blessings the Lord has granted!

33. {set up my rest} / go for broke / risk everything / 'go all in'

Set up my rest is a phrase used in the card game, *primero*, where a final wager is made and one bets (risks) all he has. In the modern poker-style game of *Texas Hold-em*, this would be akin to *going all in*. Launcelet, speaking in modern jargon might have said: 'I decided to go all in and run away.'

till I have run some ground.³⁴ My master's a very° Jew. Give him a present?—rather give him a noose!³⁵ I am famished in his service;³⁶ you may count° every rib I have with your fingers.^{37 38}

⟨Launcelet guides Old Gobbo's fingers to the side of his chest;³⁹ Old Gobbo's fingers fall down to Launcelet's pot belly; Launcelet again guides Old Gobbo's fingers to his ribs, and they again fall to his belly. Launcelet retreats.⟩

Father, I am glad you are come. Give your present, for me,⁴⁰ to one Master Bassanio, who indeed fashions his servants with fine new uniforms.⁴¹ If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has made ground.⁴²

Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers

O rare fortune!⁴³ Here comes the man—to him, father, ⟨give your gift to him.⟩⁴⁴

—Bassanio [*to one of his men*]

You may do so, but let it be done quickly that supper be ready at the latest by° five o'clock. See these letters delivered, put the new uniforms to making, and direct° Gratziano to come anon to my lodging.^{45 46}

34. In Q1 the word play is on the two meanings of *rest*: 'I have set up my *rest* (i.e., risk it all), in deciding to run away, and I will not *rest* till I have run some ground.' Alternatively, a play could be made on the word *made* (or *taken*): 'I've made (taken) my final stance, which is to run away, so I will not rest till I have made (taken) some ground.'

35. Add: ⟨I provide him with consummed° service and for this get but the lowest wages.⟩ *Consummed*, a slip for *consummate*, but also with the implication that Launcelet eats a lot.

36. Add: ⟨as he allows me no more than three meals a day.⟩

37. {You may tell every finger I have with my ribs}

The line is backwards, and should read: 'You may tell every rib I have with your fingers.' A more literal rendering might be: 'You may count every rib as if it were a finger.'

38. **very**: true \ veritable **count**: {tell} / recognize

39. A common staging is one where Launcelet spreads out his fingers on his own rib cage and then guides his father's hand to feel his fingers as if they were his exposed ribs.

40. {Give me your present} / Give your present on my behalf

41. {gives rare new liveries} / gives rare new outfits ⟨to his servants⟩ / gives embroidered costumes ⟨to his workers⟩ / suits his workers with fine new costumes

42. Launcelet seems to be making some heroic claim of 'making ground, or running to the far ends of the earth' yet in Venice, which is a series of island, his 'end' would come after a few hundred yards.

43. / What a stroke of luck!

44. In Q1, the line reads: {To him father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.}

for I am a Jew: for I am a villain

This appears as another *ex post facto* line added to the text—which is also evidenced in 24-25 and 160. As expected, most of these corrupted (and Jew-disparaging) lines, are added toward the end of a passage, where they can most easily be 'slipped into' the text (without much disruption). However, in virtually all cases, these 'corrupted emendations' appear misplaced, gratuitous, and orphaned from the rest of the passage—both in terms of style and content.

45. Bassanio is busy preparing for his departure to Belmont, which is to take place later that night.

put the new uniforms to making: {put the liveries to making} refers to the uniforms (not yet made) which are needed for the servants who will be attending Bassanio on his trip to Belmont.

and direct Gratziano: this also refers to Bassanio's trip—Bassanio seeks to take Gratziano with him to Belmont, even before Gratziano makes his request to go [2.2.170] [See Additional Notes, 2.2.113]

46. **done quickly**: {so hasted} **at the lasted by**: {at the farthest by} no later than **direct**: {desire} / please have

Exit Servant

—Launcelet [*pushing his father*]
To him, father.

—Old Gobbo [*bowing*]
God bless your worship.

—Bassanio
Many thanks.⁴⁷ Would'st thou want^o with me? {aught}

—Old Gobbo
Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

—Launcelet [*steps forward*]
Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man that would, sir, as my father shall specify—
[*pulls his father in front*]

—Old Gobbo
He hath a great infection,^o sir, as one would say, to serve— > *affection* / desire

—Launcelet [*pulls his father away*]
Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have the desire, as my father shall specify— [*pulls his father in front*]

—Old Gobbo
His master and he—saving your worship's reverence—are scarce on good terms⁴⁸—

—Launcelet [*pulls his father away*]
To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father—being, I hope, a respected^o man—shall fructify⁴⁹ unto you— [*pulls his father in front*]
respected: {old} / a man wise with wisdom

—Old Gobbo
I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow^o upon your worship, and my suit^o is—
bestow: / offer / present **suit:** / request

—Launcelet [*pulls his father away*]
In very brief, the suit is impertinent⁵⁰ to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old

47. {Gramercy}: lit.: 'grant mercy'; [God] grant [you] mercy

48. {are scarce cater-cousins}

scarce: (a) scarcely, hardly

cater-cousins: close friends, those who give (or cater) to each other like cousins

49. Error for *fructify* or *certify*.

50. Error for *pertinent*. Seems to be a blend between *important* and *pertinent*

man; and though I say it, it is though this old man, this poor man,⁵¹ my father—

—Bassanio

Let one but speak for both. [*to Launcelet*] What do you want?⁵² {What would you}

—Launcelet

To serve you, sir.

—Old Gobbo

That is the very defect⁵³ of the matter, sir.

—Bassanio [*to Launcelet*]

I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit.⁵⁴ / I shall grant thy request

Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day,⁵⁴

And recommended thee. But why prefer⁵⁵

To leave a rich Jew's service to become

The follower of so poor a gentleman?⁵⁶

—Launcelet

As the old proverb says, 'The grace of God provides enough.'⁵⁷ This very well divides my master Shylock from you, sir: you have the 'grace of God,' sir, and he hath 'enough.'⁵⁸

—Bassanio

Thou speakst it well—[*to Old Gobbo*] Go, father, with thy son.

51. {though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father} / though I say it, it is though [said by] this old yet poor man, my father.

52. / What would you want of me?

53. Mistake for *effect*, purpose, or purport

54. Bassanio is referring to an unlikely conversation had between himself and Shylock—which the audience did not see. Perhaps it came when Bassanio came to borrow money from Shylock and opened the conversation with some idle chit-chat. Shylock may have casually complained about his 'unthrifty knave,' and may have said something to Bassanio like, 'if you borrow all this money, maybe you will have enough to employ my servant as your own.' (Or perhaps Shylock wanted to pawn off his gormandizing servant to help "eat away" at the money he loaned to Bassanio, which would hasten the default of the loan). We do not, however, know what Shylock could have said about Launcelet which would prompt Bassanio to so readily accept him—unless it could be that Shylock, wanting to get rid of Launcelet, highly recommended his wasteful servant to Bassanio. Shylock mentioned (to Bassanio and Antonio) that his house was *left in the fearful guard | Of an unthrifty knave* [1.3.172-73], which was not a flattering way to describe a servant—and certainly would not prompt Bassanio to say, 'he hath preferred (recommended) thee.'

55. {And has preferred thee, if it be preferment}

Alt: this one line could be replaced with three lines—lines which express that Shylock wanted so much to get rid of Launcelet that we would pay Bassanio to take the fool.

And recommended you, (and was so kind | To offer me some gold if I would take you.) | Tell me, is this a change that you prefer?

56. / The lowly servant of a poor gentleman

57. The old proverb is: 'The grace of God is gear enough,' which comes from the biblical passage: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' [2 Cor. 12:9]

/ The grace of God is well enough / The grace of God provides enough / The grace of God provides you with all you need.

58. {The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.}

[to *Launcelet*] Take leave of thy old master; then make way
Unto my house. [*To one of his men*] Give him a uniform^o
More fancy^o than his fellows.^o See it done.⁵⁹

{livery}
/ braided / trimmed // the others

—Launcelet

Father, let's go.^o I cannot get a service job <on my own>?—I have ne'er a tongue in my head!⁶⁰
[*Looking at his palm*] Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer palm, which he may^o offer to swear
upon the Book, I shall have good fortune. [*Looking more closely at the lines*] What⁶¹—here's a
simple line of life—and it tells of^o a small trifle of wives—alas, fifteen in the least.^o ⁶² A dozen⁶³
widows and nine maids is a simple income—or coming-in—for one man.⁶⁴ And here it says I
will 'scape from drowning thrice and elude the peril of a sword—belonging to a man who
catches me on the edge of a featherbed with his wife.⁶⁵ Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a
good wench for this task. Father, come, I'll take my leave of the Jew before I take a tinkle.⁶⁶ ⁶⁷

59. {Give him a livery | More guarded than his fellows.}

guarded: ornamented with braid or trim; fancy, trimmed, ornamental. Why Launcelet gets a uniform 'more guarded than his fellows' is not clear. Launcelet's fancy uniform finds likeness to the gold casket which is the most ornamental in show yet which contains the least inside. The ornamental garment also brings to mind the image of a 'yellow-guarded coat' which might be worn by a fool or a jester. We must, however, assume Bassanio's motives are generous, and welcoming, and have nothing to do with accentuating Lancelot's fool-heartedness.

60. / I cannot speak for myself?

This line is delivered with sarcasm. Launcelet is realizing (in a moment of clarity) that he is a fool, and cannot even get a service job for himself (without the help of his father). This is soon remedied when Launcelet takes to reading his own palm, and 'discovers' that rather than having a simple life (as expected) he is going to be a grand personage, with 15 wives! In his reading he reinterprets the word *simple*, imparting it with a new and grandiose meaning. (A simple man would ordinarily have one wife, but *simple*, in Launcelet's new definition of the terms, means he is going to have a great number of wives).

61. {Go to}: a) a slight expression of disbelief and surprise: come on, what's this (unexpected thing I see); b) a slight curse, such as: damn, to hell, go to hell. Launcelet, looking at his palm, could a) be pleasantly surprised about his good fortune and all the wives and adventure he is going to have, or b) be taken aback and cursing his discovery of a simple lifeline—which he then refutes. [See Additional Notes, 2.2.153]

Shylock uses the same phrase, in 1.3.112 [Well, now it appears you need my help— | Go to, then].

62. / And in regards to that small matter of wives, [*looking down again*—alas, here it says fifteen wives in the very least.

63. {a leven}: The two-word term suggests the analogy of 'a dozen' (or 'an even dozen') though most editions supplant the term with 'eleven.' Some editions retain the spelling 'aleven' which seems to imply 'eleven.'

64. {is a simple coming-in}: implies income, perhaps from dowries, but also has the sexual innuendo of entering into (coming-in) a woman.

65. {and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed—here are simple scapes}

the edge of a feather-bed: this implies that he is coming out of a soft-bed with another man's wife (which puts his life in peril). This is humorous mix-up of the phrase, 'the edge of a sword' becomes 'edge of a feather-bed.'

66. {I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.}

in the twinkling: immediately, without delay, in the blink of an eye, in 'the twinkling of an eye.' This line, along with a few others in the scene [including 24-5, and 108] are amiss in terms of content and tonality—and may have been later-made additions. This line could be left as is (in its incomplete form), emended ('in the twinkling of an eye'), or rectified—preserving the intent of the line, which is that Launcelet intends to take leave of the Jew without delay.

In this rendering, the term *tinkle* is used only because it sounds like *twinkle*. The absurd image used in this rendering echos (or rather mocks) the hero's cry, who, having an urgent task to perform, tells his lady that he will not sleep until the task is accomplished (and he returns). This is the pledge Bassanio makes to Portia right before he takes his leave from Belmont [3.2.321-24]. Here Launcelet is claiming that he will not urinate until his task is accomplished. As part of a comic staging, Launcelet could look very restless, needing to go real bad, and hence in a great hurry to take leave of the Jew and relieve himself.

before I take a tinkle: / before I relieve myself / before I take my tinkling / before I take a piss.

67. **let's go:** {in} **he may:** {doth} **palm:** {table} **and it tells of:** {here's} **in the least:** {is nothing}
task: {gear} / work / stuff / business / matter

Exeunt Launcelet and Old Gobbo

—Bassanio [*continuing his instructions*]

I pray, Leonardo, attend thee to this: ⁶⁸

When everything is bought and stowed on board⁶⁹

{orderly bestowed}

Return in haste, for I do feast tonight⁷⁰

/ entertain

With all my dearest friends.⁷¹ Now hurry, go.

/ My best-esteemed companions

—Leonardo

My best endeavors shall be done herein.^o

/ I'll do my utmost to complete the task

Leonardo moves to exit. Enter Gratziano.

—Gratziano

Where's your master?

—Leonardo

Yonder, sir, he walks.

Exit Leonardo

—Gratziano

Signior Bassanio!

—Bassanio

Signior Gratziano! ⁷²

—Gratziano

I have a suit for you.^o

/ I have but one request

—Bassanio

You have obtained it.^o

/ And I will grant it

—Gratziano

68. {I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this} / I pray thee Leonard, attend to this
think on this: a) attend to these matters, b) think carefully about what I am saying

69. Bassanio is preparing to leave for Belmont and is having his provisions stowed on board his ship.

70. {for I do feast tonight}

feast: a) entertain, throw a feast for (my best-esteemed acquaintance); b) eat, party, enjoy myself at a feast (with my best-esteemed acquaintance)

71. {. . . for I do feast tonight | My best-esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go.}

The reference here is singular; Bassanio refers to his *best-esteemed acquaintance*. This might be interpreted as a reference to Antonio yet Antonio is his dearest friend not his best-esteemed *acquaintance*. Odd as it may seem, this is most likely a reference to Shylock, who is an *acquaintance* (not a friend) and who is *best-esteemed* in that he loaned Bassanio the money which enabled him to make his journey. Thus, Shylock as the *best-esteemed acquaintance* will be the honored guest at Bassanio's celebration.

72. Q1 has 'Gratiano.' *Signior* has been added to complete the meter, and to echo Gratziano's words.

Very well: I must go with you to Belmont. ^{73 74}

—Bassanio

Why then you must, but hear thee Gratziano:

Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice—

Parts that become^o thee happily^o enough, ⁷⁵

/ Aspects that suit / fittingly

And, to our eyes, do not appear as faults; ⁷⁶

But where thou art not known, ⁷⁷ why there they look^o

/ these may appear

Somewhat^o too overbearing. Thus, take pains ⁷⁸

{Something} / A tad / A bit

To allay, with some drops of self-control, ^{o 79}

{modesty}

Thy bounding^o spirit, lest through thy wild behavior ⁸⁰

{skipping} / leaping

I be disfavored^{o81} in the place I go^o

{I be misconstered} // in the eyes of others

And lose^o my hopes ⟨of success⟩. ⁸²

/ ruin / dash

—Gratziano

Now^o hear me:

{Signor Bassanio}

73. {You must not deny me. I must go with you to Belmont.}

This line is likely corrupt for the following reasons: a) the iambs are misplaced (with no emphasis on the fourth syllable) and b) the line contains seven iambs (instead of five). In addition, Gratziano is amiss in making a demand [*you must not deny me*] after his request has already been granted. More likely, Gratziano would be confirming what Bassanio had just granted, with a line such as: ‘Very well then—I’ll go with you to Belmont.’ To bring this line into the regular iambic verse, some editions add ‘Nay,’ to the beginning: ‘Nay, you must not deny me. I must go | With you to Belmont.’

Another way to rectify the line (in terms of meter and content) would be to have Bassanio grant Gratziano’s request once, not twice:

Grat: I have a suit—and you must not say ‘no’^o— / deny me

Signior, I must go with you to Belmont.

Bass: Why then you must. But hear thee Gratziano,

74. It is likely that Bassanio knew of Gratziano’s request before he even asked it—and that is why he granted Gratziano’s suit without even hearing it. This is in accord with the following theory (as previously stated) which goes as follows: a) Nerissa may have had a chance meeting with Gratziano (where they took a liking to each other and where Nerissa learned about Bassanio—and where she recalled that Bassanio had already been to Belmont and caught Portia’s eye); b) Nerissa (in service to Portia) arranged to have a secret meeting with Bassanio, where Nerissa proposed to him a plan: she told him that if he could win Portia’s love (where Portia falls in love with him, and would chose him to be her husband) then she (Nerissa) would help him to choose the right casket; c) as part of this plan—and for her own romantic interests—she told Bassanio to bring Gratziano with him to Belmont. [See Additional Note, 2.2.171]

75. / Aspects that fit thy manner well enough / Traits that are fitting to thee well enough / Qualities that become you well enough

76. {And in such eyes as ours appear not faults} / And traits that we do not decry as faults

77. {But where thou art not known} / But where they know you not

78. {Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain}

Something too liberal: / somewhat too ‘in-your-face’

79. {To allay with some cold drops of modesty}

80. One could expand the previous two line into three:

/ To allay thy exuberant spirit

With a few drops of cooling modesty,

Lest through your wild and raucous^o behavior / unruly / froward

81. {I be misconstered}: / I be misconstrued / I find disfavor

82. **And lose my hopes:** More likely Bassanio should say, ‘and blow my cover’—the cover of pretending to be a rich and cultured suitor (which Gratziano’s unruly conduct would undermine). According to a fair drawing of the lottery, if Bassanio was going to chose a casket based solely on his own wit, then none of Gratziano’s actions would have any effect on the outcome of the lottery nor cause Bassanio to ‘lose his hopes.’ Thus it appears that Bassanio is pinning his hopes of success on something other than a simple drawing of the lottery. According to our theory (which states that Bassanio will get help with the lottery, from Nerissa, if he is able to win Portia’s heart), if Gratziano is too rude, then this might put off Portia—and not reflect the noble character Bassanio is trying to put forth—and, thus, Bassanio would lose his hopes of Portia falling in love with him. [See Additional Notes, 2.2.181]

If I do not display a staid demeanor,⁸³ / sober manner
 Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
 Hold a prayer-book in my hand,⁸⁴ look demurely—
 Nay, more—while saying grace,⁸⁵ cover mine eyes {while grace is saying}
 Thus, with my hat, and sigh, and say, ‘Amen,’
 And follow every count of good behavior—⁸⁶ / manner of politeness
 Like one well-studied⁸⁷ in a sad expression⁸⁸ / well-versed {sad ostent}
 To please his grandma—never trust me more.⁸⁹ / ne’er trust me again

—Bassanio

Well, we shall see the way you hold yourself.

—Gratziano

Nay, but I drink tonight.⁸⁸ you shall not judge⁹⁰ me {gauge}
 By what we do tonight.

—Bassanio

No, t’were a pity.⁸⁹ / ’Twould be a pity
 I would entreat you rather to put on
 Your boldest suit of mirth; for we have friends
 That want some merriment.⁹⁰ But fare you well / a good party
 I have some business.

—Gratziano

And I must meet⁹⁰ Lorenzo and the rest. {to}
 But we will visit you at suppertime.

Exeunt

83. {If I do not put on a sober habit}

sober habit: a) solemn, serious, funeral-like behavior, b) sober clothing, a sober garb—referring to a sober exterior look.

84. {Wear prayer-books in my pocket}

85. / Nay, more—while grace is being said, look down

86. {Use all observance of civility} / Observe all manner of good behavior / And use all manner of civility / And observe all counts of civility / And employ every manner of politeness

87. / So as to please his grandma—trust me never.

88. {Nay, but I bar tonight}

but I bar tonight: a) only if I behave (suppress, stop, bar) myself tonight—which I am not going to do, so do not judge my actions by my raucous actions tonight. b) Nay, but I bar (refuse to accept any such restrictions) tonight; I am exempted from any such restrictions tonight.

89. {No, that were a pity}

No, that would be a pity (if you were barred from drinking and having fun tonight)

90. {That purpose merriment. But fare you well} / Who’re set on merriment
 / That want a rousing party. But farewell

Shylock's house. Enter Jessica and Launcelet.

—Jessica

I'm sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell;^o and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.²
But fare thee well. There is a ducat for thee.
And Launcelet, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
Give him this letter; do it secretly.
And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

> hellishly dull

—Launcelet

Adieu. Tears exhibit ³ my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew. If a Christian did not
fool 'round with your mother and get thee ⁴ I am much deceived. But adieu. These foolish
drops^o do sometimes drown my manly spirit. Adieu.

drops: / tears

Exit Launcelet

—Jessica

Farewell, good Launcelet.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To shun my father and bring him dishonor.⁵
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners.⁶ O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.⁷

/ I am not kin to his ways

/ O my Lorenzo, soon I'll end this strife

1. Rowe, who was a foremost Shakespeare commentator, and 'a practical man of the theatre,' did not divide 2.2 - 2.6 into separate scenes but played them all as one continuous action.

2. / When things got hellishly drab around here, | You, like a merry devil, came to rob | The taste of tediousness with your laughter.

3. Slip for *inhibit*, but this term might also apply in the sense that he is talking with his tears and that his tears are telling what his tongue is unable to tell.

4. {If a Christian do not play the knave and get thee} / If a Christian did not fool behind you your father's back and beget thee

5. {To be ashamed to be my father's child}

It is not clear as to why being 'ashamed to be her father's child' is a 'heinous sin.' The sin relates to Jessica's upcoming actions, whereby she betrays and dishonors her father. Thus, the line has been changed to reflect this view.

6. {I am not to his manners}

Manners most likely refers to Shylock's somber and thrifty (or hardened) ways; to his frugal manner. His spirit is old and thrifty as opposed to Jessica's which is carefree and youthful. (We see the stark difference in their manners when Shylock carefully accounts for every ducat and where Jessica, the moment she comes upon some money, frivolously spends it.). *Manner* could also refer to Shylock's loyalty to his Jewish tradition (and the inner sacrifice that entails); Jessica is more inclined to pleasure and is quick to abandon her tradition for the hope of a better, more comfortable, life.

[See Additional Notes, 2.3.19]

7./ If as you promise, if your word be true, | I'll soon be Christian, and e'er with you.

Exit

Venice. Enter Gratziano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio ¹

—Lorenzo

Nay, we will slip^o away at supper-time,^o {slink} / steal // during the feast
 Go to my lodging, put on our disguise,
 And all return within the hour. ^{2 3}

—Gratziano

We have not made good preparation. ⁴

—Salarino

We have not spoke as yet^o of torchbearers. {spoke us yet} / spoken yet

—Salanio

This plan will go afoul if not well-made; ⁵
 And best, I think,^o abandoned altogether. ⁶ / methinks // And better yet

—Lorenzo

‘Tis now but four o’clock: we have two hours
 To get things ready.^o {To furnish us} / to run the plan / to finish up

Enter Launcelet with a letter

Launcelet, what’s the news? ⁷

1. Like many other scenes, this scene also opens *in media res*, in the middle of an ongoing conversation. Here Lorenzo is discussing the preparation of a plan, which is surely the plan to steal away Jessica later that night.

2. / And return here within an hour’s time

3. This is a poorly conceived plan, as Gratziano notes in the following line. They do not yet know if Shylock is going to be at the dinner (which they find out from Launcelet later in the scene [16]). The plan might be to slink away during dinner and then return within an hour to the masque (which would follow dinner). Again, why they plan to go the dinner in the first place, and why they should return in a disguise, is not known. Perhaps the plan is tentative and changes with the arrival of Jessica’s letter, which notes that Shylock will be out for the evening.

4. **preparation:** preparation for stealing away Jessica. As part of this preparation, they must also prepare their costumes.

5. {‘Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered} / ‘Tis bound to fail unless it be well-planned

vile: foul, likely to go wrong

quaintly: noticeably; well-, carefully, with consideration

ordered: a) planned, b) carried out

/ ‘Tis bound to fail unless it is clearly planned

6. {And better in my mind not undertook} / And better yet, the plan should be abandoned.

This reference refers to the ill-conceived plan to steal away Jessica, which they are discussing. Salanio, it seems, is more level-headed than both Lorenzo (who is foolishly acting out of love) and Gratziano, who is, well, Gratziano.

7. {Friend Launcelet, what’s the news?} It is not clear how Lorenzo would know Launcelet, or come to call him ‘friend,’ but we can suspect that his interest in Jessica—and the common method of using servants to deliver messages back and forth—would make Launcelet his ‘friend.’ Where Lorenzo and the others are meeting (which, we suspect, is in a private place, since they are discussing secret plans to steal away Jessica) and how Launcelet comes upon them is unclear. Jessica instructed Launcelet to deliver the message to Lorenzo at dinner: *soon at supper shalt thou see | Lorenzo, who is thy new master’s guest. | Give him this letter; do it secretly.* [2.3.5-7]. Here it is four

—Launcelet [*handing him the letter*]
And shall it please you to break the seal it shall tell you.⁸

—Lorenzo
I know the handwriting^o ‘tis a fair hand, {I know the hand, in faith}⁹
And whiter than the paper ‘tis writ on
Is the fair hand that writ

—Gratziano
Love-news, I think.^{oo} {in faith} / It must be love-news

—Launcelet
By your leave, sir.¹⁰

—Lorenzo
Where^o goest thou? {Whither}

—Launcelet
Well sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup tonight with my new master the Christian.¹¹

—Lorenzo
Hold here, take this [*gives him a coin*]. Tell gentle Jessica,
I will not fail her.^{12 13} Speak it^o privately. / Tell her

Exit Launcelet

o’clock, not six o’clock. [See Additional Notes, 2.4.9]

8. {And it shall please you to break up this, shall it seem to signify}

9. **I know the hand:** refers to Jessica’s beautiful handwriting.

10. / With your permission, sir, I now will leave

11. Jessica’s letter outlines her plan with a ‘go ahead’ for tonight. This confirmation, we must assume, is based upon Jessica’s belief that her father will accept Bassanio’s invitation for dinner and be away that evening.

12. {Tell gentle Jessica | I will not fail her}

All Launcelet knows is that Lorenzo will not fail Jessica—he knows nothing about what Lorenzo is referring to, nor anything about Lorenzo ‘coming by’ to Jessica’s house later that evening. However, in the next scene, when Launcelet is bidding farewell to Shylock, his final words to Jessica are: *Mistress, look out at window for all this: | There will come a Christian by | Will be worth a Jewè’s eye.* [2.5.39-42] As stated, he had no way of knowing this.

One way to rectify this discrepancy would be to add a line whereby Lorenzo tells Launcelet something of the plan:

Hold here, take this [*gives him a coin*]. Tell gentle Jessica,
(We’ll meet as planned,^o beneath her balcony—)
I will not fail her.

The discrepancy is slight and need not be rectified; whereas Lorenzo telling the loose-lipped Launcelot of his plan may be more problematic.

13. What we find is that Lorenzo does fail her, that he comes an hour late [2.6.2]—a delay which, in all likelihood, would have blown the whole plan. This delay (which he attributes to having had to finish up some business) would have given Shylock ample time to return from dinner—unless the ‘business’ which caused his delay was to wait at Bassanio’s until he was sure that Shylock arrived (which meant that the coast was clear).

[to Salarino and Salanio]

Will you be ready for the masque tonight?^{o 14 15}

/ the masquerade?

I've got myself a golden torchbearer.¹⁶

/ I am provided with

—Salarino

By Mary, I'll get to it straight away.¹⁷

{Ay marry} / With tending / God willing

—Salanio

And so will I.

—Lorenzo Meet me and Gratziano

At Gratziano's lodging in an hour.^o

{some hour hence} / one hour hence

—Salarino

'Tis good we do so.^o

/ We'll surely do so

Exit Salarino and Salanio

—Gratziano

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

—Lorenzo

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house,

What gold and jewels she is furnished with,^o

/ she will bring with her

What page's suit she'll wear for her disguise.^{o 18}

{she hath in readiness}

If e'er the Jew, her father, comes to heaven

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;¹⁹

14. / Go gentlemen—prepare you for the masque

15. The Q1 text reads:

I will not fail her, speak it privately

Go Gentlemen, will you prepare you for this mask tonight,

I am provided of a Torch-bearer. *Exit Clowne.*

[See Additional Notes, 2.4.21]

16. {I am provided of a torchbearer}

Masquerade parties were elaborate affairs and sometimes the guests, dressed as dignitaries, would be accompanied by a torchbearer to announce their entry. Lorenzo's reference to Jessica as his torchbearer not only indicates that she will mark his entrance to the masque but that she will illumine his life with love and beauty.

It is clear that Jessica will not be playing the part of Lorenzo's torchbearer at the masque, and that all reference to Jessica being a torchbearer is by way of analogy. Jessica and Lorenzo, filled up with gold, are going to make their way out of town while everyone (including Shylock) is distracted with the colorful event.

17. {Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight}

marry: An exclamation evoking the name of Mary, Jesus's mother. It is similar to 'by Mary,' or 'by the mother of God' and would, by extension, mean: 'in truth, indeed, surely,' etc.

18. This plan is contingent upon Shylock being out of the house, which is something they are not yet sure of since the invitation to dine with Bassanio has not yet been accepted. It seems that Jessica is sure that Shylock will accept the offer (even though he is hesitant).

19. The next three lines are odd and out of place and have no reason to come out of Lorenzo's mouth—and these harsh lines divert, and interfere with, Lorenzo's loving reverie concerning Jessica. These appear like anti-Semitic emendations; these emendations make a rude entrance at the end of several scenes or as part of a character's exiting

Come, go with me; [*gives Gratziano the letter*] peruse this as thou goest.
Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.²⁰

Exeunt

lines. Not only are these lines suspect (in this content) they break up the flow of the passage and force their way in as an inopportune afterthought. Hence, these words do nothing more than drag the dialogue and harm Lorenzo's character. As these lines are misplaced—and were likely added by someone other than the author—they have been deleted. The lines, as found in Q1, read as follows:

{And never dare misfortune cross her foot}°	/ And may misfortune never cross her path,
{Unless she do it under this excuse:}°	/ Else it befalls her under this excuse:
{That she° is issue° to a faithless Jew}	/ daughter

cross her foot: obstruct her path. This refers to the inauspicious omen of tripping over something when on a journey. Here it could be applied to her 'journey of life,' the journey she is about to take as wife of Lorenzo.

Unless she: unless it, unless misfortune. Fate, destiny, and fortune—and in this case 'misfortune'—were attributed to a goddess and female in gender. Thus *she* refers to the goddess of misfortune and not Jessica.

faithless: a) lacking faith in Christ, b) lacking truth, untrustworthy

[See Additional Notes, 2.4.37]

20. As stated in a previous note, this reference to a torchbearer does not mean that Jessica is going to be Lorenzo's torchbearer at the masque but, symbolically, that she is going to light his way. We might also assume, by way of analogy, that part of the light that Jessica will provide is the light (or brightness) of the gold she is going to gild herself with. Compare this light-giving aspect of Jessica with Portia's light-giving in 5.1.129.

ACT TWO – Scene Five 2.5.0

Venice. Enter Shylock and Launcelet

—Shylock

Well, thou shalt^o see—thy eyes shall be thy judge— / shall / will
The difference ‘tween^o old Shylock and Bassanio. {of}
[*calling*] Hey^o Jessica! Thou shalt not stuff thyself¹ {What}
As thou hast done with me. [*calling*] Hey^o Jessica! {What}
Nor sleep, and snore, and wear out all your pants
From sitting round all day.² [*calling louder*] Hey^o Jessica! {Why}

—Launcelet

Hey^o Jessica! {Why}

—Shylock Who bids thee call? Not I.
I do not bid thee call.

—Launcelet Your worship always
Told me I could do nothing without bidding.³

Enter Jessica

—Jessica

Have you been calling me?^o What is your will? {Call you?}

—Shylock

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
Here are my keys. But why then^o should I go? {wherefore}

1. {Thou shalt not gormandize} / Thou shall not gluttonize.

A curious combination of a Jewish type commandment, ‘thou shalt not’ and a Christian admonition against gluttony.

2. {And sleep, and snore, and rend apparel out}

/ And sleep and snore, and wear out all your clothes / And wear out clothes from sitting ‘round all day.

/ And sleep and snore and wear out the bottom | Of pants from sitting on them all day long.

/ And sleep, and wear out the seat of your pants | From all your sitting on them all the day.

rend: this terms usually implies *tearing*. In this context—where Launcelet sleeps and snores on the job—*rend* would imply the wearing out of clothes through sitting on them all day, thinning the fabric—especially at the seat of one’s pants—making them more prone to tears and rips.

3. { *Shy:* And sleep and snore and rend apparel out

Why Jessica, I say!

Launce: Why Jessica!

Shy: Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Launce: Your worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding. }

I am not bid for love. They flatter me.^{4 5}

But yet I'll go in spite,^o to feed upon

{hate}

The wasteful^o Christian. Jessica, my girl,

{prodigal}

Care for^o my house. I am right loathe to go;

{Look to} / Attend / Maintain

There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest^o ⁶

/ in my mind

For I did dream of money-bags last night^o—⁷

{tonight}

⟨A sign which tells of an upcoming loss.⟩⁸

/ augurs some loss in the future

—Launcelet

I beseech you, sir, go. My young master doth expect your *reproach*.⁹

—Shylock

As I expect his.^o

{So do I his}

—Launcelet

And they are planning something.¹⁰ I will not say you shall see a masquerade party¹¹ but if you do, then it was not for nothing that^o my nose fell a-bleeding on Black^o Monday last, at six

o'clock i'th'morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday, the fourth year in the afternoon.¹²

/ then it must have been because // Easter

—Shylock

4. {I am not bid for love. They flatter me}.

/ I am not bid for friendship nor for love: | They seek to flatter me—and nothing more.

/ I am not bid for love. They ⟨only seek | To⟩ flatter me, ⟨to soften up the Jew.⟩

5. It is odd that, having previously said to Bassanio, 'I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you'[1.3.34], Shylock is now going to eat with him. His motivations, therefore, to eat with Bassanio—and go against his word—must be quite strong. Later he states that he is going 'in hate' to try and eat a lot (and therefore bankrupt the Christian) which is a comical excuse. (And this may be the same reasoning by which he gave his gormandizing servant to Bassanio). By all indications, however, Shylock is going because Antonio's closest friend, Bassanio, has offered him something by way of friendship (whereas, in the past, all he received from Antonio was scorn); Shylock also wants to be placed on an equal status with the Christians and wants Antonio to see him (Shylock) being commended by Bassanio.

In terms of anti-Semitism, Bassanio is clearly aloof to it. Bassanio, it seems, is somewhat friendly toward Shylock (and may even feel a debt of gratitude towards him) enough so to invite him over to his house for dinner that night. And the uncertain meaning of line 2.2.165 ['for I do feast tonight | My best-esteemed acquaintance'] could mean that Bassanio is throwing the feast for Shylock or that Shylock is the guest of honor.

6. / There is something about which is disturbing / There is something amiss, which ruins my peace

7. {For I did dream of money bags tonight}

tonight: last night.

During Elizabethan times, a person's dreams were thought to portend an *opposite* occurrence in real life. Hence, Shylock's dream of money-bags (bags filled with money) portends its opposite—a loss of money. The contemporary understanding of dreams holds that the content of person's dream corresponds to some waking state occurrence rather than the opposite.

8. To realize the original meaning, an additional line was added.

/ A sign which tells me of some loss to come. / An omen telling me of some great loss

/ And all the bags were empty of their gold.

9. **reproach** (scolding, blame): error for *approach*. Shylock understands the term intended (*approach*) yet responds in kind to the word *reproach*.

10. {And they have conspired together}

11. {a masque}

12. Lancelot makes a confused and nonsensical prediction (using various signs and omens) as a way to mock—and also dismiss the validity of—Shylock's ill-boding dream. We have the impression that Launcelet is aware of the upcoming plan, which is contingent upon Shylock attending the feast, and therefore he does his best to get Shylock to accept the invitation.

What, there's a masque?° Hear you me, Jessica,
 Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,¹³
 Do not climb you up to the windows then,¹⁴
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnished° faces:°
 But plug° my house's ears—I mean my casements;°
 Let not the sound of mindless° fopp'ry° enter
 My somber house. . . . By Jacob's staff¹⁵ I swear
 I have no mind° of feasting forth° tonight,
 But I will go.¹⁶ [*To Launcelet*] Go you before me, then,¹⁷
 Say I will come.

{What, are there masques?} / A masquerade?

/ painted // colored masks

{stop} // windows

{shallow} / folly

/ I've no desire // going out

—Launcelet I will go before, sir.
 [*aside to Jessica*] Mistress, look out the window for all this:
 There will come a Christian by
 Will be worth a Jewess eye

/ There a Christian will come by,

/ Worthy of a Jewess' eye.

Exit

—Shylock
 What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha? ¹⁸

—Jessica
 His words were, 'farewell mistress'—nothing more.

—Shylock

13. / And the vile squeals of the wry-necked fife-player

fife: a small, shrill-toned musical instrument resembling a flute and used mainly with drums to make music which would accompany marching. *Fife* as well as *drum* (mentioned in the previous line) could refer to the instrument or the musician playing the instrument. Hence, *drum* would be a reference to 'a drummer' and *fife* to 'a fife-player.'

wry-necked fife: refers to the image of a flute player who twists his neck and hold his head awry (bent to one side) while playing. McDonnell, however, believes that *the squealing of the wry-necked fife* might indicate the sound of the *wry neck*, a bird with a high-pitched call which writhes its head and neck, though this interpretation is a stretch. (In current literature, this line is often misquoted as: 'the vile *squeaking* of the wry-necked fife.')

14. {Clamber not you up top the casements then} / Do not arise and look ye out the window // Don't climb you up to the windows to look

15. {By Jacob's staff} This is not a Jewish saying. Jacob's thrift, however, is a characteristic admired by Shylock, and Shylock often identifies with this biblical character. A Jacob's staff referred to a pole which provided a firm foundation for a compass or astronomical instrument. Thus, "by Jacob's staff" would mean, "by that which supports me," or more loosely, "by my gut feeling."

16. We find no clear reason as to why Shylock is invited to dinner—unless out of Bassanio's gratitude for his having generously loaned him the money, gratis. The feast may be in honor of Shylock. Moreover, we do not know why Shylock consents to go, especially after having made the point, earlier that day, that he (as a Jew) would not eat with a Christian. [1.3.9-30] [See Additional Notes, 2.6.38]

17. {Go you before me, sirrah}

sirrah: a low (though not disparaging) term which is often used in reference to a servant. Portia also uses the term when addressing her servants [1.2.129]

18. **Hagar's offspring:** a negative reference to Ishmael, the foolish son of Abrahams's Egyptian concubine, Hagar. Hagar (and her son) left Abraham's house, complaining of his harsh treatment, and later they became outcasts. [Genesis 21:9-21] [See Additional Note, 2.5.43]

The patch¹⁹ is kind enough, but a huge feeder.^o
 Snail-slow in working,^o and he sleeps by day
 More than the wildcat. Drones that do not work
 Stay not in my hive.²⁰ Thus I part with him—^o
 Now to the Christian so he can help waste^o ²¹
 His borrowed purse.^o Well Jessica, go in,
 Perhaps I will return immediately.^o ²²
 Do as I bid and^o shut doors^o after you:
 Fast bind, fast find—
 A proverb never stale in a thrifty mind.²³

/ dolt / fool // eater
 {profit} > producing anything

 / let him go /give him up
 / with whom he can waste
 / funds / wealth
 / return at once. So now
 {you,} //close up

Exit

—Jessica
 Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed,
 I have^o a husband,^o you a daughter lost.²⁴

/ gain {a father}

Exit, opposite door

19. **patch:** dolt, fool, clown. A term referring to the motley or ‘patchwork’ garb used by professional fools. It might also refer to someone as worthless as a patch of cloth. The term is used in other plays in the canon, such as *A Midsummer’s Night Dream* and *The Comedy of Errors*. Shylock’s complaints are not personal attacks, per se: the brunt of his contempt is directed at Launcelet’s wastefulness (i.e. his laziness and large appetite) which is at odds with Shylock’s ‘thriftiness.’

20. {Drones hive not with me}

21. {To one that I would have him help waste} / And now to one with whom he can help waste} / Now to the Christian, so to help him waste

22. This is a mild threat for Jessica to stay put.

23. This common proverb, used from the fifteenth century onwards, means: ‘if you lock things up, then you will be able to keep hold of them.’ These are Shylock’s last words to his daughter—and they are mistaken. It turns out that the very opposite is true: He treats his daughter in the same binding way as he would treat his gold or some possession. [See Additional Notes, 2.6. 54]

24. {Farewell; and if my fortune be not crossed | I have a father, you a daughter lost.}

I have a father: refers to Jessica’s gaining a husband (who will take care of her like a new father); it could also indicate her gaining a ‘holy Father,’ through her marriage and conversion to Christianity (which involves the loss of her Jewish father and heritage).

crossed: a possible pun—she is hoping that her fortune be not *crossed* (i.e., that nothing will cross, thwart, or come in the way of her plan to marry Lorenzo and become a Christian), yet her fortune *is* crossed in that she is converting to Christianity, symbolized by the cross.

*Venice. Enter the maskers, Gratziano, Salarino, and Salanio.*¹

—Gratziano

This is the window under^o which Lorenzo
Desired us to wait.^o

{penthouse under} / balcony by
{make stand}

—Salarino His hour is past.^o

{is almost past}²

—Gratziano

It is^o a marvel he out-dwells his hour,^o
For lovers ever-run before the clock.

/ And 'tis // that he comes so late

—Salarino

O, ten times faster fly the doves of Venus^o³
To seal love's bond new made^o than they are wont
To keep their well-intentioned vows^o intact.^o⁴

{Venus' pigeons fly}
/ To newly seal love's bond
/ meaningful promise // unbroken

1. The stage heading in Q1 reads: 'Enter the maskers, *Gratiano* and *Salerino*.' This stage heading is somewhat confusing, both in its reference to *Salerino* (which seems to indicate *Salarino* and not *Salerio*) and to 'the maskers'—which appears before the character names. Such an anomaly suggests an *ad hoc* change in the original text. We can assume that the original heading may have read 'Enter maskers' which indicated the entrance of Gratziano, Salarino, and Salanio. Thus, it is likely that a diligent typesetter, wanting to 'clarify' the text, later added the names of *Gratiano* and *Salerino* to the heading. The mistaken spelling of *Salarino* suggests that this name was not part of the original heading (but added later). Thus, with this 'partial' typesetter addition—the addition of *Salarino* and not *Salarino* and *Salanio*—most editors assume that Salanio (because he is not specifically listed) is absent from the scene. This, however, is unlikely since Salarino and Salanio were both part of the original planning and both, up til now, have always appeared together. The scene, however, remains unaffected by this minor point and it can be staged with one or both Sals being present. In keeping with the prior action of the play, and the fact that Salarino and Salanio always appear together, both Salarino and Salanio are included in the scene. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.0]

2. The lines in Q1 appear as follows:

Gra: Desired us to make stand.

Sal: His hour is almost past.

Gra: And it is a marvel he outdwells his hour.

The first two lines are truncated; and if they are combined they would form a line too long for the standard meter. In addition, Salarino states that Lorenzo's hour is 'almost past' whereas Gratziano replies that he 'outdwells his hour.' The lines could remain as they stand, or they could be combined into one standard line.

Gra: Told us to wait.

Lor: His hour is almost past.^o

/ all but past

Gra: It is a marvel he prolongs^o his hour.

/ outdwells

3. **Venus' pigeons:** May refer to the pigeons that draw Venus's chariot (or carry Venus) though this image is 'very odd' and not consistent with any known mythology. Warburton holds that the original may have read *Venus' widgeons* (which refers to a kind of duck and suggests a wayward and silly bird) though such an emendation would offer no improvement upon the original. Most agree that the subject (the one who seals love's bond) refers to Venus and not to the pigeons that draw her. All said, *Venus' pigeons* probably refers neither to Venus nor her pigeons but should be taken as a metaphor for a somewhat inconsistent lover (a pigeon) who is smitten by love (Venus) and who runs fast to obtain the object of his desire.

/ O ten times faster fly love-stricken youths / Love-smitten youngers run ten times as fast / A wayward lover runs tens times as fast

4. {To keep obligèd faith unforfeited.}

obligèd: pledged, obligated

Salarino is claiming that lovers are very quick to enter a new bond of love (and make all kinds of pledges)—rushing in like the doves of Venus—yet are just as quick to break those same vows (when some other love interest emerges).

/ To keep intact their new-made obligations / To keep intact the vows already made / To keep their faith

—Gratziano

That ever holds:° Who riseth from a feast	/ 'Tis always true
With the keen° hunger of one sitting down? ⁵	/ same
Where is the horse that doth retread° again	{untread} / gallop
Another lap° with the unbated fire°	{His tedious measures} // same kind of passion
That he did pace the first? All things that are,	
Are with more spirit chasèd° than enjoyed.	/ vigor pursued
How like a young man° or a prodigal	{younker} / young son
The bannered° ship ⁶ leaves from her native bay, ⁷	/ lofty / splendid
Hugged and escorted° by the forceful wind; ⁸	/ embracèd / caresséd
How like the prodigal doth she return	
With over-weathered° ribs and ragged sails,	/ weather-beaten / a storm-beaten hull
Lean, rent, and beggared by the forceful° wind!	{strumpet} / heady / sturdy / ruthless

Enter Lorenzo

—Salanio ⁹

Here comes Lorenzo—more of this hereafter.

—Lorenzo

Sweet friends, your patience for° my long delay.°	/ forgive me for {abode}
Not I, but my affairs have made you wait. ¹⁰	
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives°	/ a wife-stealer
Then I will watch as long for you. Come here.°	{Approach} / 'Tis here
Here dwells my father ¹¹ Jew. [<i>calling</i>] Hey!° Who's within?	{Howe}

Enter Jessica above, dressed as a boy

—Jessica

with vows already made [See Additional Notes, 2.6.7]

5. / With the keen appetite that he sits down? / With the same (/keen) hunger as when he sat down?

6. / The proud vessel / The ship so proud

7. {The scarfed bark puts from her native bay} / The decorated ship leaves from her bay
scarfed: refers to something wrapped or adorned with streaming banners, such as the side of a ship (*bark*) decorated with flags and steamers while it makes a glorious departure from her native port.

8. {the strumpet wind} / a good, strong wind

strumpet: refers to something inconsistent, something promising yet unreliable. The terms brings to fore the metaphor of the Prodigal Son and the prostitutes (strumpets) upon whom he wasted his fortune. Here the promising wind is quick to bring one's ship out to sea and, later, it is that same wind which brings the ship to ruin.

9. In Q1 this speech heading is abbreviated as '*Sal.*' and could indicate either Salarino or Salanio (depending on which one is listed in the stage heading). Since both characters are present in the scene (which was the likely intention of the author, though not specifically stated in the stage heading), and since both characters should have lines, Salanio is given this line. In terms of staging, Gratziano and Salarino might be lounging around, talking about the pigeons of Venus, while Salanio, who is not talking, first notices—and announces—Lorenzo's arrival.

10. Such tardiness would put this whole plan in jeopardy since the long delay would give Shylock ample time to return from dinner before Lorenzo's arrival. What more pressing affairs could have caused Lorenzo to be so late? Perhaps the delay was brought about by poor planning and last minute demands or because Lorenzo was waiting at Bassanio's feast to make sure Shylock was well situated before he departed.

11. **father:** future father-in-law.

Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Although^o I'll swear that I do know your voice.^o

/ so I am assured / can be sure
{Albeit} > "all be it" / {tongue}

—Lorenzo
Lorenzo—and thy^o love.

/ your

—Jessica
Lorenzo, surely, and my love indeed—¹²
The one I love so much!^o And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

{certain}
{For who love I so much}

—Lorenzo
Heaven and my thoughts are witness that thou art.

—Jessica
Here, catch this casket—it is worth the pains.¹³
I'm glad 'tis night, so you don't look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my appearance.^o
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty¹⁵ follies that themselves commit;^o
For if they could, Cupid¹⁶ himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.¹⁷

{exchange}¹⁴ / new look
/ petty // they're wont to commit
/ transformed into

—Lorenzo
Come down,^o for you must be my torchbearer.¹⁸

{Descend}

—Jessica
What, must I hold a candle^o to my shames?
They are, good sooth, already too^o too light.^o¹⁹

/ bright flame
/ far / much

12. / Lorenzo certainly, my love indeed

13. Stage direction: a) she throws down the chest filled with gold—which is painfully caught or b) she is about to throw down the chest but is urged by a group of 'No's to carry it down instead.

14. **exchange**: change of appearance (into a boy), transfiguration

15. {pretty} / artful / petty > comedic, ridiculous

16. Cupid, god of love, is often depicted as blind (and unable to see) thus conveying the sense that love is blind, that it obeys the heart and not outer conditions. Such a Cupid (unable to see Jessica dressed as a boy) would not blush.

17. / To see the way I've changed into a boy.

18. Lorenzo is using this image figuratively, as per the imagery enlisted in 2.4.22;39. He is saying, 'you must be the one who brings light and radiance into my life; your light must lead my way in the world.' This is in contradiction to Jessica's wish to remain hidden under the cover of night.

19. {They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light} / They are, good heavens, already too light.

(my shames are) . . . **too too light**: a) much too apparent, evident, in full view; b) immodest, unethical.

Here Jessica is saying that she does not want her shames (her dressing as a boy or more likely her dishonorable actions with respect to her father) to be further exposed.

The reference to *light* can also carry the meaning of being unfaithful (such as someone who is light in keeping her vows) though this is not Jessica's intended meaning. Later in the play (5.1.129) we hear Portia using the term light (meaning "unfaithful") in this sense: *Let me give light, but let me know be light: | For a light wife doth make a heavy husband.*

good sooth: good truth. *In sooth* means, 'in truth,' 'to tell you honestly,' whereas *good sooth* is more akin to a light swearing, such as 'good heavens,' 'good God,' or 'by God.'

Why, 'tis love's nature to remain in hiding,^o ²⁰
And I^o should be concealed.^o

—Lorenzo So are you, sweet.
E'en²¹ in the lovely° garnish° of a boy.
But come at once 〈and tarry you no further〉:²³
For the cov'ring of night soon runs away^{o24}
And we are stayed for° at Bassanio's feast.²⁵

—Jessica
I will make fast the doors, and guild myself²⁶
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit above

—Gratziano
Now, by my word,^o she's more gentile than Jew.

—Lorenzo
You can berate me if I do not love her ²⁷
For she is wise—if I can be the judge;°

20. {Why, 'tis an office° of discovery, love,} / a matter / a function
/ Why, love is best when kept behind close doors.

Jessica is here reflecting some of her father's manner, desiring to keep things hidden behind closed doors.

21. {Even} To preserve the iambic meter, *even* would be pronounced as *e'en*.

22. **lowly:** Q1 has *louely*, which is an old spelling of *lowly* but could also be read as *lovely*. *Lowly* does not quite fit, since the garb of a boy is not lowly: *lovely* ties in more closely with *sweet*, and would be said in playful jest, especially in light of Jessica's embarrassment.

23. {But come at once}. The line is truncated for no appreciable reason and is likely in error. In Q1, these four syllables are added to the end of the previous line, thus producing a line with seven iambs (as opposed to five): {Even in the lovely garnish of a boy, but come at once}. This line could be preserved in its truncated form or emended with three additional iambs:

/ But come at once ⟨and make no more delays⟩

24. {For the close night doth play the runaway}

/ The cov'ring night doth quickly run away

close: covering, secretness; darkness of night, which conceals.

play the runaway: is running away, is speeding by, is passing quickly. This is also a reference to Jessica, who is running away.

25. It seems that someone at Bassanio's feast is waiting for them. Thus they are urged to hurry in order to make a clean getaway before arousing suspicion (by their absence at the masque).

stayed for: waited for. The term *stay* (wait) also appears in 59 (*Our masquing mates by this time for us stay*) and 63 (*'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you*). [See Additional Notes, 2.6.48]

26. **gild myself:** provide myself with more ducats. It also carries the implication of dressing or gilding herself with more gold, in the same way that an ornament might be gilded with gold. [See Morocco's choice of the gold casket, which takes place in the next scene, and which carries the ominous warning he finds on the scroll: *Gilded timbers do worms enfold* (2.7. 69)]

Here again we see a conflict in Jessica: she wants to remain hidden (and not hold a candle to her shame); she wants her affections to remain behind closed doors, yet here she is gilding herself in gold, and putting herself in a position to be seen. Certainly, though she acts in hiding, everyone is going to hear about her actions—and some might even see her actions as directly linked to Shylock's anger and his demand for payment on the bond.

27. {Beshrew me but I love her heartily}

/ Forswear me if she is not my beloved / Reprove me but with all my heart I love her

Beshrew me: A mild swear akin to ‘curse me’ > derived from the injury which comes from the bite of a shrew.

but: if not, if I don't > "Let me be bitten by a shrew if I don't love her heartily"

And fair she is—if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is—as she hath proved herself;
And therefore, like herself—wise, fair, and true—
Shall she be carried° in my constant° soul.²⁸

{placèd} / faithful / deepest

Enter Jessica

What, beauty art thou!²⁹ Gentlemen, away,³⁰
Let us make ground° awhile the maskers play.^{31 32}

{What, art thou come!}
/ make haste / depart / be gone

Exeunt Lorenzo, Jessica, Salarino, and Salanio

*Enter Antonio*³³

—Antonio
Who's there?

—Gratziano
Signior Antonio?

—Antonio

28. / Shall she be carried, always, in my soul.

29. {What, are thou come! On gentlemen, away.}

What, art thou come!: / How beautiful! > How beautifully thou art come!
/ What beauty has come! Gentlemen away

30. **on gentlemen away:** Q1 has {What, art thou come, on gentleman away} which many editions emend in the form of a question: 'What, are thou come? On, gentleman, away!' But to whom does the term *gentleman* refer? (Jessica is disguised as a boy and not a gentleman). F1 has: 'On gentlemen, away' which is more likely and more fitting the scene (and this is a term which could refer to Salarino and Salanio, and it could include Jessica in jest). Thus we can suspect that the original term may have been *gentlemen* which may have been changed to *gentleman* by a well-meaning typesetter (the same one who 'corrected' the stage heading by adding the name Salarino to it). This likelihood also supports the notion that both Salarino and Salanio are present in this scene.

31. {What, art thou come! On, gentlemen, away | Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.}

/ . . . On gentlemen, away | Let's go before we cause too much dismay

/ . . . On gentlemen, let's go | Let us get far before our friend's e'er know.

masquing mates: fellow party-goers who will be at Bassanio's masquerade party. The masquing mates may be waiting for this group to arrive—yet it is unlikely that Lorenzo is going to the ball to meet them. The command 'on gentlemen' is more likely a prompting (along with 'For the close of night doth play the runaway') that they make their getaway before their masquing mates notice they are not at the feast (and go out looking for them). Despite Lorenzo's excitement about having a torchbearer (someone to herald his entrance) the masque is the last place they want to be seen; the plan is to exit the city, under cover of night, while everyone is distracted with the masque.

[See Additional Notes, 2.6.59]

32. In 2.8 Salarino tells Salanio of Bassanio's departure and so he must have gotten off the gondola and proceeded to the masque (where he might have been employed as a distraction or to offer an excuse as to Lorenzo's whereabouts). Meanwhile Salanio helped Lorenzo and Jessica steal away from Venice (while everyone was busy with the masque). Lorenzo's last line, 'Our masquing mates by this time for us stay,' should be taken as an indication to make haste, since 'by this time' their masquing mates (friends at the party) are waiting for their arrival and, as the hour grows late, they might get ancy and go out looking for them, which might draw notice and suspicion. As it turns out, everyone at the masque became acutely aware that Gratziano (and likely Lorenzo) was missing, because 20 men were sent out in search of him.

33. The timing of Antonio's arrival, and his meeting with Gratziano near Shylock's house, is amiss. Antonio would not be going out in search of Gratziano with Bassanio's departure so immanent (for Antonio had already sent out 20 men to find him). Rather, Antonio would be eking out his time with Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.60]

Fie° Gratziano! Where are all the rest? ³⁴

{Fie, fie} / Damn it

'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay° for you.

/ wait

No masque tonight, the wind has come about, ³⁵

And now Bassanio is° aboard his ship. ³⁶

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.° ³⁷

/ men to look for you.

—Gratziano

I'm glad of it:° I seek° no more delight,
Than to be under sail and gone tonight. ³⁸

{I am glad on't} {desire} / wish

Exeunt ³⁹

34. {where are all the rest?} / where is everyone?

We are not sure whom Antonio is referring to when he says 'all the rest.' He might be inquiring about Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio, whom Antonio believed was with Gratziano all this time (and may have made for his delay) but Antonio, curiously, finds Gratziano all alone.

35. {No masque tonight, the wind is come about.} / No masque for you tonight—the wind has come

no masque: one reading of this could indicate that the masquerade party, planned for that night, has been cancelled (due to Bassanio's departure) or that the masque is already over—both scenarios of which are unlikely. More likely, *no masque tonight* refers to no masque for Gratziano, as he must set sail immediately. It could also be played as a literal reference to the mask that Gratziano is wearing (which Antonio pulls off when he says *no masque tonight*—thus implying that Gratziano should take off the mask he is wearing, stop his fun and games, and attend to the task of readying himself for departure.

the wind is come about: the wind has turned favorable (which now allows Bassanio to make a swift departure to Belmont). From the foregoing action it appears that Bassanio borrows the money from Shylock in the morning, makes preparations in the afternoon, puts on a feast in the evening, and intends to depart the next day. Yet, the winds having turned favorable (and Bassanio impatiently wanting to get to Belmont without delay) he decides to depart immediately—right in the middle of his own feast. Owing to the fact that Portia has many known suitors, and any delay in Bassanio's trip to Belmont would diminish his chances of winning here, an immediate departure (the very same day as he acquires the money) is to be expected. The time frame implicated by the action is, of course, not consistent with Shylock's bond, which is for three months; Bassanio hears of the expiration of Shylock's bond the very day he arrives in Belmont, which would imply that the bond expired on the very day it was made.

36. {Bassanio presently will go aboard} / Bassanio now awaits aboard his ship / And now Bassanio's ship will go abroad

37. Antonio says that the wind has come about—which prompts Bassanio to make a hasty departure, right in the middle of the party he is throwing—yet wind is not a factor in travel to Belmont: throughout the play, people go back and forth between Venice and Belmont without any need of favorable wind. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.66]

38. Gratziano, the ultimate party man, would have little reason to delight upon hearing that the masque was cancelled unless there was something greater which he desired, and which could only be found on Belmont.

39. In the Kean production of 1858, Jessica is swept away by Lorenzo and departs in a whirl of carnival figures. Straight after, Shylock makes an entrance and a slow walk across the stage; he then knocks twice on the door to his house and there is no answer. A long silence follows and then the curtain falls. Some productions have Shylock enter his house, and sensing the ill-brood of Jessica's absence, cries out her name—with no answer.

Portia's house at Belmont.¹

A flourish of cornetts. Enter Portia and the Prince of Morocco, with their attendants

—Portia [*to servant*]

Go, draw aside the curtains and disclose^o

{discover} / reveal

The triple^o caskets for this noble prince.

{several} / choice of

The curtains are drawn aside and three caskets are revealed

Now make your choice.

The Prince examines each one

—Morocco

The first of gold, which^o this inscription bears:²

{who}

‘Who 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.’

The third, dull lead, with warning all^o as blunt:

/ just

‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’³

[*to Portia*] How shall I know if I do chose the right?^o

/ right one

—Portia

The one of them contains my picture, Prince;

If you choose that, then all of mine is yours.^{o 4}

{then I am yours withal}

—Morocco

Some god direct my judgement. Let me see—

I will inspect^o th’inscriptions once^o again.

{survey} {back}

What says this leaden casket?

‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’

Must give, for what? For lead? Hazard^o for lead?

/ Risk all

This casket threatens: Men that^o hazard all

/ who

1. Some editors, following Capell, add the stage direction here to signify Morocco’s entrance. However, Morocco’s arrival has already been announced, and he is already in residence. Some editors also add [*flourish of cornetts*] at the end of the scene, with Morocco’s exit, which is also unlikely.

2. / The first of gold, which offers^o this inscription: / presenting / deliv’ring

3. The inscriptions on the caskets, found in the source story, *Gesta Romanorum*, (1595), are as follows:

Gold: *Who so chooseth me shall find what he deserves.*

Silver: *Who so chooseth me shall find what his nature desires.*

Lead: *Who so chooseth me shall find what God has disposed for him.* [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]

4. **withal**: “with all.” ‘I am yours withal’ = I am all yours, all of what is mine is yours

/ If you chose that, then I am wholly yours

Do so in hope of some untoward advantage.⁵
 A golden mind stoops not to petty⁶ schemes.
 I'll neither⁷ give nor hazard all⁸ for lead.
 What says the silver with her virgin⁹ hue?
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 As much as he deserves. Pause¹⁰ there Morocco
 And weigh thy value with an even¹¹ hand.
 If thou be¹² valued¹³ by thine worthiness,
 Thou dost deserve enough¹⁴—and yet 'enough'
 May not extend so far as to the lady.
 And yet to be afraid¹⁵ of my deserving¹⁶
 Would be¹⁷ a weak disabling¹⁸ of myself.
 'As much as I deserve'—why, that's the lady!
 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
 In graces,¹⁹ and in qualities of breeding²⁰—
 But more than these, in love I do deserve.
 What if I strayed no further,²¹ but chose here?
 Let's see, once more, this saying 'graved²² 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 saint.²³
 The Persian deserts²⁴ and the vasty wilds²⁵
 Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
 For every prince to come and view fair Portia.
 The wat'ry kingdom²⁶ whose high-reaching wave²⁷
 Spits²⁸ in the face of heaven, is no bar²⁹

/ unseemly gain / of undeserved gain

/ lowly

{I'll then nor} {aught}

/ moonlike

/ stay / stop

/ a steady

{be'st} {rated}

{afear'd} // fear what I truly deserve

{Were but} // debasing / discredit

/ In manner // in royal ancestry

/ deserve her

/ carved > engraved

/ wilderness / barren wilds

/ raging ocean {ambitious head}

/ barrier // cannot block

5. {Do it in hope of fair advantages}

fair advantages: gaining something not fully deserved
 / Do so in hope of quick and feeble gain

6. {A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross}

shows of dross: worthless displays

7. **virgin hue:** 'silver is the color of the moon, and Diana, the virgin goddess, is the moon's goddess.' (Kittredge)

8. {estimation} / reputation / own repute

9. / If estimated by mine worthiness | I do deserve enough

10. / Would be to lower and debase myself / Would be to weaken and debase my value

11. **qualities of breeding:** more suggestive of Arabian horses than a royal bloodline. This is an image favored by Morocco but may be ill-suited for European sentiments.

12. **this shrine:** a container for the relics (and/or bones) of a saint. Morocco refers to the Portia as a *shrine*—an object of worship—but, realizing that a shrine may also refer to a tomb, which contains a dead saint, quickly corrects himself with a modifier, calling Portia, a 'mortal breathing saint.'

13. {The Hyrcanian deserts and vasty wilds} / The unrelenting deserts and vast wilds

Q1 = 'vastie'; F1 = 'vast.'

Hyrcania: an area south of the Caspian Sea known for its wilderness.

14. {The wat'ry kingdom, whose ambitious head}

ambitious head: / high-reaching waves

15. **spits:** the image of a wave's crest spewing water into the air

16. {is no bar} / has no chance / is no barrier

/ cannot slow / cannot stymie | Nor stop

To stop these dauntless suitors,^o who but leap^o {foreign spirits}¹⁷ {but they come}
 〈Across her vast expanse,〉 as o'er^o a brook, / 'twere
 To catch one sight^o of the fair Portia.¹⁸ / glimpse
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like^o that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation / Could't be
 To think so base a thought. It is^o too gross^o ¹⁹ {were} / It is abhorrent
 That she be wrapped in common cerecloth
 Like one who's buried in the obscure grave.²⁰ / one interred in the forgotten
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,^o / enclosed / contained
 Which holds one-tenth the value^o of tried^o gold? {Being ten time undervalued} / true / pure
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse^o than gold. They have in England / less > anything less valuable
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stamped in gold; but that's insculpted upon^o ^{21 22} / engraved upon
 The surface—here an angel lies within!²³
 Deliver me the key, and straight away
 Here do I choose, and prosper as I may.^{24 25}

—Portia

There, take it, prince. And if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours.

Morocco unlocks the golden casket

17. **foreign spirits:** men of courage and determination (who hail from foreign lands).

18. {As o'er a book to see fair Portia} Two lines, above, replace one line in the original.
 / To glimpse one moment of fair Portia

19. / It is revolting / obscene / repugnant / unthinkable

20. {To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave}

cerecloth: waxed cloth which corpses were wrapped in for burial

obscure: a) dark, distant b) common, undistinguished, forgotten

It is an insult to think that she (her image) could be found in lead, or wrapped in a wax cerecloth, both of which suggest the status of a commoner—one who gets buried in an obscure or unmarked grave.

21. **insculpted upon:** engraved upon the surface. This obscure word is found in the English translation of *Gesta Romanorum*, the source from which the Author borrowed the casket story: 'The third vessel was made of lead, full within of precious stones, and thereupon was insculpt this posey: *Who so chooseth me, shall find what God has disposed for him.*' [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]

22. / Could e'er be set^o in something worse than gold. / Was ever set
 There is^o a coin in England, stamped in gold, / They have
 That bears the figure of a rad'ant angel
 But that's insculped on^o the outer surface;^o / engraved upon

23. It is the picture of Portia, representing Portia, which lies within.

24. / Here I do choose, deliver me the key | And let my fortune fall as it may be.

/ I will stop here—deliver me the key | Here I do choose, and thrive as I may be.

25. The original reads:

{Stamped in gold, but that's insculped upon;
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key.
 Here I do choose, and thrive as I may.}

The word *key* may have been pronounced *kay* and thus the intent of the original was for Morocco's speech to end in a final rhyme. (This was also the case with Bassanio's speech before the caskets but not quite with Arragon's: Arragon's last line ends with *here*, rhyming with Portia's next line, ending with *there*.)

—Morocco

O hell! What have we here?
A hideous skull,^o within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll. I'll read the writing:

{A carrion death}

*All that glitters^o is not gold;
Often have your heard that^o told.
Many a man his life hath sold,
For the^o outside^o to behold,
Gilded tombs^o ²⁶ do worms enfold.^o
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in^o judgement old,
Your answer had not been^o inscrolled—
Fair you well, your suit is cold.*

{glitters}

/ this

{But my} / Just the / Only

/ graves {infol}

/ but > but in

/ fate would not be so

'Tis cold indeed,^o and labor lost.
Now^o farewell heat and welcome frost. ²⁷ ²⁸
Portia^o I have too grieved a heart
For tedious leave,^o and so I part. ^{o29}

{Cold indeed}

{Then}

/ And here

/ For long 'good-bye's // thus I depart

Exit with his attendants ³⁰

—Portia

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go—
Let all of his complexion choose me so. ³¹

26. Q1 reads: *Gilded timber do worms infold*. To rectify the meter, most editions follow Johnson's emendation and change *timber* to *tombs*. Rowe, however corrects the meter by replacing *timber* with *wood*—which is close in meaning to the supposed original. Replacing *timber* with *coffin* would be a more exact fit, yet disrupt the meter. *Timber* refers to a wood coffin, which is gilded on the outside but which decays and becomes enfolded with worms. A *tomb* (which is associated with stone and which lies above ground) may be gilded but is not likely to be enfolded with worms

27. {Cold indeed and labour lost | Then farewell heat, and welcome frost}

Morocco's first two lines follow the same rhyme scheme as the scroll (which is also the case with the lines spoken by Arragon and Bassanio after the scroll); his next two lines, however, revert back to the standard iambic meter. This anomaly produces a rhythmic break between the meter of Morocco's first rhyming pair and his second. The four lines could be left as is, with the different meters (8-8-10-10) or one could preserve the meter of the first two lines, and conform the next two lines to the same meter (8-8-8-8). Or, the first lined pair could conform with the second, having all four lines in iambic pentameter—yet this would not be consistent with the post-scroll meter found in Arragon and Bassanio.

28. This is a paraphrased inversion of the old proverb, 'Farewell, frost': "Therefore are you so foule, and so, farewell, frost." (Lilly's *Mother Bombie*); "Farewell, frost, will you needes be gone" (Wapull's *Tyde Taryeth No Man*, 1576)

29. {Portia, adieu, I have too grieved a heart: | To take a tedious leave, thus losers part.}
/ To stay a long good-bye—and thus I part.

30. Some editions add [*flourish of cornetts*] as part of this stage direction. This direction is not found in any of the quartos. Morocco has just lost the contest and is leaving in disgrace—hardly the kind of exit one would want to herald with cornetts. If a flourish of cornetts was added here, it would have to be unconvincing, deflated, and, comedic—and perhaps quashed in midstream by a sensitive gentleman from Portia's train.

31. **complexion**: most notably refers to Morocco's dark complexion (and Portia's dislike of it), though it could also be a 'politically correct' reference to Morocco's manner or disposition (as the term *complexion* can also have this meaning, as it does in [3.1.28]).

/ For such good riddance, I have fate to blame, | May all with his vainglory chose the same.

Exeunt

Venice. Enter Salarino and Salanio. ¹

—Salarino

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail,
And Gratziano's gone along with him.
I'm sure Lorenzo is not on their ship.^o

{With him is Gratziano gone along}
/ has not gone with them

—Salanio

The villain Jew with outcries roused^o the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.²

{raised} / woke

—Salarino

He came too late; the ship was under sail.^o
But there the Duke was giv'n^o to understand
That seen together, in a gondola,
Were young Lorenzo and his amorous love.^{o 3}
Besides, Antonio assured^o the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.⁴

/ had just left port

/ made

/ his Jessica

{certified} / well-assured

—Salanio

I never heard an outburst^o so confused,
So strange, outlandish,^o and so oddly spoke^{o 5}
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
[*mimicing*] 'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!⁶
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!
A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,⁷
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!

{a passion}

{outrageous} / excessive // dissident

1. This portion of the text, where the two Sals are talking to each other (and filling in crucial details about the main characters) shows why two similar characters were added to the text (as part of a later draft). The function of these two characters has no bearing on the action of the play; their function is to inform the audience with respect to unseen action involving the main characters. [For an further discussion of the names, See Additional Notes, 2.8.0]

2. Only someone of considerable influence (and in utter desperation) could wake the Duke and summon him from his house to investigate a minor incident.

3. / That someone saw Lorenzo, and his love | Jessica, fleeing in a gondola.

4. / That they were not aboard Bassanio's ship

5. **so oddly spoke**: {so variable} / conflicted / out of whack / disparate / discordant

6. **my Christian ducats**: this line indicates the confusion between Shylock's sense of loss in regards to his ducats and his daughter—both of which are seen as property. This line echoes a line found in Marlow's play, *The Jew of Malta*. [See Additional Note, 2.8.15].

7. **two rich and precious stones**: Later there is a reference to a diamond purchased in Frankfort for 2000 ducats [3.1.80] but we do not know what the second stone might be; it could be the turquoise ring, which Shylock references later, but it is unlikely that he would refer to the ring as a precious stone.

She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!’

—Salarino

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, ‘His stones, his daughter, and his ducats!’

—Salanio

Let good Antonio look to keep^o his day.^o {look he keep} // forfeit not
Or he shall pay for this.

—Salarino Ay,^o well remembered^o—

I conversed^o with a Frenchman yesterday {Marry} // By Mary
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part^o {I reasoned} / I’d spoken
The French and English,⁸ there did overturn^o / dividing / between
A vessel of our country, fraught with riches.^o {miscarriéd}/ overturnéd // was dashed to pieces
I thought about^o Antonio when he told me,⁹ {richly fraught}
And wished in silence that it were not his. {upon}

—Salanio

You’re^o best to tell Antonio what you hear;^o {You are} / ‘Tis / heard
Yet do it gently, else it^o may grieve him. {Yet do not suddenly, for it}

—Salarino

A kinder gentleman treads not^o this earth: / man walks not upon
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.¹⁰
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return. Antonio said, ‘Do not;^o’¹¹ / No, no
Rush not your heart^o for my sake, Bassanio,¹²
But stay until the time has fully ripened.^{o13} / ripening of time
As for the Jew’s bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind or heart:^o {of love}
Be joyous^o and employ^o your chieftest^o thoughts¹⁴ {merry} // engage /// highest

8. / England and France

9. / I thought it might be good Antonio’s ship

10. Thus, Salarino was present at Bassanio’s departure while Salanio was not.

11. {Of his return. He answered, ‘Do not so’}
/ Bassanio told him he’d return with haste. | To which Antonio said, “Do not do so”;

12. {Slumber not business for my sake, Bassanio}

Q1 has the term *slumber* which Q2, F, and virtually all modern editors emend as *slubber*.

slubber: to perform with haste and/or with lack of care; sully, spoil, ruin

slubber not business: don’t rush or hurry with your affairs

slumber not business: ‘don’t sleep on the job’; be attentive to the task at hand. In modern English, the term *slumber* is readily recognized (and would be understood in the context of Antonio’s statement) whereas the term *slubber* is not readily recognized and might bring up amiss associations with *slobber* or *blubber*.

13. {But stay the very riping of the time}

14. / Be joyous; let your only^o concern be / foremost

To courtship and° such fair ostents° of love¹⁵ / To win her with // displays
 As shall most fittingly° become° you there.’¹⁶ {conveniently} // come to
 And then, right there,° his eyes aflow with tears,¹⁷ {And even there} / And on the spot
 He turned his face and put his arms around him,¹⁸
 And with affection, so fully displayed,¹⁹ expressed / apparent / evident
 He kissed Bassanio’s cheek, and so° they parted.^{20 21} / thus

—Salarino

His only love in this world is for him.²²
 I pray thee, let us go and find Antonio° {find him out}
 To quicken° his embracèd heaviness²³ / lighten
 With some delight or other.° / and laughter

—Salarino

So we shall.°

{Do we so} / Let us go

Exeunt

15. {To courtship and such fair ostents of love}

fair ostents of love: / fair displays of love / fair showings of love

ostent: a shortened form of *ostentation*. *Ostents*, as used here, means to show or display, whereas the term *ostentation* carries the meaning of a grand, pompous, or even pretentious display.

16./ As shall arise in your heart when you’re there

At this point, Antonio still believes that Bassanio is going to Belmont in order to win Portia in a conventional scenario, which would involve wooing and courtship, and ‘fair ostents of love.’ This is the scenario that was first presented to Antonio in 1.1 and the one he still believes to be true. Antonio has not been told of the true nature of Bassanio’s hazardous venture which involves a chance drawing of caskets. [See Essays: *The Lottery*]

17. And then, right there, his eyes abound° with tears / afresh / adorned / aflow // filled / bursting

18. {Turning his face, he put his hand behind him}

This image painted by Salarino suggests that Antonio says ‘good-bye’ to Bassanio and then puts his hand behind him (Bassanio) in an affectionate, half-embrace. Alternatively, it might indicate that Antonio says ‘good-bye’ to Bassanio, turns his face to go, but wanting one final touch, Antonio (without looking back) puts his hand behind himself, and reaches back to touch Bassanio. The first image suggests that Antonio half-embraces Bassanio and then wrings his hand; the second image suggests that Antonio reaches back and wrings Bassanio’s hand.

19. {And with affection wondrous sensible} / And with his love so fully evident

wondrous sensible: amazingly evident (to the senses)

20. {He wrung Bassanio’s hand, and so they parted}

It seems unlikely that this ‘amazingly evident display of affection’ would culminate with a regular handshake, after such displays as hugging and kissing were over. More likely, it indicates one, last desperate attempt to touch Bassanio, however so slight, by Antonio. To simplify this image, the handshake was replaced with a kiss.

21. / And even there, among the onlookers,
 His eyes were big with tears. Turning his face,
 He put his arms around him, then with great
 Affection, showing wondrous emotion

22. {I think he only loves the world for him}

/ I think his only love in life is him. / I think Bassanio is the world to him. / I think he liveth only for Bassanio.

23. / And steal the sorrow he doth now embrace

Belmont. Enter Nerissa and a Servant

—Nerissa

Quickly, I pray thee—draw the curtain straight.^{o 1} / now
 The Prince of Arragon has ta'en his oath
 And comes at once to make his choice of caskets.²

A servant draws back the curtain, revealing the three caskets.

[A flourish of cornetts.]

Enter the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and attendants

—Portia

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.
 If you chose that wherein my picture's found,^{o 3} {I am contained}
 Straightaway shall we take^o our nuptial vows.⁴ / Then straightaway we'll take
 But should you fail, without another word,^o / more speech, my lord
 My lord, you must depart^o from hence at once.^{o 5} / be gone

—Arragon

I am enjoined^o by oath to observe three things: / obliged > obligated, bound
 First, never to disclose^o to anyone {unfold} / reveal
 Which casket 'twas I chose. Next, if I fail
 Of the right casket, never in my life⁶
 To join^o a maid by way of marriage. Lastly, {woo}
 If I do fail^o in fortune of my choice,
 To leave at once^o and forever be gone.⁷ / forthwith

—Portia

To these injunctions^o everyone doth swear⁸ / conditions
 Who comes to hazard for my worthless^o self.⁹ / lowly

—Arragon

1. / Quick, quick, draw back the curtain straight away / Quick, I pray, draw the curtain straight away
straight: right away / straight away

2. {And comes to his election presently}

3. / And should you choose the one containing me

4. {Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized} / Straight shall we go to church and there be married

5. / You must be gone from hence immediately

6. / To chose the right casket, ne'er in my life

7. {Immediately to leave you and be gone.}

8. / These are the terms to which all men must swear

9. / Who chance to win my less than worthy self / Who chance to win my undeserving self

worthless: insignificant, less than worthy (when compared to the worth of these great suitors). This is a false show of modesty.

And so am I obligèd.^{o10} Fortune now / And thus have I so pledgèd
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead:
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.' xxx
You must have greater beauty than mere lead^{11 12}
Ere I should^o give or hazard all on you.^{13 14} / Before I
What says the golden chest? Ah,^o let me see: {Ha}
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What 'many men desire' may indicate^{o 15 16} / may but suggest / may refer to
The foolish multitudes^o that choose by show. / ignorant masses
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach^{o 17} / than what fond eye teaches
Which pries^o not inwardly^o but like the martlet¹⁸ / looks / seeks {to the interior}
Doth build its nest upon the outer wall
Therein exposing it to harsh conditions,¹⁹
E'en at the risk^o of hazard and disaster.²⁰ / And in the way
I will not chose what many men desire
Because I will not jump^{o21} with common sorts,^{o 22} / move // common souls / commoners
And rank^o me with^o the barbarous multitudes.²³ / class / stand
Now then, to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
Tell me once more what title^o thou dost bear:^o / saying // inscription thou bear
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
And well said too! For who shall go about^o / For what man shall attempt
To cozen^o fortune by a show of honor²⁴ / To cheat one's / Beguiling

10. {And so I have addressed me} / And I've attended to them / And thus I've taken the vows
addressed me: I have addressed (and fulfilled) these injunctions by taking the required vows.

11. / You must have greater value than mere lead

12. Arragon dismisses the lead casket in one line saying, you must look more beautiful before I would risk anything upon you ('You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard'). In other words, he makes his decision based upon looks and not consideration of the inscription. Then, ironically, the bulk of his speech is dedicated to condemning those who judge by outer appearance and the 'fool multitude that choose by show.'

13. / Before I should give or hazard on you

14. Previous two lines replace one line in the original: {You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard}

15. / And yet that 'many' may well indicate

16. The original reads: {What many men desire? That 'many' may be meant | By the fool multitudes}. The line is competent enough but contains an additional (and superfluous iamb); it is unlikely that the learned Arragon would stray from the standard meter where there was no reason to do so. The original most likely would have read: *'What many men desire' may be meant*—with Arragon referring back to the last portion of the inscription ('what many men desire') rather than one word ('many'). In this version, the standard meter has been preserved.

17. / Not seeing past the fondness of their eyes / Not seeing past what attracts their attention

fond eyes: that which is attractive to the eye and which appeals to the outer senses (and thereby lacking true inner vision and wisdom)

18. {martlet}: a bird, probably referring to the house-martin or swift

19. / Exposing it to hazardous conditions

20. {Even in the force and road of casualty}

/ And well upon the highway to disaster / Which is the road unto harm and casualty / Putting itself in danger and in harm's way / E'en at the risk of injury and death / Subject to hazard, danger, and destruction

[See Additional Notes, 2.9.29]

21. / Because I won't commune / Because I shalln't conspire

22. {Because I will not jump with common spirits}

jump with: run the same course as, be in agreement with, be associated with, be allied with, etc.

23. / And be so ranked with the barbarous masses / And have me ranked with the ignorant hordes

24. / and to show one's honor

Without the seal^o of merit? Let none presume
 To wear an undeservèd dignity.^o
 O that one's status, wealth, and high position²⁵
 Were not derived corruptly;^o and that true^o honor
 Were rightly earned by those who deem to wear it.^{26 27}
 How many then should be without their crowns!^{o 28 29}
 How many that command would be commanded!
 How much low peasantry³⁰ would then be gleaned^o
 From those of noble birth;^{o31} and how much honor
 Amply bestowed^o upon^o our dignitaries
 Would be but varnish? Well, but to my choice:³²
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 I will assume what I rightly deserve;
 I choose the silver chest. Give me a key,³³

{stamp} / badge / mark
 / worthiness

/ by falsehood {clear} / bright

/ medals

/ culled // could we extract

/ royal blood

/ Decorated // Amply awarded to

25. {O, that estates, degrees, and offices} / O that position, wealth, and higher office
estates: a) one privilege, one's position, b) one's wealth, one's fortune, what one owns
degrees: rank, position

26. {Were purchased^o by the merit of the wearer} / procured
 / Were found upon the worth of those who wear it.

27. / Were not obtained through some corrupted^o means; / deceitful
 And that true honor were justly bestowed
 In accord with the worth of those who wear it.

28. {How many then should cover that stand bare!}
cover: succeed, be covered with the dress of success, wear (cover themselves with) a suit of dignity, b) cover
that: who now

that stand bare: a) those who have nothing, who stand naked (without wealth or honor), b) the bare head of servants, who do not wear a hat in the presence of their masters.

A) How many then (if rank and position were not derived corruptly) should cover their bare heads—as they do now—with hats or crowns, to signify their true honor?—none.

B) How many then should keep their hats on (cover their heads) when those of presumed rank passed by?—everyone. (No one would doff his hat as a sign of respect).

/ All would have covered heads as they pass by / All would keep their hats on as they pass by

C) How many then, would succeed, that now have nothing? How many then, who now stand bare (without recognition) would be covered with medals (signifying honor)?—a few. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.43]

29. The next six lines are somewhat vague (and the metaphors used are inconsistent) but their intent is clear: Arragon is saying that those who now have honor are not deserving of it (and that the honor they show was derived corruptly). Two of the lines, however, could be interpreted more amicably: one could mean that among those who are low (with bare heads) some are worthy and could wear the hats normally worn by dignitaries (signifying honor); the other, that among the 'chaff and ruin' some are truly honorable—and could be made to appear that way with the right exterior coating (varnish). For the most part, however, all the lines are emended to reflect Arragon's view that those who are currently in the place of honor are undeserving of it, (rather than the more complex image that among those who are poor and lowly could be found people who are deserving of honor).

In an attempt to rectify the metaphor (and preserve its agricultural references) Bailey (1862) emends the passage as follows: 'How much low *peasant's rye* would then be *screen'd* | From the true seed of honor! and how much *seed* | Pick'd from the chaff and *strewings* of the *temse* | To be new *garner'd* ! (*Temse* refers to a kind of sieve). Bailey notes that the term *peasantry* is not found in any of Shakespeare's dramas.

[See Additional Notes, 2.9.48]

30. {How much low peasantry would then be gleaned}
 Q reads, 'how much low peasantry,' whereas F reads, 'how much low pleasantry.'

low peasantry: lowliness, low rank or conduct of a peasant

low pleasantry: low remarks of humor; low courteous remarks; lip service, facetiousness

31. {From the true seed of honor} / From so-called 'noblemen'

32. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.48]

33. {I will assume desert. Give me a key for this}

To claim^o my prize and my fortune to be.^{34 35}

/ And here's

He opens the silver casket and pauses

—Portia

Too long a pause for that which you find there.^{o 36}

/ you do see / would agree

—Arragon

What's here? The portrait of a blinking^o idiot.

/ dull-eyed

Presenting me a schedule.^o I will read it.

/ with a scroll

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.'³⁷

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head!

Is that my prize? Are my deserts^o no better?

> Is what I deserve

—Portia

By your own hand, O Prince, your choice is made;^{o 38}

/ you made your choice

Can^o I be judge of that?^{o 39 40}

/ Need // I need not be the judge

—Arragon

And what is here?

He reads

Five times fire did burn^o this;^{41 42}

{try} > purify

34. {I will assume desert. Give me a key for this, | And instantly unlock my fortunes here}
/ I will assume desert—give me the key | To claim my prize for all the world to see.
/ I will assume desert—the key for this | To instantly unlock my prize of bliss

35. Unlike Morocco's soliloquy, Arragon makes no mention of Portia, only himself. Morocco mentions both himself and the lady; Bassanio mentions neither himself nor the lady.

36. Here, as in 2.9.78, Portia's subsequent line rhymes with Arragon's previous line. The original reads:

Arr: And instantly unlock my fortunes *here*. *Arr:* Patiently to bear my *wroth*.

Por: Too long a pause for that which you find *there*. [52] *Por:* Thus hath the candle singed the *moth*. [78]

In this emendation (unlike the original) Arragon closes with a rhyming couplet. As such, the triplicate rhyme added by Portia may not be necessary.

37. Arragon misquotes the inscription which suggests that he is recalling it, not actually reading it.

38. / By your own hand, you have rendered a verdict / By your own choice, O prince, you gave a verdict

39. {To offend and judge are distinct offices | And of opposèd natures.}

Portia is saying: One who offends (Arragon), due to lack of wisdom, cannot be in a position to judge or give sentence (since this requires wisdom). In other words, an offender is in no position to judge himself; someone qualified to judge would not have committed the offence in the first place. If Portia is being asked by Arragon to be the judge (and overrule the verdict), she is politely excusing herself. She does not want to offend Arragon by personally agreeing with the verdict; nor does she need be in the position of judge since Arragon's own choice has already rendered judgement. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.60]

40. / Need I be judge of that? / 'Tis not my place to judge || And what is here?
/ I need not be the judge of that. || What's here?

41. {The fire seven times tried this}

tried: refined, purified [See Morocco's use of the term, 2.7.53]

42. Q1 reads as follows:

The fire seven times tried this
Seven times that judgement is,

*Five times judgement brings a hiss,[°]
 Now your choice begets a miss;^{° 43}
 Some there be that shadows kiss,
 Such have[°] but a shadow's bliss.
 There be fools we all dismiss,⁴⁴
 Silvered[°] o'er, and so was this.⁴⁵
 Take what thought[°] you will to bed⁴⁶
 I will ever be your head^{° 47}
 So be gone, for you are sped.[°]*

*/ brings abyss / falls amiss,
 / That their choice is e'er amiss
 / Now they have a
 / Claiming / Getting

 / Varnished
 {wife}
 / e'er be in your head
 > dismissed*

Still more fool I shall appear,
 With[°] the time I linger here,
 With one fool's head I came to woo,
 But I go away with two.
 Sweet adieu, I've lost my claim,
 Thus I go to[°] bear my shame.^{48 49}

{By}

*/ my suit/fate is lame / I am lost and ne'er the same
 / Now to go and*

*That did never choose amiss,
 Some there be that shadow's kiss,
 Such have but a shadow's bliss:
 There be fools alive Iwis (I wis)
 Silvered o'er, and so was this.
 Take what wife you will to bed,
 I will ever be your head:
 So be gone, you are sped.*

43. {That did never choose amiss} / Choose you now another miss / That did never choose iwis

44. {There be fools alive Iwis}

Iwis: certainly, assuredly, for sure; 'I know,' 'I think.' The capitalization suggests that the original intent was probably *I wis*, or *I know*.

45. {Silvered o'er, and so was this}

silvered o'er: a) Dressed up with the appearance of merit, perhaps donning some silver medals. This reference specifically implicates Arragon for the very thing he so diligently condemned in others—undeserved worth. b) The silver or gray hair found on aged persons, who are considered wise (due to age) but who are, indeed, fools.

46. {Take what wife you will to bed}

This line speaks of taking a wife to bed, yet the vow forbids a suitor from ever taking a wife should he choose the wrong casket. A possible rendering might be: 'Take your vanished wife to bed.' *Vanished* plays on the words *vanity*, *vanquished*. Here a *vanished* wife refers to a wife that Arragon will never have—as all he will ever take to bed is the thought of having a wife.

47. {I will ever be your head}

This suggests that 'I' (the head of a blinking idiot) will ever be Arragon's head. (Arragon will always have the head of an idiot). As an alternative, the line could read: 'I will e'er be in your head.' This suggests that thoughts about losing the lottery (and thoughts about this idiot head) will ever be in Arragon's mind (and Arragon will ever come to think of himself as a fool for failing at the lottery).

48. / Sweet adieu—I'll keep my vow, | Bearing sorrow, then as now. || To your good choice, O prince, I bow
 / And to my fortune I do bow.
 / A moth into the flames—and how!

/ Sweet adieu, my oath I'll keep | With but patience as I weep || Ay, one more night of restful sleep.

/ Sweet adieu, my life I'll wait | Patiently to bear my fate || Thank God 'tis not a moment late.

49. {Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath, | Patiently to bear my wroath.} *Por:* {Thus hath the candle singed the moath}

wroath: wroth > a variant of *ruth* (sorrow, grief). Due to the spelling, it is likely that *oath* and *wroath* were meant to form a triplicate rhyme with *moath*. In modern pronunciation, the rhyme between *oath* and *wroath* is lost, whereas the rhyme between *wroth* and *moth* is preserved. Thus, in modern pronunciation Arragon's speech is completed in rhyme by Portia's following line (*wroth-moth*). Similarly, at the end of Arragon's speech before the caskets [2.9.50-51] there is no ending rhyme (*this-here*)—yet the rhyme with Arragon's last line is completed by Portia's following line (*here-there*).

Exit Arragon and his attendants

—Portia

One more^o moth into the flame.⁵⁰

/ Another / Flies the

O, these high-minded^o fools when they do choose,

{deliberate}⁵¹

They have the wisdom by their wits to lose.

—Nerissa

The ancient saying is still true of late:

/ to date / and straight

Hanging and wiving are compelled by fate.^{o 52}

/ obliged by / outcomes of / fortunes of

—Portia

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Messenger

[—Messenger

Where is my lady?

—Portia

Here. What would my lord?]⁵³

—Messenger

Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one who has arrived^o

{comes before} / who comes in advance

To indicate^o the approach^{o54} of his lord,

{To signify} / Thus announce // th'arrival

From whom he bringeth bounteous^o off' rings,⁵⁵

/ numerous

That is to say^o (besides his courteous words)⁵⁶

> {To wit}

50. {Thus hath the candle singed the moth}

51. **deliberate**: deliberating, calculating, over-thinking. This term suggests a reliance on the mind as opposed to the heart. Portia, however, is thankful for this deliberation since it leads such suitors into making the wrong choice.

52. {The ancient saying is no heresy: | Hanging and wiving goes by destiny}

/ The ancient saying is a verity / is a truth I see

/ The ancient saying is not one of^o hearsay: | Hanging and wiving go by fate I dear say / found on

/ The ancient saying holds true even now: | Hanging and wiving are fated somehow

53. **my lord**: Portia is using this term playfully as it would never be used in reference to a messenger. She is playing on the use of the term *my lady*, suggesting by her playful, *my lord*, that she does not hold the rank of a lady. This line {Where is my lady? || Here my lord}, however, is suspect, both in the messenger's superfluous question, and Portia askew response.. Thus, this line could be deleted without any loss.

54. {th'approaching} / th'arrival / the coming

55. {From whom he bringeth sensible regrets} / From whom he bringeth bounding compliments / From whom he brings abounding (/abundant) salutations.

sensible: evident to the senses, abundant

regrets: a) salutations, greetings, compliments, b) gifts

Sensible regrets would usually be interpreted as 'abundant greetings,' yet with the modifier ('Gifts of great value') the expression would suggest, 'a lot of gifts'—and gifts of great value.

56. {To wit, besides commends and courteous breath}

to wit: namely, that is to say

/ That is—besides his words of lavish praise— / That is to say—besides great compliments— / That is to say—besides his courteous words— / To wit (besides abounding compliments) / To wit (besides his courteous

Gifts of rich value. 'Til now,° I've not seen⁵⁷
 So hopeful° an ambassador of love.⁵⁸
 A day in spring has never come° so sweet
 To show the bounty of summer's approach⁵⁹
 As this forerunner° comes before his lord.

> As of yet / Up to this time
 {likely} > promising
 {in April never came}

 {fore-spurrer}⁶⁰

—Portia

No more, I pray thee. I am half afeared°
 Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee °
 Thou spend'st such lavish wit° in praising him.⁶¹
 Come, come, Nerissa, this° I long to see,
 One from Cupid's post, come so gracefully.°

/ afraid
 / he is your cousin
 / your finest wit / such high-blown wit
 / for
 {mannerly}

—Nerissa [*aside*]

Bassanio! [*wishfully*] Lord Love—if thy will it be!°^{62 63}

/ Lord of Love, O let it be!

Exeunt

words and praise)

57. {Yet, I have not seen} / I have not yet seen / As of yet, I've not seen
yet: as of yet, heretofore

58. / So promising a harbinger° of love / courier / messenger

59. {To show how costly summer was at hand} / To show how fully summer was at hand
costly: lavish, full, bountiful

60. **fore-spurrer:** a forerunner who comes on a horse.

61. {Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him} / Thou spend'st thy Sunday best in praising him.
high-day: holiday, fit for a high holy day or a Sunday; high-blown, lavish, extravagant
high-day wit: language befitting a special day,

62. The line found in Q1 reads: '*Bassanio* Lord, love if thy will it be.' Most editors reject this punctuation and follow the sensible emendation of Rowe, which reads: '*Bassanio*, Lord Love, if thy will it be! The punctuation in Q1 refers the term 'Lord' to Bassanio (Lord Bassanio), rather than it being a reference to Cupid (Lord love), who is mentioned in the previous line. Another possibility is that Nerissa is making a plea to God, the Lord, in hopes of Bassanio's arrival: 'Bassanio, Lord—love if they will it be.'

/ Bassanio! [please] Lord—[let there be] love if thy will it be! / if it's meant to be!

/ [Please let it be] Bassanio, Lord, [and let there be] love, if they will it be!

/ O Lord, Bassanio—if thy will it be!

/ Bassanio, Lord of Love, I pray it be [See Additional Notes, 2.9.100]

63. The question begged by this line is: How might Nerissa come to know, or even surmise, that Bassanio was a suitor, and likely to arrive in Belmont?—likely enough for her to wish it. Her delighted mention of Bassanio, and her plea to Cupid (or God) for it to be Bassanio, tells us that she was not only expecting his arrival but was hoping for it. (Bassanio's arrival also portends the arrival of Gratiano, which may what Nerissa was really hoping for). [See Essays: *The Lottery*]

Venice. Enter Salanio and Salarino

—Salanio

Now, what news on the Rialto?

—Salarino

Why yet it lives there unchecked,¹ that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading² wrecked^{° 3} on the narrow seas—the Goodwin Shoals[°] I think they call the place—a very dangerous flat,[°] and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall[°] ship lie buried. This be the news⁴ if my gossip report be a woman of her word.⁵

—Salanio

I wish she were as lying a gossip as an old maid who ever knapped[°] ginger,[°] ⟨moving her jaw up and down without a word of truth coming out⟩ or like a one who weeps and has her neighbors believing that her husband has just died—for the third time! But it is true, without any miss matching of words⁶ or crossing the plain highway of talk,⁷ that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had a title good[°] enough to keep his name company—⁸

—Salarino

Come the full stop anon[°]—what sayest thou?⁹

/ by now > already

—Salanio

Why the end is, he hath lost a ship.¹⁰

1. {it lives there unchecked} / Why news is spreading fast
lives: / breeds **unchecked:** unstopped, uncontradicted

2. {that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading} / that Antonio's ship, laden with riches
rich lading: rich cargo

3. **wrecked:** {wrackt}; wracked / strewn about **the Goodwin Shoals:** {the Goodwins}: the Goodwin Sands, a shoal off the coast of Kent, England **flat:** sand bar, sand flat, shoal **tall:** / proud / great / grand

4. **be the news:** {as they say}

5. {if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word} / If the rumors are true
This double-positive could be simplified or emended as follows: 'if my gossip report be an honest woman / if my gossip report be a woman of word.'

6. {without any slips of prolixity}
prolixity: wordy, verbose, long-winded—tiresome as a result of being too wordy
slips: lapses into, indulgence in
slips of prolixity: without embellishment, without using too many words (or euphemisms to try and cover up the hoped for truth), etc.

7. **crossing the plain highway of talk:** deviating from a straight-forward account; 'beating around the bush.'

8. **knapped:** chewed on **ginger:** / ginger snaps **title good enough:** / merit enough

9. / Come to the end already! What is it? / Come, the full stop. And now, what sayest thou? / Come, the full stop by now—what sayest thou?

10. The line division in Q1 is amiss. It reads:
Salari. Come, the full stop.

Solanio. Ha, what sayest thou, why the end is, he hath lost a ship.

In this line division, Salanio asks Salarino a question when Salarino is the one seeking information. Hence, Salanio's question, 'Ha, what say'st thou?' should be assigned to Salarino. In addition, it is clear what Salarino is saying and so for Salanio to question him is not warranted. In defense of the original line structure, Salanio could be asking the question to himself, and then answering it, but such a construction is cumbersome and inelegant.

—Salarino

I hope^o it might prove the end of his losses.¹¹

{would}

—Salanio

Let me say, ‘amen’ to that,¹² lest the devil cross my prayer—for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter Shylock

How now, Shylock—what news among the merchants?

—Shylock

You knew—none so well, none so well as you—of my daughter’s flight.¹³

—Salarino

That’s certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor¹⁴ that made the wings on which she flew away.¹⁵

—Salanio

And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was ready to fly¹⁶—as it is the nature of all ⟨young girls⟩ to leave the nest.^{17 18}

nature: {complexion} / disposition

—Shylock

She is damned for it!¹⁹

—Salarino

11. See note 27 for a possible way to rectify this scene. If rectified, Salarino and Salanio would exeunt here, lines 19-50 would be deleted, and Shylock would enter alone and deliver his famous speech, ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ to the audience—and not to the disinterested Salarino and Salanio.

12. {Let me say ‘amen’ betimes} / Let me say ‘amen’ while there is still time / before it’s too late
betimes: while there is still time; right now / quickly

13. It seems that Jessica’s flight took place a few weeks ago—this is in accordance with Tubal’s return from Genoa, which takes place later in the scene. (Genoa, by road, is some 200+ miles from Venice.) Shylock has seen Antonio many times, and it is likely he would have also seen Salarino and Salanio. Yet, for dramatic consistency, we must assume that this is the first time that Shylock sees Salanio and Salarino since Jessica’s flight.

14. A fanciful reference to a tailor who made Jessica’s wings; this could also be a reference to the tailor who made the boy’s clothing that Jessica wore.

15. {she flew withal}

16. {fledge} A fledgling, ready to fly.

17. {leave the dam}: leave the nest. The substitution of *nest* for *dam*, which makes the line more understandable, ruins the word association with the next line where Shylock says, ‘she is damned for it.’

18. In an earlier embodiment of the play, where Salarino alone existed (and had not yet been split into two identical characters: Salarino and Salanio) all the lines in this scene belonged to Salarino. When Salanio was added, this line (which has congruity as a single line) was split into two, with the first part remaining with Salarino and the second part assigned to Salanio. Salanio’s superfluous closing line, [73-73], however, was not part of the original embodiment (nor originally assigned to Salarino) but was likely added *ex post facto* (by someone other than the author) after the final draft was complete. [See Note 41]

19. Here the blame quickly shifts from Salarino and Salanio to Jessica (where it belongs) and then blame changes into his rage against Christians in general and Antonio in particular. Shylock’s words hereafter, to the two Sallies—although he is being mocked—is friendly and cordial. He does not attack them in the way they attack him.

That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

—Shylock
My own flesh and blood to rebel!

—Salanio
This useless bag of flesh—it is sure to rebel for a man of your years.²⁰

〈—Salarino
You can't expect it to rise on every occasion.°〉²¹ / when you want it to

—Shylock
I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood.

—Salarino
There is more difference between thy flesh and hers, than between jet black and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and white Rhenish.^{22 23} But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio has had any loss at sea or no?

—Shylock
There I have another bad match.²⁴ A bankrupt,²⁵ a prodigal²⁶ who dare scarce show his head on

20. {Out upon it, old carrion, rebels it at these years.}

out upon it: > Probably refers to something like, 'damn it,' 'to hell with it,' 'throw it out,' 'useless,' etc. thus suggesting something that is ruined or ready to be discarded. This negative sense is in line with the negative term for the body, referring to it as 'old carrion'—dead or rotting meat. A similar term ('out upon her') is used by Shylock later in the scene, 113, when referring to his daughter.

old carrion: the body which is corporeal, weak, and subject to aging /

rebels it at these years: it (the body, specifically, the male sexual organ) rebels (does not follow one's wishes) when it gets to be this age.

/ Damn this old carrion. It rebels and will no longer rise to the occasion / What to expect from a man of your years? Surely your flesh is wont to rebel and does not rise when prompted

21. This line is added to explain the sexual nature of Salanio's previous reference. It could be included as a separate entry by Salarino (as found above) or tagged to the end of Salanio's previous line.

22. Salarino talks here in a very familiar tone and he seems to know both Jessica and Shylock well enough to make such a comparison. Yet his words are acerbic. Shylock, however, does not respond to these cutting words, (nor does he seem to take offence) as his mind is occupied with other concerns. Shylock opens the scene with an accusatory tone (against the Sals) but the bulk of his mentality quickly shifts to his daughter and Antonio (with help from the Sals).

23. The contrast between red wine and Rhenish (which is a white German wine) is primarily that between something crude (red wine) and something refined (Rhenish), though there is also the more obvious contrast between the colors of red and white. Without an understanding of Rhenish this contrast would be lost, especially since *Rhenish* sounds a lot like *red*. To make this distinction clear, the above line could read: 'between red wine and white,' or 'between crude red wine and fine white Rhenish.'

24. {There I have another bad match} / There I have another thing gone wrong.

This reference is unclear, and we are not certain of how Antonio's loss at sea represents another bad match. The first bad match—which Shylock is unwittingly concurring with—is that between Shylock and his daughter, the second bad match is that between Shylock and Antonio. The bad match refers to Antonio's inability to pay—but we are not clear at to why Shylock is calling it bad. (If Shylock was truly delighted in Antonio's loss, he might call it a good match rather than a bad one).

25. {a bankrout} > someone whose funds (bank account) has been routed; someone who is bankrupt

26. {a prodigal} / a wasted man.

The term generally refers to one who has carelessly spent or wasted his wealth (by being too liberal in his spending). Antonio, however, is more careful in his ventures, and so the term may refer to Antonio's prodigality with respect to his loaning money to Bassanio (and Bassanio's wasting of it). Yet, earlier in the scene Shylock

the Rialto; a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart.²⁷ Let him look to 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—let him look to his bond.

—Salarino

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

—Shylock²⁸

To bait fish withal.²⁹ If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced³⁰ me, and hindered me half a million times.³¹ He hath laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my ventures, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies—and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, arms, legs,³² senses, affections, desires?³³ 'Are we not' 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

described Antonio's ventures as, 'ventures he hath squandered abroad' [1.3.20-21] and so the term might refer to Antonio's overly extended ventures.

27. **upon the mart:** at the Rialto; where the merchants and traders meet

28. According to theory, Salarino and Salanio were not found in the original draft of the play (nor the second draft—for in that draft Salarino alone existed) but the pair came about as part of a third draft—whose main function was to talk about, and give news of, the main characters. Thus, it is likely that Shylock's famous speech was originally a monologue, with Shylock making his plea to the audience, rather than two supporters of Antonio (who would not sympathize with, nor understand, Shylock's position). Several anomalies in the text support this theory (that Salarino and Salanio were added as part of a later draft), including a) The stage direction reads: '*Solanio and Salarino.*' rather than '*Enter Salarino and Solanio.*' (as is found in 2.8), and there is no line spacing before this entry to signify a new scene; b) Shylock's entry is placed in the position of an character exit, not an entrance and reads, '*Enter Shylocke*' as opposed to '*Enter Shylocke.*' c) When a man from Antonio enters to signify the exist of Salarino and Salanio, the speech heading for 'Man' is missing, and there is a misplaced line space before the line, d) the stage direction, *Enter Tuball*, is listed twice (instead of once), e) the stage direction reads *Exeunt Gentlemen*, as opposed to *Exeunt*, etc.

Thus, in an earlier draft, this may have been a monologue, with Shylock alone. In a later draft, this was likely two scenes, with Salarino and Salanio exiting after line 18 ['I would it might prove the end of his losses.']. We find support for this in the misplaced and anomalous connecting line [19-20], and also in the superfluous and uninspired dialogue between the Sals and Shylock [21-49], none of which moves the plot, most of which is askew (especially the part where the Sals are comparing Shylock to his daughter), and all of which seems to be a later addition. Hence, a restoration of this scene would be to split the scene into two and delete a portion of the middle section: a) 3.1.1—3.1.18 [keep], with *Exeunt* of both Sals after line 18; 3.1.19—3.1.50 [delete]. *Enter Shylock*, and begin with line 51: 'He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million. . .'. b) Shylock could begin at line 41, and reference his speech to Antonio: 'Antonio has had another loss at sea: Now he is a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto . . . He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy: let him look to his bond. And if he forfeit, will I take his flesh? <What's ask me>what's that good for? To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. . .'. c) Salarino and Salanio could remain on stage, unnoticed, as Shylock gives his speech. When the speech is over, a Man from Antonio could enter and bid them to leave [3.1.70-72]. Alternatively, Shylock could notice them (when the man enters) and shout out just before they exit: *Shy*: 'You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.' *Exeunt Shy*: [to himself] She is damned for it. (Alternatively: Salarino could make a last retort, saying: 'That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.')

29. / To use for baiting fish. / To use for fishing bait.

30. / dishonored / humiliated

31. {hindered me half a million}: a) hindered me again and again, a half a million times, b) caused me a loss of half a million ducats in profit

/ hindered me a million times

32. {dimensions} / a body frame / bones > which make up a person's height

33. {affections, passions}

Affections generally refers to objective desires, things a person likes, things influenced by the senses; *passions* refer more to subjective feelings, stirred from the heart.

like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrongs a Christian, what kindness does he return? ³⁴ Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy ³⁵ you teach me I will return unto you; ³⁶ yet it shall go harder to you than it has come to me. ^{37 38}

[optional added lines]

⟨⟨ —Salanio

Your words are full of passion words but fail to impress. You say that Christian and Jew are alike—then you talk of revenge. If we are alike, your plea should be one of forgiveness. Nay, there is neither Jew nor Christian in your words—there is naught but your own hatred, misplaced and misbegotten.^{o 39}

—Salarino

Methinks old Shylock peddles his Jewish sufferance ⁴⁰ better than anyone on the Rialto. Antonio hates the evils of usury, not Jews—and you, kind sir, are a usurer.

—Salanio

Your rage has defeated your judgement.

— ⁴¹

—Salanio

Ay, this revenge you ply with such zeal is not a thing you've learned by Christian example—'tis your own creation. We've heard Antonio speak against usury but not once

34. {what is his humility?}

/ what kindness does he show? > said with sarcasm

/ what does he give (/offer / show) in return?

his humility: his humble response; the kindness and benevolence shown by a Christian

35. **villainy:** / ill-treatment / vulgarity / obscenity.

The term *Jew* was often synonymous with *villain*, and we see this reference in a line by Launcelet: *for I am a Jew [villain] if I serve the Jew any longer*. [2.2.108] The villainy that Christians teach Jews, is that they view and treat Jews as villains; hence, that same villainy (and wretched treatment) that Christians impose on Jews, Shylock, a Jew, will now impose on a Christian.

36. {execute} / repay unto you/ give in fair return / repay in fullness / give back to

37. {and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction}

/ and it shall go hard, for I will give it to you better than you have given it to me

/ and I will give it hard to you but I will give the better lesson

38. There is a continued reference to Christians, though the object of Shylock's revenge is Antonio. Antonio is the one who has mistreated Shylock, and he (Antonio) has become a symbol for Shylock which represents the Christian mistreatment of Jews. The distortion here is that Shylock's rage is turned against Antonio only after he learns about Jessica's flight—even though Antonio had nothing to do with it nor would Antonio ever condone such a 'less than honorable' action. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.69]

39. **to justify:** to vindicate / in service of

misplaced and misbegotten: / befuddled and befouled

40. / peddles the 'Jew card'

41. Optional line to add:

—Salarino:

Even more vile than this, you hide the evils of your trade behind the sanctity^o of your ⟨Jewish⟩ tradition.

vile: / suspect /telling

sanctity: virtue / nobleness / righteousness

against the Jew or his nation.⁴² ›

Enter a Man from Antonio

—Man

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

—Salarino

We have been up and down to seek him out.^{43 44}

Exeunt Salarino, Salanio, and Man

Enter Tubal

—Shylock

How now, Tubal. What news from Genoa?⁴⁵ Hast thou found my daughter?

—Tubal

I often came where I did hear of her, but could not^o find her.⁴⁶

{cannot}

42. Optional additional line: “Bear in mind, we speak of good Antonio not about the lesser company he keeps.” Adding this line would indicate that Antonio is especially good (and never makes a negative comment about Jews) while suggesting that other Christians, such as Salanio and Salarino, are not so good, and may have made negative comments about Jews.

43. Q1 reads: {*Solanio*. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be matched unless the devil himself turn Jew.} As mentioned in previous notes, anti-Semitic ‘additions’ to the text are often found at the end of a scene or a speech (made as a last remark before a character exits); these always appear misplaced or ‘forced’ upon the text. These ‘add-ons’ smack of having been penned in, *ex post facto*, by someone other than the author. (See notes xx for other examples of this anti-Semitic ‘appendaging.’) (Also note, that in this short interaction, a Jew is likened to a *devil* three times [19, 31, 73] : thus it seems that someone, lacking in all respects, repeated this same reference here, yet again.) Here, again, we find a likely case of ‘unauthorized appendaging’ where an unnecessary, inconsistent, and misplaced anti-Semitic remark is attached as a final exiting remark. Not only is the content suspect, but the textual anomalies surrounding this entry support the theory that it was added to the text: for instance, there a mistaken speech heading in the preceding line (attributing the line to *Saleri* not *Salari*); the stage direction, *Enter Tubal*, is listed twice; and the stage direction reads *Exeunt Gentlemen*, as opposed to *Exeunt*.

Saleri. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal.

Solanio. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be match, unless the devil himself turn Jew. *Exeunt Gentlemen*.

Enter Tubal.

The original entry (before ‘corrections’ and additions were made) may have been thus:

Salari. We have been up and down to seek him out.

Exeunt.

Enter Tubal

[See Additional Notes, 3.1.73]

44. See previous note: The original entry is likely a corrupted addition to the text and has been deleted. However, a portion of the original line attributed to Salanio could be emended (and added to the text):

Salanio: Here comes another of the tribe. Let’s quick unto Antonio’s house.

45. Genoa is 200+ miles from Venice.

46. / but there I could not find her

—Shylock

Why there, there, there, there! ⁴⁷ A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort. The curse never fell upon our nation till now—I never felt it till now. ⁴⁸ Two thousand ducats in that and other precious, precious jewels. I wish^o my daughter were dead at my feet^o and the jewels in her ear! That^o she were hearsed at my foot^o and the ducats in her coffin! ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ No news of them? Why so? And I know not what is spent in the search. Why, thou—loss upon loss. The thief is gone with so much, and so much ⟨spent^o⟩ to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; ⁵¹ nor no ill-luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders, no sighs but of my^o breathing, no tears but of my^o shedding. ⁵² ⁵³

47. Stage direction: [*Shylock motions his hands in different directions, as if casually throwing things away, indicating a carefree waste of his jewels and ducats*]

48. No curse has fallen upon ‘our nation,’—the only curse that has fallen is upon Shylock. What pain is Shylock feeling for the first time? All the years of being persecuted as a Jew, by his enemies, he could not feel, it could not penetrate his hardened exterior. But the betrayal of his daughter has penetrated the exterior—but it is more like a stabbing come from inside his heart which he can now feel. Perhaps it was the combination—the betrayal of his daughter and the whimsical ruin of his hard-earned money—which caused Shylock, for the first time, to feel the curse that fell upon his nation. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.81]

49. {I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin!}

Is Shylock wishing his daughter dead because she has betrayed him or because of the monetary loss she incurred? Here we see Shylock’s confusion over value—and between his daughter and his ducats. In the court scene Shylock refuses an offer of 9000 ducats (which was well above the sum stolen by his daughter) so the loss of money is not the whole of his suffering. Here Shylock is wishing his daughter dead so that he could retrieve his jewels and ducats from her dead body—which reveals his confusion and misplaced sense of rage. He simply has no way to understand or express what he is feeling. He is not really wishing his daughter dead, even though he twice makes this plea. Yet even in this wish there is a mixed message: he wishes that his daughter be dead, but also that she be at his feet, that she returns to him.

50. Some additional lines could be added to mollify Shylock’s previous words and appease his misplaced rage wherein he wishes his daughter dead. (Notice that Shylock speaks frankly about wanting his daughter dead but we never hear him talk with the same directness or sense of entitlement when it comes to Antonio). The added lines would also better situate the question, ‘No news of them?’ addressing it to Tubal as opposed to Shylock asking the question to himself:

—Shylock . . . ducats in her coffin. ⟨She’s made me suffer; she has cut me deeper than all mine enemies. They, I know, are set against me—and their cruelty I can bear—but she was dearer to me than all the world.⟩
⟨—Tubal Those who are closest, oft’ cut us the deepest.⟩
—Shylock No news of them?
⟨—Tubal None.⟩

51. Herein Shylock is using the term *thief*—and expressing his desire for *revenge*—in reference to his own daughter. So, we see that Shylock’s response in terms of revenge—even with respect to his own daughter—is a flaw of his own unplumbed character, and not something he learned from Christian example (as stated by Shylock in his famous ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ speech). Here wants Jessica dead—as that is the action he deems to match her crime. However, Shylock’s own words belie his true feelings—he does not actually want Jessica dead, but that is the only thing he can say as to express his sadness and misplaced rage. Perhaps the kind of revenge that Shylock actually seeks is to teach her a lesson, to somehow make Jessica feel the same kind of pain that he feels so that she might come to know (a regret) the pain she has brought on her father. We can also suspect that Shylock wants to teach Antonio the same kind of lesson. Neither of these ‘lessons’ involve the actually killing of the other person, though that is what Shylock has stated in his rage.

According to theory (see note 28), Salarino and Salanio did not appear in the original draft of the play; in such a case, this scene may have opened with the entrance of Shylock and Tubal, at line 75 (and did not include Shylock’s famous speech opening with, ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ The idea of Shylock seeking revenge against his daughter is misplaced and, as part of a later embodiment of the play—and expanding upon Shylock’s human need for revenge—this theme of revenge was then expanded to include Shylock’s revenge against Antonio but also the more encompassing revenge of the Jew against the Christian. This is also supported in Shylock’s reaction to news of Antonio’s loss later in the scene. (See note 53)

52. {nor no ill luck stirring but what lights a my shoulders, no sighs but a my breathing, no tears but a my shedding.}

53. **wish:** {would} **feet:** {foot} **That:** {Would} / I wish **at my foot:** / right here **spent:** / lost / wasted / expended **my:** / mine own **ill luck:** / misfortune

—Tubal

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

—Shylock

What? What? Tell me—what kind of ill luck? ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵

—Tubal

He hath an argosy, cast away, coming from Tripolis.

—Shylock

I have heard the same.^o Is it true, is it true?

{I thank God, I thank God.}

—Tubal

I spoke with some of the sailors who escaped the wreck.

—Shylock

I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news. What else did you hear in Genoa? ⁵⁶

54. {What, what, what, ill luck, ill luck.} / What? What? Ill luck for Antonio?

This line is anomalous and probably a result of some ‘typesetting correction.’ This odd repeating of words (which is also found in line 96 and line 99) may have resulted from a portion of original line being unreadable (due to a smudge) and the typesetter, in an attempt to fix it, simply repeated some of the words that were readable. In one possibility, the original manuscript may have appeared as such:

□□□□□ what □□□□□ ill luck.

a) typesetter’s rectification: ‘What, what, **what**, ill luck, **ill luck**.’

b) present rectification: ‘Tell me what kind of ill luck?’ / What, what kind of ill luck?

All three lines (94, 96, and 99) are suspect, both in content and in their odd repeating of words. One might argue that since the same kind of repetition appeared three times that it must have been part of the original; or, it could be, that the original page was smudged in several places and the typesetter rectified all the lines in the same way (not by omitting words that were smudged but by repeating words from the same line).

55. In this line Shylock seems to hear about Antonio’s ill-luck with surprise, suggesting that he is hearing the news (and delighting in it) for the first time. Yet earlier in the scene Shylock mentions Antonio’s losses and how he is a bankrupt and a prodigal. So, there is some obvious repetition. Some commentators believe that this part of the scene (between Shylock and Tubal) formed the whole of the scene; in a later draft—intending to show Shylock’s vengefully human side, and also explain some of his reasons for wanting to kill Antonio—the author added Shylock’s famous speech, ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’

56. Both the quartos and the folios have ‘hear in Genoa’ {*heere in Genowa*} which most editors emend as ‘heard in Genoa?’ They defend this emendation by stating that *d* and *e* were easily confused in Elizabethan handwriting, though they have no answer as to how *ea*, in *heard*, would have been mis-typeset as *ee*, in *heere*. In addition, the term *heard* is used both before [93] and after [101] this line, without error, which makes such a midstream typo even more unlikely. The line, as it stands in Q1, or as summarily emended, is defective, and we can assume some type error—most likely an error of omission rather than one of typesetting.

With the emended phrase, ‘*Ha, ha, heard in Genoa?*’ Shylock is made to repeat what Tubal had previously said (‘*Antonio, as I heard in Genoa*’). Thus, the line would mean: ‘Ha, ha, so that is what you heard (about Antonio) in Genoa?’ However, Tubal’s response is about Jessica—not Antonio—suggesting that Shylock is not oddly repeating Tubal’s phrase but inquiring about his daughter. Thus, Shylock’s phrase ‘*Hear in Genoa?*’ could be emended as, ‘*What else did you hear in Genoa?*’ or ‘*What did you hear about my daughter in Genoa?*’ With this emendation (preserving the word *hear* and not changing it to *heard*) Shylock is asking for news about his daughter and not repeating Tubal’s words about Antonio’s ventures (which is something he already knows).

With respect to the anomalous repetitions of lines 94, 96, and 99 (see note 53) portions of the line may have been smudged and the typesetter (trying to rectify the line) took to repeating words from the same line (that were already readable) as opposed to a) omitting the smudged words altogether, or b) trying to fill in the unreadable words with new ones of his own creation. (We thank thee good typesetter for not trying to do this!)

In trying to rectify the line, one could, a) leave it as it appears in Q1, b) include the typesetter’s rectification along with an additional one, or c) rectify the line (without relying upon the typesetter’s rectification). Thus:

a) I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha. Hear in Genoa. (or ‘Heard in Genoa’)

—Tubal

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night, eighty ducats.⁵⁷

—Shylock

Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Eighty ducats in one sitting! Eighty ducats!

—Tubal

And, in my company⁵⁸ to Venice, there came several⁵⁹ of Antonio's creditors who swear he cannot chose but break.

break: / go bankrupt / go bust

—Shylock

I am very glad of it. I'll plague him, I'll torture him. I am glad of it.⁶⁰

—Tubal

One of them showed me a ring that he had from your daughter—in exchange for a monkey.

—Shylock

Damn her for it.⁶¹ Thou torturest me, Tubal.⁶² It was my turquoise. I had it of Leah⁶³ when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a jungle full^o of monkeys.

whole jungle: {wilderness} / whole jungle

b) I thank thee good Tubal. Good news. Good news! Ha, ha—what else did you hear in Genoa?

c) I thank thee good Tubal. Good news. What else did you hear in Genoa?

c) I thank thee good Tubal. What else did you hear in Genoa?

57. {four score ducats} / eighty / one hundred / two hundred / four hundred

The original reads, 'four score ducats' (or eighty ducats) and is here replaced with a more familiar and recognizable amount of 'eighty ducats.' The term *four score* is not a number readily recognized by the modern audience (and they would have to pause to mentally translate this term into 'eighty.') In addition, the term is strongly associated with the opening of the Gettysburg Address and would direct most audience members to make that irrelevant association.

Eighty ducats does not represent an amount whereby Shylock would feel as if someone had 'stick'st a dagger' in him. Perhaps the intent of Shylock lamenting over 'four score' ducats—and repeating the term twice in the following line—was meant to show his miserliness (for in the context of a 2000 ducat ring, and the 3000 ducat bond, such an amount is too small to take up so much attention). One possible emendation would be to 'up the ante' and replace 'four score ducats' with 'four hundred ducats' which is an amount more likely to elicit such a strong reaction.

58. **in my company:** / traveling with me / along with me

59. **several of:** {divers of} (> from 'diverse') / a number of / many of

60. At this point Shylock could direct the conversation back to talk of his daughter as opposed to having Tubal always directing the subject of conversation toward Antonio. Hence, Shylock could finish this line by adding, 'And what of my daughter?' or 'And is there any more news of my daughter?'

61. **Damn her for it:** {Out upon her}: Out of this world with her, to hell with her.

62. {Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal.} This is Shylock's initial response to Tubal. It begins with an attack on Jessica; then addresses Shylock's feelings, and then the ring. The order of the lines could be transposed where Shylock's initial response is about the ring, then Jessica, then himself

B) *Shylock:* That was my turquoise ring. I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a whole jungle of monkeys. Damn her for it. Thou torture me Tubal.

63. {I had it of Leah} / I received it from Leah

Shylock's wife, Leah, is mentioned by name. Recall the story from Genesis that Shylock told to Antonio, relating to Jacob attending to Laban's sheep. [1.3.74-87]: Jacob's somewhat deceitful actions could have been his way to get even with Laban, his father-in-law, who had previously tricked Jacob into taking Leah (Laban's daughter) as his wife and not Rachel (whom Jacob desired).

—Tubal
But Antonio is certainly undone.⁶⁴

—Shylock
Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go Tubal, get me^o an officer, and give him a two-week notice.⁶⁵
I will have the heart of him if he forfeit—for were he out of Venice I can do what business I
will.⁶⁶ Go, Tubal, and meet me at the Rialto. Go, good Tubal; at the Rialto Tubal.^{67 68 69}
get me: {fee me} / find me / hire me

Exeunt. They go separate ways

64. Tubal, again, is trying to divert Shylock from his grief (over the loss of his daughter) to something Shylock will be glad of—Antonio's losses.

65. {Bespeak him a fortnight before}. > Tell the officer to arrest Antonio in a fortnight (when the bond is due) if Antonio does not pay the full amount due. This securing of an officer in two weeks (when the bond is due) defies the time frame of the play: Bassanio is now in Belmont with plenty of time to win Portia, return to Venice, and pay off the debt—as planned—before it is due. (Bassanio set sail for Belmont at the end of 2.6). [See: *Essays, Time Warp*]

66. This line is somewhat out of place. Shylock's plan to kill Antonio, to get him out of the way, no longer makes sense since Antonio is a bankrupt and would no longer have sufficient money to loan out. [See Additional Notes: 3.1.121]

67. {Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.} The likely intention here is to show the Elizabethan audience that Jews use their synagogue as a place to do business—which is the very thing that Jesus revolted against. Tubal has just arrived back from a long trip; Shylock had spent a good amount of money to pay for Tubal's trip, but he does not know how much the trip cost (*And I don't know what's spent in the search. Why, thou—loss upon loss!* [86-87]). Hence, Shylock must go and meet with Tubal to work out the finances and settle the balance for Tubal's trip (and to give Tubal the fee so that he may secure an officer in two weeks time). But why Shylock directs Tubal to meet him at the synagogue is unclear, unless there is an open area in front of the synagogue where it is convenient to meet. Some commentators interpret this meeting at the synagogue to suggest that Shylock needs Tubal to meet with him at the synagogue so that Shylock can take a vow before God—a vow to kill Antonio (if he should forfeit). However, there is no support that Shylock needs Tubal in order to take such a vow, and Shylock's taking a vow before God (which we hear about in 4.1) has no tangible relationship to Shylock meeting with Tubal at the synagogue. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.123]

68. This line marks the end of a series of somewhat odd lines, spoken by Shylock, where he needlessly repeats his words. Such lines include:

What, what, what? Ill luck? Ill luck? [94]

I thank God, I thank God. Is it true? Is it true? [96]

I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha, here in Genoa. [99]

Four score ducats at a sitting! Four score ducats! [104]

I am glad of it. I'll plague him, I'll torture him. I am glad of it. [109]

Go Tubal and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal, at our synagogue, Tubal. [121]

69. For a discussion of Shylock's emotional state, and how his sadness has been displaced by rage, see Additional Notes, 3.1.124

Belmont.

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and attendants. ¹

—Portia [*to Bassanio*]

I pray you, tarry. ^o Pause a day or two	> spend some more time
Before you choose, for if your choice is wrong ²	
I lose your company. Thus, forbear ^o awhile.	/ hold back / remain
There's ^o something tells me—and I dare not ^o say	/ Now // cannot
It's love—that I could not endure ^o to lose you	/ bear
And you know that indifference ^o counsels not	{hate} / disfavor
In such a way ³ —(so hear ^o what goes ^o unsaid. ⁴)	/ heed // what's left
But lest you should not understand me well ^o —	/ fully
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought— ⁵	
I would detain ^o you here some month or two	/ I want to keep
Before you venture for me. I could teach you	
How to choose right, but then I break my oath, ^o	{I am forsworn} ⁶
And that will ^o never be—so ^o you may miss me.	{That will I} / thus
But if you do, ^o you'll make me wish a sin,	> miss me / choose wrong
That I did break my oath. ^o ⁷ So blame your eyes; ⁸	/ vow
They ^o have bewitched me and divided ^o me: ⁹	That // bewildered / confused

1. The theory that Bassanio received some kind of indirect help from Nerissa, in determining the right casket, is supported by the text. To indicate this to the audience, he and Nerissa could be seen conversing, or conspicuously together, before the scene opens.

2. {Before you hazard, for in choosing wrong }

3. {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.} / Disfavor counsels not in such a manner.

> My heart is telling me—but (because I am not allowed to show any favoritism) I cannot say that I am speaking out of love, but (what I want to say) is that I could not bear to lose you—and you know yourself, that love, not hate, speaks in such a way.

4. / so hear what is unspoken / so hear what I have not said / so hear what I cannot say / so hear the words unspoken / so hear what's left unsaid

5. / And yet a maiden's only voice is thought / A maiden's thoughts move but not her tongue

> a woman is not allowed to truly speak her mind (but is only allowed to think such thoughts)

6. **I am forsworn:** I have sworn falsely, I have failed to keep my oath. *Forsworn* is repeated later in the passage but at no other place in the text. It is interesting to note that a few lines later [53-62] Portia references a story about Hercules from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* wherein, in the English translation (by Golding) the same word *forsworne* appears—and this is the only place in the 15 books of the *Metamorphoses* that the word is used. The likely implication is that the author referenced a copy of Golding's *Metamorphoses* while composing this portion of the text (as opposed to simply recalling the story from a past reading).

7. {That I had been forsworn}

8. {Beshrew your eyes}

9. {They have o'erlooked me and divided me}

o'erlooked: a) bewitched, as in being amazed and charmed, b) bewitched, as in altering one's vision, as in confusion or with eyes looking but not seeing, c) overlooked me, not seen me as I am

divided me: divided my attention, confused me, divided my sentiments (for I must keep my vows with respect to my father's wishes, but I also find myself wanting to break that vow and help you win)

This sentence may refer to the effect that Bassanio's eyes have on Portia (i.e., they bewitch and bewilder her) or to what Bassanio sees with his eyes (i.e., he overlooks and divides Portia in his sight).

a) When looking into your eyes I'm bewitched and confused (as to whom I belong to, for I am lost in your eyes)

b) When looking into your eyes I see beyond the narrow scope of my vow, and I am divided (one part is obligated to keep my vow and the other part wants to break it)

One half of me is yours, the other half yours—
 Mine own I would say—but if mine, then yours,
 And so all yours. O, these wicked^o times {naughty} / woeful / awful
 Put bars^o between the owners and their rights.¹⁰ / walls
 And so, though yours, still not yours. Make your choice¹¹
 And prove <that I am yours. In this, I've sworn
 To give no help.^o And so, should you choose wrong >^{12 13}
 Let fortune go^o to hell for it, not I.¹⁴ / My fortune goes
 I speak too long; but 'tis to slow^o the time,¹⁵ {pieze / piece} / weigh
 To eke^o it and to draw it out in length,¹⁶ {ech / etch}
 To stay you^o from your choice.^o / To hold you {election}

—Bassanio Nay, let me choose,
 For as I am, I live^o upon the rack.^{17 18} / I'm stretched

—Portia
 Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess

-
- b) Your eyes have overlooked me and see me as two
10. / Puts barriers 'tween the owners and their rights / Bars us from claiming what we rightly own. / Has people barred from what they rightly own / Puts walls between an owner and his rights
bars: barriers, obstacles; bars, as in the bars of a prison
11. / And so, though yours, not yours. So make your choice
12. / To offer thee no help. If you choose wrong / To give no help. And so, should you choose wrong
13. And so, though yours, still not yours. Prove it so,
 <By your own choice, that I am truly yours.>
 <In this, I cannot help. Should you choose wrong> / <And should it be you fate to choose the wrong>
14. / My hopes and dreams go to hell but not I.
15. {I speak too long, but 'tis to peize the time}
peize: to weigh down, load, burden; hang weights upon
peize the time: add weights to the (pendulum of the) clock so as to make time move more slowly.
piece the time: draw out, elongate, add pieces to the time (as in seconds, minutes, hours, etc.)
 Q1 has *peize* which means, 'to weigh down, and may refer to the slowing of the clock, which is accomplished by hanging weights upon the pendulum. It could also refer to the weighing (making more meaningful) the time. ('Weigh with deliberation each precious moment.' — Clarendon). Many editors dismiss this image and take *peize* to be a misspelling of *peise*, meaning to *piece*, augment, or add to. *Piece the time* would mean to add pieces to it, so as to make the time longer. In both cases the meaning is the same: it relates to slowing, prolonging, or adding to the time. Portia, not confident that Bassanio will choose the right casket—which would force him to leave at once—wants to enjoy his company for as long as she can.
 The image of hanging weight upon the clock to slow down the time, could be depicted more literally:
 / I speak too long; but 'tis to hang more weight | Upon the clock, in hopes of slowing time,
16. {To ech it and to draw it out in length} / To try and eke it and draw out its length / To draw and eke out every last moment
ech (eke): to prolong, extend, protract, augment, increase. Often used with *out*, as in 'eke out the time.'
17. {For as I am, I live upon the rack} / For I now live as stretched upon the rack
upon the rack: refers to the image of a person being painfully stretched upon the rack (a common instrument of torture in Medieval times). This method of torture was commonly used to extract confessions from accused criminals and traitors (those who were accused of treason). The term *rack*, means 'to painfully stretch.' [Antonio uses this term in 1.1:181-82: *Try what my credit can in Venice do; | That shall be racked, even to the utmost.*]
 Bassanio is saying, 'For as I am (having to wait until I can make my choice) I feel as if I am being stretched upon the rack (and cannot bear to be tortured thus a minute longer). stretched upon the rack as a metaphor to signify his patience being stretched, i.e., his having to wait for Portia. The wait is tortuous and, as such, he cannot wait the additional month or two which Portia suggests, even though it could increase his chances of winning her. He cannot even wait another minute and proceeds directly to the caskets. Bassanio's being stretched may also be in terms of his finances which are low and at their breaking point.
18. Option: add a line here for clarification: <Like one who's been stretched to the breaking point.>

What treason there^o is mingled with your love?¹⁹

/ What heresy

—Bassanio

None but that ugly treason of mistrust,^{o 20 21}

/ unrest

⟨Where I am sure about my love for you ⟩²²

/ the love I hold

Yet still in doubt^o if I'll ever^o enjoy it.^{23 24}

/ unsure //I am to

There is more kinship and affinity^o

/ and likeness of kind

'Tween snow and fire, as^o treason and my love.^{25 26}

> as there is between

—Portia

Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,

Where men enforced^o do speak^o anything.²⁷

/ will say

—Bassanio

Promise me life and I'll confess the truth.²⁸

—Portia

19. Portia is using this light banter—this accusation of treason—to test Bassanio, and to have him 'confess' what is true. Her real question is: Is your love true—is what you show (outwardly) a true reflection of what you feel? (Are your motivations based on love for me or personal gain?)

Is there some aspect of yourself that goes against, that belies (i.e., is treasonous to) your show of love? In other words, do your outer actions of apparent love go against what you truly feel inside? Are you putting on the outer show of loving me yet do not truly love me?

20. {None but that ugly treason of mistrust | Which makes me fear th'enjoying of my love}

What does Bassanio mistrust? And how does such treason make him fearful of the future and uncertain (mistrusting) whether there will come a time when he can enjoy the fruits and expression of his love (for Portia). A) Bassanio's treason could be his mistrust the wisdom of Portia's father and the lottery he devised—which was supposed to determine one who truly loves Portia. Bassanio truly loves Portia, and wants to enjoy the fullness of that love (the same way that Portia wants to enjoy it)—and he mistrusts whether the lottery (which is supposed to determine one who truly loves Portia) will, in fact, do so. B) Perhaps Bassanio does not trust himself. His love is true, his love is certain, but his own doubts whether he will be able to rise to the occasion (and choose the right chest) are in doubt. C) Previously Portia accuses Bassanio of treason (of putting on an outward show of loving her but not truly loving in his heart). Bassanio's reply could then be a reference to Portia's mistrust (of Bassanio's true motivations) but this is unlikely, since such a mistrust would not make Bassanio fear the enjoying of his love. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.29]

21. / None but the dark heresy of mistrust / None but the heresy found in mistrust

22. / ⟨Where I am certain about my love's truth⟩

23. / But not about my fortune to enjoy it / Yet still unsure if I'll enjoy its fruit

24. {Which makes me fear th'enjoying of my love}

25. Bas: 'Tween snow and fire as there is between treason
And my love.

Portia: Yet, you speak upon the rack

26. {There may as well be amity and life | 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love}

There is as much kinship and similarity between snow and fire (which are opposites) as there is between treason and my love. In other words, there is no treason mixed with my love—it is pure and singular. There is doubt as to whether I will ever enjoy that love (because there is some lack of certainty in the outcome of the lottery) but no doubt as to my love.

27. / Where men compelled do confess anything

Again Portia is teasingly testing Bassanio, saying that his admission of love may not be sincere since he is like someone who is upon the rack and will make a confession (and say anything) just so he can get off the rack. Such a confession, forcibly induced, therefore, cannot be trusted and taken as true.

28. **promise me life:** > promise me that I will have you; promise me that you will end this torture (of being apart from you). It is unclear what Bassanio is asking of Portia, since she cannot, by her own wits or power, deliver Bassanio to freedom (i.e. from the torturous death of being separate from her).

Well then, ‘confess and live.’²⁹

—Bassanio ‘Confess’ and ‘love’³⁰
Is but^o the very sum of my confession.^{31 32} {Had been}
O happy torment when my torturer
Doth teach^o me answers where I am^o set free—^{33 34} / give // wherein I’m
Now to my choice^o and my fortune to be.³⁵ {the caskets}

29. **confess and live:** an inversion of the proverb, ‘Confess and be hanged (die).’

30. . Q1 reads: {Confesse and loue | had beene the very sum of my confession:}

This playful response to Portia’s previous line may be punctuated as: a) Confess and love (Q1), b) ‘Confess’ and ‘love’, or c) ‘Confess and love’. The passage is sufficiently vague such that neither form of punctuation is decisive. Putting the entire phrase in quotes links this line to the previous line of ‘confess and live,’ whereas quoting each word separately (‘confess’ and ‘live’) suggests that each word carries an individual meaning and capacity. It seems that Bassanio is being vague by design, and his words are not meant to be fully understood; he is, perhaps, making a veiled confession which is not meant to be recognized. [See Note 32]

[See Additional Notes, 3.2.38]

31. / Are yet the only words that I need speak: / Is the sum totaling of my confession

32. To ‘fill-out’ or modify the previous line, an additional line could be added:

⟨For all I have to confess is my love⟩ / ⟨For all I have are confessions of love⟩

33. {O happy torment, when my torturer | Doth teach me answers for deliverance:} / Doth teach me answers that lead to my freedom / lead me to freedom

for deliverance: a) that enables me to get free (of the torture of not having you) by choosing the right casket; b) that enables me to get free of the rack, of this torturous delay.

Bassanio’s reply to Portia’s ‘Confess and live’ might have also been ‘confess and give’ which would clearly suggest the lead casket. However, in both cases, Bassanio does not know the inscriptions found on the caskets, and therefore would not appreciate any clue found in the word *confess* or *give*. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.38] [See Essays: *The Lottery*]

34. The exact meaning of this passage is confusing. Clearly, at some point, Bassanio comes to feel that he has the key or the answer to his deliverance (to winning Portia) but it remains uncertain how (or from whom) he received this sense. We might first look to something Portia said which offered Bassanio some kind hint, but we see nothing in her words—nor anything to give Bassanio this sense of certainty (to having obtained the key). One might fish and hold that Portia’s admonition to ‘confess’ might be linked to ‘giving’ and direct Bassanio toward the lead casket (which prompts the suitor to hazard all). Yet any such clue relating to the inscription found on the lead casket would be lost on Bassanio since he has not yet seen the inscriptions. Another place to look for ‘the key’ would be to Nerissa (with her being the ‘torturer’ not Portia). As previously stated, our theory is that the ‘key’ or ‘answer’ to winning the lottery lies with Nerissa: if Bassanio can win Portia’s love, then Nerissa will give him a hint as to which casket to choose. (Thus, in this context, Bassanio’s ‘confess and love’ may mean that if Portia *loves* him Nerissa will *confess* the casket to choose; or if Portia *confesses* her love to him, then Nerissa will help him to win his *love*. Thus, Portia’s confession of her love is the ‘key’ which delivers Bassanio from ‘torture.’)

In terms of a production, Bassanio could get a knowing nod from Nerissa towards the end of Portia’s opening speech indicating that he had fulfilled the terms (that Portia loves him) and that he will get help from Nerissa. (Bassanio may have been told at a previous time that a) he would get some indication from Nerissa that he had fulfilled his end of the agreement, and b) that he should listen very carefully to the song for ‘a hint.’ If Bassanio did not fulfill the terms, and proceeded to make a choice without an ‘OK’ from Nerissa, then she would not have the musicians play a song.) Thus Bassanio’s statement, ‘O happy torment, when my torturer | Doth teach me answers for my deliverance’ may apply to Nerissa, who has now given him the ‘go ahead’ and will ‘teach him the answer’—through the words of the song—that will release him of this torturous wait and enable him to win Portia.

Portia’s opening speech is, in no uncertain terms, an admission of her love. As part of the staging, after every few lines, Bassanio could look over toward Nerissa, asking with his eyes, ‘Is this enough?’ or ‘Does this not indicate that she loves me?’ erstwhile hoping to get the nod of approval. Bassanio may want the nod forthwith, while Nerissa wants to be a little more certain, and thus makes Bassanio wait a little longer. Thus, after getting the nod, Bassanio moves to make his choice as quickly as possible, feeling the tortured by every second more he must wait.

35. {But let me to my fortune and the caskets}

my fortune: a) my fate, what befalls me (which will be determined by my choice), b) my treasure

The original does not end with a rhyming couplet.

a) / Doth teach me answers where I am set free | Now to the caskets where my fortune be

/ Now to the caskets and my destiny / Now let me to my fortune that awaits me

/ Now to my choice and my fortune to be

b) / Is but the sum of all I have to say | Now to my fortune and the chests, I pray.

/ Now to the caskets and my fortune, away!

c) / ‘Tis but the sum of all I do confess | Now to the caskets and my happiness

—Portia

Away then! I am locked in one of them:

If you do love me, you will find me out.³⁶

Nerissa and the rest, stand all aback.^{37 38}

{aloof}

Let music sound^o while he doth make his choice.³⁹

/ play

Then if he lose he'll make a swan-like end,⁴⁰

/ die just like a swan

⟨Which sings^o a song upon its final breath,^o⟩⁴¹

/has // to mark its hapless end

And fades in music. That the metaphor^o⁴²

{Fading in music. That the comparison}

May stand more proper,^o my eye shall be the stream^o

/ May be more apt / true // river

And wat'ry death-bed for him.⁴³ He may win—^o

/ Should he win

And what is music then? Then music is

The teeming flourish^o of joyous^o cornets⁴⁴

/ fanfare // sparkling

That play to honor a new-crownèd monarch;

Or like the dulcet^o sounds at break of day

/ ambrosial

That creep into^o the dreaming bridegroom's ear

/ fall upon

And summon^o him to marriage.⁴⁵ Now he goes,

/ beckon

d) A possible triplicate rhyme scheme: / Doth teach me answers where I am set free | ⟨Like a kind jailor who throws me the key⟩ | Now to my choice and my fortune to be

36. **If you do love me:** The lottery was designed to find Portia a man who would truly love her. Portia has (so far) been resisting the 'wisdom' of her father's lottery, uncertain that such a device will find one who truly loves her—and also, uncertain, that it would find one whom she truly loves. But now, not able to intervene or prolong, Portia surrenders to the fated dispensation of her father's lottery. Her words, *If you do love me, you will find me out* are more likely a hopeful prayer rather than a sanction or confirmation of the efficacy of her father's lottery.

find me out: find the casket that hold my picture

37. / give him some room / make room, stand back

38. Portia makes a specific mention of Nerissa to 'stand aloof,' which indicates that she is in proximity to Bassanio (which would have to be the case if she were to give him a subtle 'yes'-nod).

39. This is not a directive to the musicians to play while Bassanio makes his choice but a poetic device. (No music is actually played while Bassanio makes his choice). The musicians are instructed to play while Bassanio is contemplating his choice, not while he is actually deliberating on it.

40. {Then if he lose he makes a swan-like end}

/ Then if he loses, he'll die like a swan / Then if he lose he'll play a dying swan

a swan-like end: swans were associated with music and were believed to sing a song (a swan-song) before they died. This belief was also found in Plato, Euripedes, and Aristotle, and commonly held as true during Shakespeare's time: "It is said of the learned, that the swan, a little before her death, sings most pleasantly, as prophesied by a secret instinct her near destiny." *Shepherd's Calendar* (1597). The use of the term *swan song*— which is based on this supposition that a swan sings shortly before its death—now refers to the last great thing a person does before dying or the final work of a person's life. The term *swan song* comes from the English translation of the German word *schwanengesang*. Here, the image of a swan singing before it dies is replaced by the tragic image of swan sinking to a watery death while sad music plays in the background.

41. / Whose lullaby attends its sad demise / Which sings while sinking to a watery grave / Which sings a song to mark its tragic end

42. **Let music sound . . .**

/ Let music play while he doth make his choice.
Then, should he lose, he will be like a swan,
Who sinks into a watery demise
As the musicians play their final strain

43. / That the comparison may stand more proper,
Mine eyes shall offer a river of tears
To thus provide for his watery death-bed.

44. / A joyous flourish of the bright cornets

45. / And call him sweetly to wed
/ And call him church-wise for his wedding day.
/ And call him toward church on his wedding day

With no less grandeur ^o —but with much more love— ⁴⁶	{presence} / dignity
Than youthful Hercules when he did rescue ^o ⁴⁷	/ who goes to rescue
The virgin princess, ⁴⁸ paid in sacrifice ^o	/ given as a tribute
By suff'ring ^o Troy ⁴⁹ to placate Poseidon's	{howling}
Sea monster. I am now the sacrifice. ⁵⁰	{I stand for sacrifice} ⁵¹
The rest around me are the Trojan wives, ^{o52 53}	/ wives of Troy
Who now ^o approach ^o with bleared visages ⁵⁴	/ here // have come
To view the outcome ^o of this grand exploit. ^o ⁵⁵	{issue} / heroic / awesome venture
Go Hercules! ⁵⁶ If thou live, I will live: ⁵⁷	
But here I view with much, much more dismay ^o	/ this fight with more dismay
Then thou, the hero, ^o who doth mak'st the fray. ⁵⁸	/ greater

Nerissa instructs the musicians to play a song.
A song is played while Bassanio mulls over the caskets ^{59 60}

46. / With no less dignity, but much more love

47. {Than young Alcides when he did redeem}

48. Refers to Hercules's rescue of the virgin princess Hesione.

[For the complete story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Additional Notes, 3.2.56]

with much more love: Hercules did not rescue Hesione out of love but for payment. Portia is bringing up this story, but then saying that Bassanio (coming with the same grandeur and dignity as Hercules) is coming with much more love, and trying to win her not as a mercenary, for some material gain, but out of love (something which Hercules did not have for the virgin princess he set forth to rescue). Hercules's agreed-upon reward for saving Hesione was not her hand in marriage but her father's magical horses.

49. {The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy}

howling: crying out, lamenting, suffering. Only after the virgin princess was offered as a sacrifice to the sea-monster would the ravages and floods afflicting Troy be appeased.

I stand for: I am, I represent

50. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.58]

51. **stand for:** represent

52. {The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives} / The rest aback are the women of Troy

53. / To the sea-monster by the lamenting
 People of Troy. And now, 'tis I who stand
 As sacrifice. And all those around me,
 Aghast in wonder,^o are the Trojan^o wives / horror / marvel

54. **with bleared visages:** / with teary visages / with teary faces all / tears upon their cheeks

55. / Who come with bleared eyes and stained cheeks / Who now come forth with tears upon their cheeks

56. {With bleared visages come forth to view | The issue of th'exploit. Go Hercules.}

57. {Live thou, I live}

The sense is that if Hercules lives—and does not die in his attempt to rescue Hesione—then she will live (be rescued). Thus, if Bassanio wins (lives), then Portia will be rescued (and live the life she wants.)

58. / Yet I do view this battle more with fright, | Than you who be in it—he who doth fight.

/ Yet now I look with greater fear in me, | Then you who fight the monster o'the sea.

59. The original stage direction, reads: *{A song whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself.}*

60. In this stage direction Nerissa bids the musicians to play. This action is in support of the theory that Nerissa has come to 'assist' Bassanio with the lottery (because Portia fall in love with him). Many commentators hold that Bassanio receives help (on which casket to choose) from the rhyme scheme of the song (where the first three lines of the song rhyme with *lead*) and also by the lyrics of the song (which suggest the lead casket—if one is listening intently for such a clue). However, without Bassanio being 'tipped off' to listen carefully to the song, such a hint would be lost on him.

It is likely that Bassanio was instructed beforehand to listen carefully to the words of the song. To make it clear that Nerissa is giving Bassanio some kind of 'hint'—and not actually telling him which casket to choose—she could be made to whisper a clue to Bassanio, such as: 'With care, my lord, do listen to the song' or 'Pay special heed to the words of the song.' Some productions, supporting the view that Bassanio was 'tipped off' by the words of the song, put special emphasis on all the words in the song that rhyme with *lead*. xxx See Note 60.

—Singer

*Tell me where is fancy bred,
In° the heart or in the head?
How 'tis born and how 'tis fed?*⁶¹

{*Or in*} > *Either in*
{*How begot, how nourishèd?*}

—Chorus

Tell me, tell me.°

{*Reply, reply*}

—Singer

*It is engendered in the eyes,°
With gazing fed all fancy dies°
In the cradle, where it lies.°*⁶²

/ *Dull and heavy in the eyes*
/ *With more gazing, come more lies*
/ *is where it lies* / *'tis there it dies.*

*Let us all ring fancy's knell.*⁶³
[*spoken*] I will begin: [*sung*] *Ding, dong, bell.*

—Chorus

*Ding, dong, bell,*⁶⁴ 〈 *Ding, dong, bell.* 〉

61. {*Tell me where is fancy bred,*} / *Tell me where does loving start,*
{*Or in the heart, or in the head?*} / *In the head or in the heart?*
{*How begot, how nourishèd?*} / *Does it bind or rend apart?*

The three lines of the original verse all end in words that rhyme with *lead*. This is often cited to support the argument that Bassanio was directed, by the rhyme-scheme of this song, to choose the lead casket. The words of the following verses may also provide clues in their warning against the fancy of the eyes, i.e., the gold and silver caskets—suggesting the choice of lead. As mentioned in the previous note, Bassanio would need a more obvious clue (such as a clear directive as to where to look for a clue) to then make the connection between the rhyme-scheme and the lead casket. Nerissa telling Bassanio to listen carefully to the song would be a hint regarding the location of the hint; Bassanio, intent on the casket—without the hint on where to look for a hint—might miss the song and its lyrics completely. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.65] [See: *Essays, The Lottery*, for evidence suggesting that Bassanio received help with the lottery].

62. {*It is engendered in the eyes,*}
{*With gazing fed, and fancy dies:*} / *With gazing fed, all fancy dies,*
{*In the cradle where it lies.*}

63. {*Let us all ring fancy's knell.*}

Making the song too obvious would give away its hidden hint and so the song must be subtle in its direction to the lead casket—and subtle enough to be picked up only by someone who had been instructed to listen with care. One example of lyrics which might make the hint too obvious—leading one to give so to get—would be as follows:

Let the sun of fancy set, | I'll begin—and you beget, | Ay you will, but not quit yet
Chorus: *What you give is what you get.*

64. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.72, for facsimile of Q1 original]

[NOTE: The text (and meter) after this point is uncorrected and in rough draft]

—Bassanio [*to the gold casket*] ⁶⁵ ⁶⁶

So may the outward shows be least themselves.⁶⁷ / Those who show most without are least within.
The world is e'er deceived^o by ornament.^o ⁶⁸ / ever duped // grand display / outer show
In law, a plea that's tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show^o of evil. In religion, / sum / heart
What damnèd^o act^o does not become a blessing, / damning {error}
When some dry scholar^o approve it with text,^o {sober brow} // scripture
Hiding^o gross error^o with fair ornament? / Gilding {Hiding the grossness}
There is no vice too simple^o to^o assume^o ⁶⁹ / single // not able to
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts would crumble^o / are as false / are as flimsy
Like walls^o of sand, do wear upon their chin {stayers} / stairs
The beards of Hercules and frowning^o Mars, / fearless
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk / searched within
And they assume but valour's outer show^o ⁷⁰ / the outer shows of valor

65. The soliloquy found in the original is somewhat amiss as it does not resemble the speech of a true romantic hero nor does it fulfill the comic heroism called for by the scene. Misaligned with the speeches of Morocco and Arragon, it is filled with discordant images, and does not reflect love, pure-heartedness, or innocence. There is not one mention of Portia or her attributes.

In a prior draft, this passage was replaced with words and images more fitting of a romantic hero; for even though Bassanio does not fully embody the virtues of a romantic hero (and often acts quite the opposite) he has the potential to become such a hero (if not permanently, at least for this one moment). He could be made to rise to the occasion. In a later draft, the original was preserved, yet emended with some final words which might reflect the true heart of a hero. Bassanio's speech, which cascades with images about scandal, cowardice, hypocrisy, criticalness—and vacant of any hint of love—may reflect a subconscious sense of his own duplicity. His speech in front of the caskets is somewhat out of step with the other speeches delivered by Bassanio in the scene—especially the one coming after he opens the casket and sees Portia's picture [115-130]. Thus all his speeches, except for this one, bear the imprint of a romantic hero; during this treasured first encounter between Bassanio and Portia (which takes place earlier in the scene), the audience happily suspends all judgement with respect to Bassanio's wastefulness and duplicity and enjoys a moment of sublime love between lover and his beloved, between the romantic hero and his princess. [For a version of this speech, consistent with the heart-set of a romantic hero, see Additional Notes, 3.2.73]

66. Orson Wells suggested that Bassanio could have played the parts of both Morocco and Arragon; and after two wrong choices (the gold and silver caskets), he would then become sure of the contents of the lead casket. Such a staging, of course, would change the entire nature of Bassanio's character and put him squarely in the camp of a cheat and an enterprising money-getter.

67. / Those who are least, display themselves the most / So are the outward shows e'er least themselves / It is the outward shows be least themselves / So they are least who glisten^o themselves most;

68. {The world is still deceived with ornament}

still: always, ever; has always been

ornament: lavish outer display: / appearance / its own beauty / empty dazzle

69. {so simple but assumes} > Too singular and not able to assume (be interpreted as) some mark of virtue

70. {And these assume but valour's excrement} / And these but display the shows of valor / These cowards but assume valour's plumage

valour's excrement: excrement refers to an outgrowth of hair (as hair was seen as a waste product, something excreted by the body). This likely refers to outgrowth of hair on the face (i.e., beards) usually associated with men of valour, mentioned in line 85. It could also refer to the long hair of heroes, but this is not supported in the given

To render themselves fearful.^o Look on beauty {them redoubted}/ them afearéd
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
This cream,^o when plied upon the face works wonders > makeup / paste / balm
Making them fairest who wear most of it.
So are those crispèd, flowing,^o golden locks, {snaky}
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind;
But such pretense of beauty, as we know, / one can see
Is wig-made hair, ta'en from another's head,^o / Comes from a wig, hair from another's head
The skull of which now lies in some lost grave.
Thus, outer show is but the guiled^o shore / tempting / charming
To a most dangerous^o sea; the beauteous scarf / threatening / imperilled
That veils a queen's wretched face;^o in a word: / a darkened visage
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To trap the wise. Therefore, thou gaudy gold / To but entrap the wisest. Therefore, then
You're as worthless to me as hardened^o food / golden
Which greedy Midas could not hope to eat—^{71 72}
I will have none of thee. [*to the silver casket*] Nor of thee, silver;
Thou art the pale drudge^o of common coin, / Thou art none but the stuff
Passed in exchange between the hands^o of men.⁷³ / greed
But thou, thou meager^o lead, which rather^o threatens, / worthless / barren / herein
And gives no^o promise of profit or gain: / Than give a
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence.⁷⁴ / finery / regal lies
<Thus, I seek not to *gain*, as shown^o by gold,> /told / proff^oed / lured
<Nor then to *get*, as offered^o by silver,> / vaunted / proffered / promised
<But e'er^o to *give*, as demanded^o by lead.> / Only // required / mandated⁷⁵

context.

71. {To entrap the wisest. Therefore, then, thou gaudy gold} {Hard food for Midas, I'll none of thee}
The first line, as found in Q1 has 13 syllables, and anomalies in the meter; thus most editions rectify the extra syllable by eliminating 'then.' Then, to keep the line in verse, the first two syllables and the fifth and sixth are elided (combined into one syllable). Hence, the most common rectification would read as follows: *T'en trap the wisest. T'fore thou gaudy gold.*

Hard food for Midas: Refers to the legend of King Midas who was granted the wish that everything he touch turn to gold—which included his food and drink. Thus, gold, which in normal circumstance would have great value, was in this instance was the hard food (and therefore worthless) which Midas could not eat.

72. / To trap the wisest. Thus, thou gaudy gold,
You're as worthless to me as hardened food
That none, not even Midas, could hope to eat.

73. / You are none but the stuff of common coin, | E'er passed between the drudging hand of men.

74. The original ends in a two-line rhyme schema:

{Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence;} / Thy plainness moves me more than regal lies,
{And here chose I. May joy be the consequence!} / And here I choose—may heaven be my prize!

The last line of the original [*And here chose I. May joy be the consequence!*] is herein expanded into five lines which further explains Bassanio's reasoning, and heart-set, which lead him to chose the lead casket. Simply stated: a heart that loves seeks only to *give* (as demanded by lead) and not to *gain* or *get* which would be the motivation prompting one to chose the gold or silver casket. This stance of love and selfless giving is that of a true romantic hero—which Bassanio is not—but which he, in this instance, has the potential to be. If Bassanio's speech truly and wholly reflected that of a romantic hero (or a flawed hero who, in this moment, rose to the occasion as assumed the virtue of a hero) it would certainly contain more generous and auspicious images (rather than the harsh and critical constructions found in the original). For one version of a possible speech, worthy of a romantic hero, (and which could replace the speech found in the original) see Additional Notes, 3.2.7XX.

75. / as is sanctioned / as sanctionèd / as betokened / as warranted

⟨Here, here chose I: when all is done and said,°⟩⁷⁶
⟨A heart that giveth all is ne'er misled.⟩^{77 78}

/ everything is said / all is finishèd
/ A heart that gives all can ne'er be misled

—Portia [*aside*]

How all the other passions fleet to air,
My° doubtful thoughts and rash-embraced despair;
And shudd'ring° fear, and green-eyed jealousy—
O love° be sparing, ease° thy ecstasy.^{79 80}
In measure rein° thy joy; scant° this excess!⁸¹
Thy blessings overflow°—please make it less.^{82 83}
⟨I fear this fortune is too much for me
I'm lost° in waters° of an endless sea.⟩⁸⁴

{As} > Such as / These
/ dreaded
/ heart {allay}
{raine} / rain / hold // block / stint
{I feel too much thy blessings}
/ I drown // oceans {For fear I surfeit.}⁸⁵

—Bassanio [*opening the leaden casket*]

What find I here? A portrait of fair Portia.
What demigod hath come so near creation
To make this image ride upon my eyes
Such that it seems to move and yet moves not?^{86 87 88}

76. / Here, here I choose, when all is finishèd

77. / He who giveth all can ne'er be misled / The heart that gives can never be misled / A heart that giveth can ne'er be misled

78. Here, here I choose: when all is said and done | A heart that gives all has already won

79. / O heart be mild, allay this love in me.

80. Alt: Replace this line with three lines:

I fear this love's made a fool-sop° of me. / pansy / milksop
O heart be sparing, temper this delight,
O ration joy, don't give it such a might.

81. **raine:** rain down, dole out, give out. **in measure:** in limited and controlled amounts, as not to flood or overwhelm. Here there is the play of oppositions, where Portia is calling for rain, which is associated with abundance, but herein asking that it be given in measure. *Rain* will also be heard as *rein*, which would mean control, hold back, rein in.

82. / In measure rein thy joy, scant this delight!
Thy blessings overflow—appease° their might. / take back
/ I feel too much thy blessings—ease their might.

83. / How all my passions do fleet into air:
First gone is doubt, then rash-embraced despair;
This fear and monstrous jealousy are gone / jeal'sy have left me. // are done
O love, be kind—don't turn more pleasure on / be moderate, tame thy ecstasy; // thy pleasure shun
In measure rein thy joy, tame this excess;
I feel too much thy blessings—make it less! / I feel thy blessings too great

84. This verse fully ensconces Portia in the comical quality of the play, as now, for the first time, her love is fully expressed and 'over the top'—more resembling the fanciful excess of love than anything in real life. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.113]

85. {For fear I surfeit} The original line is orphaned, does not follow the rhyme-scheme nor meter of the lines which precede it, and simply repeats the theme mentioned previously. Thus it weakens and flattens the impact of Portia's rhyming verse. To fully embody this appendage, this truncated line is emended with a full pair of rhyming lines. Alternatively, the partial line could simply be deleted.

/ O in the waves of love's ocean I'm lost: | Beyond all hopes, and ignoring all cost.

/ O, in the heat of love's fire I'm swelt'ring | Lost in the blessedness° of mine own melting.

86. { What find I here?

Fair Portia's counterfeit. What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes
Or whither riding on the balls of mine
Seem they in motion?}

And here, her gentle° lips lay slightly open
 Parted with sugar breath. So sweet an air°
 Should sunder such sweet friends.⁸⁹ And in her hair
 The painter plays the spider and hath woven
 A golden mesh t'entrap the hearts of men
 Faster than⁹⁰ gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks its power should steal both his eyes
 And leave the work° undone.⁹¹ Yet look how far
 The substance° of my praise doth wrong this shadow°
 In underprizing it, just as this copy°
 Doth limp behind her true form.⁹² Here's the scroll,
 The continent⁹³ and summ'ry of my fortune: ⁹⁴

/ muted / dreamy
 {a bar} / breath / wisp

{itself} // unfinished
 / fullness // copy
 {so far this shadow}
 {the substance}

*Thou who° choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair and choose as true.
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content, and seek no new.*

/ You that
 / Take fair chance and chose quite true

In the original, Bassanio's two iamb line (What find I here?) completes Portia's previous three iamb line (For fear I surfeit.) Due to the anomalous nature of Portia's two iamb line (see previous note) it has herein been emended to fulfill the standard iambic meter, which leaves Bassanio's two iamb line somewhat truncated. To accommodate this, one possibility would be to add a pause before or after Bassanio's words:

a) _ _ _ _ _ What find I here? b) What find I here? _ _ _ _ _

87. What artist, wielding the skill of a god,
 Hath come so near creation? O these eyes—
 Do these eyes move or do they ride upon
 The balls of mine own eyes and seem to move°?

{seem they in motion}

88. What find I here? . . .
 Fair Portia's portrait!° What <artist, possessed°
 Of all the powers of a > demigod
 What <artist, possessing° / wielding
 The spectral powers of a > demigod
 Hath come so near creation? What is this?

What demigod hath fashioned such a picture
 So near to God's own creation? And now—

89. { . . . Here are severed lips | Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a bar | Should sunder such sweet friends. }
 / Here find her lips, parted by sugar breath; | So sweet a breath could sunder such sweet friends.

90. **faster than:** a) more quickly than, b) more securely than (as in 'bind fast')

91. **undone:** {unfurnished} / unfinished a) without finishing the portrait, b) without being able to furnish the second eye

92. {Doth limp behind the substance} The metaphor of 'limping behind the substance' refers to something which falls short of the real thing (substance), and specifically to a lifeless shadow which follows, or 'limps behind,' the form of a real person. *Limp*, moreover, implies a defective or imperfect kind of following which is not found in the term 'walk behind' or 'follow behind.' Bassanio is here invoking the Neo-platonic theme of opposites highlighted by the contrasting concepts of *substance* and *shadow*. Hence, Bassanio is saying that the '*substance* of my praise (i.e., my words) does wrong this *shadow* (this portrait) in underprizing it (failing to capture its beauty)'—just as this *shadow* (picture) falls short of (limps behind) the *substance* (the real Portia); i.e., his words (as eloquent as they are) do no justice (fall short) in describing the beauty of this portrait, just as this portrait (as wondrous as it is) does no justice in capturing Portia's true beauty.

93. **continent:** contents, container. *Continent* can also be an oblique reference to the fullness, totality, or grandeur of my fortune (as in the size of a continent).

94. {Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll, | The continent and summary of my fortune}

/ Doth limp behind the living form of Portia

/ Falls hopelessly° short of the real Portia. / lifelessly / dreadfully

/ Here's the scroll, the summ'ry (/summate) of my fortune: [See Additional Notes, 3.2.129]

*If you be well-pleased with this,
Hold your fortune for° your bliss,
Turn ye toward your loving miss
And claim her with a loving kiss.* ⁹⁵

/ pleased
/ with
{Turn you where your lady is}

A gentle° scroll! Fair lady, by your leave,
I come by note, to give and to receive.⁹⁶
Just like a fighter who obtains the prize,⁹⁷
Who seems triumphant in the people's eyes,⁹⁸
Hearing applause and the echoing° shout ⁹⁹
Giddy in spirit, yet gazing° in doubt,
Whether those clam'ring cheers° be his or no,°
So, thrice-fair lady, I stand even so,°
As doubtful° whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you. ^{100 101}

/ kindly

{universal}
/ ling'ring
{peals of praise} // not
/ on the spot
/ Still doubting

—Portia

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though, for myself alone,°
I would not be so daring° in my wish
To wish myself much better, yet for you¹⁰²

/ when it comes to me
{ambitious}

95. It is not clear as to when—if ever—Bassanio claims Portia *with a loving kiss*. Some productions, concurring with Rowe (a foremost commentator of the early 18th century), have Bassanio claim Portia (with a loving kiss) at the end of this line (*I come by note, to give and to receive*) after handing her the note. This timing is doubtful since (later in the same passage) Bassanio tells of his confusion, his unsureness, and so he would not be in a position to claim Portia. Others have the loving kiss come after line 148 (*Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you*)—which is still somewhat early. The kiss can also come after Portia's line [167], *Myself and what is mine to you and yours | Is now converted*. It can also occur after Portia gives him the ring, in line 174 (*And be my vantage to exclaim on you*). In the original there is no stage direction for the kiss, nor any clear pause or indication as to when such a kiss would be planted. We cannot say for sure that one is even given. We see throughout the play that Bassanio is never able to 'claim' Portia; she is always in charge and never acts as the docile princess eager to be claimed by her gallant prince—save for a few sentimental lines [108-113] which she is eager to dismiss (*Scant this excess—make it less*) or a few stray lines wherein she fully gives herself to Bassanio [149-175] which, however, end with a condition (*Let it presage the ruin of your love | And be my vantage to exclaim on you*.) [See Additional Notes, 3.2.138]

96. To coincide with the words, 'I come by note,' Bassanio could offer Portia the scroll.

97. {Like one of two contending in a prize} / Like one who fights and comes to win the prize

98. / Who° thinks he's done well in the people's eyes, {That}

99. / Amidst a great applause and thun'drous shout

100. What confirmation does Bassanio seek?—that he has won the lottery (which is apparent) or that he has won the true fortune of the lottery, i.e., Portia's love. Bassanio is doubtful (unsure) about the truth of what he sees; he sees Portia smiling at him (and seemingly pleased with the outcome) but he wants assurance, he wants her to affirm not only that he has won the lottery (which is apparent) but also that he has indeed won her heart and the fullness of her love (which is not, in his mind, assured by the lottery). [See Additional Notes, 3.2.148]

101. Bassanio talks only of his confusion—when, in fact, there really should be no confusion at all. In the first soliloquy, after opening the casket, he describes the picture of Portia (but not her) with glowing words; after reading the scroll, he talks of his uncertainty; after his uncertainty is pacified, he talks about his joyful bodily confusion—but not once does he actually speak of Portia, nor her beauty, nor his love for her, nor his assumed state of joy. All his talk is indirect, metaphorical, speaking of a picture, of winning a fight, of buzzing cheers—but never once of Portia. Not once, in all his talk, does he even mention her name.

Is this the way a true hero would approach it?—winning without even recognizing it? Being confused and unsure? Or would a hero take hold of this triumphant moment and use it as a glorified opportunity to now give full expression to his (previously bridled) love?

102. / I am content and would not dare to wish | That I, myself, be better, yet for you

I would be tripled ^o twenty times myself; ^o 103	{trebled} / better
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times	
More rich, that I, in beauty, dignity,	
Comfort, ^o and virtue might exceed account. 104 105 106	{livings} / friendship
But the full sum of me is some ^o of something	/ part
⟨That's yet to be complete.⟩ To term more fully: ^o 107 108 109	/ Advised more fully
I'm ^o an unlessoned girl, ^o unschooled, unpracticed ^o ; 110	{Is} / unfinished
Happy in this, she is not yet so old	
But she may learn; and happier than this,	
She is not bred so dull that she can learn; ^o	/ and may learn quickly;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit	
Commits itself to yours, to be directed	
As from her lord, her governor, her king. ^o	/ master, and her king
Myself and what is mine, to you and yours, ^o	/ I give to you,
I now impart. ^o But now I was the lord	{Is now converted} / I hereby transfer
Of this fair mansion, ^o master of my servants,	/ of this estate
Queen o'er myself; and even now, yet now,	
This house, these servants, and my very self, ^o	{and this same myself}
Are yours, my lord. ^o I give them with this ring	{my lord's}

She holds up ring

103. {I would be trebled twenty times myself} / I would have myself tripled twenty times

104. / And friendship might stand high in your account.

105. {A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times}
{More rich, that only to stand high in your account}

The latter line contains two extra syllables (six iambs instead of five). Some editors 'correct' the verse by shifting the extra iamb from the beginning of the second line to the end of the first line. Thus: 'A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich | That only to stand high in your account.' (Such an emendation is made in the editions by Oxford, Arden, Norton, Longman, Kittredge, etc. but not in Cambridge, Folger, Bevington, etc.) The transfer of this extra iamb improves the meter of the second line at the expense of the first line (which now contains an extra iamb). Moreover, the meter of the second line is not fully restored as this transfer provides the line with a weak fourth syllable. I suspect the error lies around the term 'that only to,' which is awkward and which does not meaningfully place the line within the context of the sentence. The word 'account' is also suspect as this same word, and its same meaning, appears twice—both here and at the end of the sentence (which ends on line 155).

[See Additional Notes, 3.2.155]

106. An alternative punctuation would yield this rendering:

/ More rich—to stand but high in your account
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends / I hope that I, in virtue, beauty, friends
Exceed account.

107. { . . . But the full summe of me | Is sume of something: which, to term in gross}

some (or sum): Q1 has *sume* which can be read as *sum* or *some*. Both reading, though differing in nuance, are essentially the same, both diminutive and somewhat self-deprecating:

Sum of something: implies that the full sum of Portia is only the sum (totality) of something (and not everything); that her full self is incomplete (i.e., that of an unlessoned girl who still has much to learn)

Some of something: refers to a "portion of a portion"—again something which suggests a lack that Bassanio, as her new lord, could fill and make whole. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.158]

108. / ⟨That's yet to reach its fullness.⟩ Thus, in sum, / ⟨Has not yet ripened.⟩ Thus, to state it fully / Hence, to put it bluntly / ⟨That's yet to be completed.⟩ Termed more fully

109. {to term in gross} : in sum, to say in full, to tell you the whole story, to tell you (the whole) truth. *Gross* might also refer to blunt honesty, and frankness, and could be akin to such an expression as 'to say in all honesty.'

/ But the full sum of me is but a part | Of something, which, to tell you the whole truth

110. / I'm as a school-girl—untrained, unpracticed

Which, when you part from, lose, or give away,¹¹¹
 ‘Twill mark^o the ruin of your love, I say,^{o112}
 And give me reason to regret^o the day.^{113 114}

/ be // I daresay
 / good reason to rue

She places ring on Bassanio's finger

—Bassanio

Madam, you have bereft me of all words.^{o 115}
 All that can speak^o is the blood in my veins;¹¹⁶
 As there is such confusion in my powers^{o 117}
 Much like^o the buzzing cheers that issue from
 The rousèd^o masses after they have heard
 Some fine oration by their sovereign^o prince,^{118 119}
 Where every sounding, fully blent together,¹²⁰
 Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy.^{o 121 122}
 〈And now in me, each voice is lost,^o each cry〉
 Expressed yet not expressed.¹²³ When this ring parts

/ but stolen all my words
 / but speaks / speaks now
 / speech / words / breath
 {As}
 {pleasèd}
 / honored / beloved

 / nothing but joy
 / one

111. {Which when you part from, lose, or give away,}

when: implies an inevitability or an outcome which is expected to happen, whereas *if* does not imply such inevitability.

112. {Let it presage the ruin of your love}

113. {And be my vantage to exclaim on you.} / And give me cause to berate you all day.

vantage: just cause, give me cause, advantage (as in having a good reason); my chance, my opportunity.

exclaim: yell, rail, fume, scream, denounce, etc. (*ex-claim:* give up your claim on me.)

114. [See Additional Note, 3.2.174]

115. / Madam, your words have (but) rendered me speechless / Madam, you have but stolen all my words.

116. {Only my blood speaks to you in my veins}

/ And now what speaks is the blood in my veins / Only the blood in my veins doth now speak;

117. {And there is such confusion in my powers}

powers: a) power of speech; ability to speak or articulate; b) power of intellect and will; ability to match what is in the mind with the words

/ As great confusion besieges my words / And great confusion sieges all my words / And great confusion hems my power of speech / As great confusion besieges all my words / As all my powers of speech are confused.

118. {As after some oration fairly spoke | By a beloved prince there doth appear}

/ As after hearing some well-spoken words (/fine oration) | By a beloved prince who doth appear

/ Like buzzing cheers, come from the rousèd masses | When hearing^o words from their beloved prince

/ Like ecstatic (/rapturous) applause of the masses

/ Like buzzing cheers among the multitudes^o / arising from the masses / that come from pleasèd crowds

/ 'Tis like the buzzing cheers of pleasèd masses,

119. / The rousèd masses after their beloved | Prince doth appears and give some fine oration.

120. {Where every something being blent together}

121. {Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy} / Turns to a wilderness of un'fied^o joy / mingled

122. **something:** sound, noise, voice, all the cheers

nothing: silence. Where every voice (something) blends together in a barren land (wild) of silence (nothing).

wasteland: {wild}; wilderness, desert, barren region, empty plain

123. {Expressed and not expressed: . . .} This obscure reference generally means that all the cries (of the multitudes) are expressed as one cry: thus every cry is expressed (as one voice) and unexpressed or unheard (as a singular voice).

[See Additional Notes, 3.2.183]

My finger, know that life does part my stead^o 124 125
O, then be bold^o to say, 'Bassanio's dead.'^{126 127}

/ instead
/ Then be so bold

—Nerissa

My lord and lady, it is now our time;
We have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
Now we cry, 'Joy^o, good joy, my lord and lady!'

{To cry 'Good joy'}

—Gratziano

My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that one^o can wish,
And^o I am sure, whate'er you'd wish for me^o ¹
<Would fall quite short of what I now possess. > ²
And when your honours mean to seal with vows^o
The pledging^o of your faith, I do beseech you ³
Still^o at that time,⁴ I may be wed as well.⁵

{you}/ I
{For}
/ Is but a thing I already possess.
{solemnize}/ celebrate
{bargain}/ contract
/ E'en / That / Please

—Bassanio

With all my heart—if thou canst get a wife.

—Gratziano

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

124. {But when this ring | Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence}
/ But when this ring | Parts from this finger, then parts life instead
/ When this ring parts | My finger, then I find an earthen bed
My finger, then . . . / be sure my life has fled / ever my life's been shed / my life does part instead /
my life has surely fled

125. Previously, when Bassanio is unsure whether he has truly won Portia [141-45], he uses imagery of a crowd cheering for its champion. Here, when it is confirmed that he has doubtless won his prize, he again invokes the imagery of a cheering, buzzing crowd, where all the voices can be heard (rather the joy of the voices) rather than any individual voice. These images are akin and both refer to the impersonal cheering of a crowd—for its champion or its prince—but none evoke the personal images of love.

Why is it, however, that Bassanio cannot speak? Is he overwhelmed with joy? Why is there such confusion in his powers, in his ability to articulate how he feels? All these impersonal images may come to sound like a rouse, where Bassanio is insinuating that he loves Portia, that he is speechless with joy—but where he may be speechless because he cannot truly tell Portia that he loves her. Never once in all these words does he confirm his love for Portia (as he asks her to do); rather he only intimates and suggests his love by way of his dazed state. He talks about the buzzing cheers of the multitudes (where no single voice can be heard) and never do we hear our hero give words to any singular expression of love. (Again, it is cleverly suggested—and one might leave with the impression that he loves Portia—but his words never blossom into a true and unmistakably expression of love. His final words relate to the image of his own death—and something which may take place in the distant future—but never to his living heart, now. Are these the words of someone in love?—or someone not in love and trying to give the impression (without actually lying) that he is in love?

126. {O then be bold to say, 'Bassanio's dead.'}

127. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.185]

1. {I wish you all the joy that you can wish | For I am sure you can wish none from me.}

> I wish that you obtain all the joy that you wish for yourselves—and in your wishing, I am sure that you need not include me (and wish something for me) since I have already obtained the fullness of what I (or anyone else) might wish for me.

2. / Falls short of what I already possess / Is but a thing that I already have / I now possess in the fullest of measure. / Is short of what I already possess

3. / When your honored selves are ready to take | The vows that seal your faith, I beseech you

4. {Even at that time} / That at such time / E'en at that time

5. {I may be married too}

Taking Nerissa's hand

My^o eyes, my lord, can look^o as swift as yours: / These / Mine // move
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved—and lengthy^o postponements⁶ / long-drawn / undue
No more pertain to you, my lord, than me.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And, as the matter falls, so too did mine.^{7 8}
For I did woo until I ran^o with sweat, / I poured / beads fell
And swore until my very roof went dry
With oaths of love, until at last—if promise
Doth last—I got the promise of this fair one,⁹
To have her love, provided 'twas your fate^o {that your fortune}
To win^o her mistress.^{10 11} {Achieved} / Brought you

—Portia Is this true, Nerissa?

—Nerissa
Madam, it is, if you stand pleased with it.^o {withal}

—Bassanio
And do you, Gratziano, speak in truth?^o {mean good faith} / speak in faith

—Gratziano
In truth,^o my lord. {Yes, faith} / Yes, truth / In faith

—Bassanio
Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

—Gratziano [*to Nerissa*]

6. {for intermission}: taking a break (from action); inactivity; a rest period (wherein one does not pursue the object of his love)

You loved; I loved . . . / and to postpone that love / and bearing such delays / to stay the fruits thereof
/ You loved the one and I loved the other— | And neither one could bear the long delay.
/ You loved the one, and I the other—neither | Could you nor I, endure the long delay.

7. {And so did mine too, as the matter falls} / And like as well, as fate would fall, did mine.

8. / You loved the one, and I did love the other; | And neither you, my lord, nor I, could bear | A long delay. Your fortune stood upon | Your choice, so too, as fate would fall, did mine.

9. / And swore with oaths of love until my roof / And swore until my very roof went dry,
Went dry, until at last—if promise last— With oaths of love, until at last—assuming
I got the promise from this fair one here Her promise last—I got this fair one's promise

10. / To have her love, provided 'twas your fate | To win her mistress.
/ To have her love, if so your fortune be | To win her mistress.
/ To have her love, provided that your fortune | Did win her mistress

11. Gratziano must abide by Nerissa's fateful terms, which are: only if Bassanio chooses the right casket (and wins Portia) will Gratziano and Nerissa be able to be together. (Gratziano would never impose such absurd terms upon his own love). Why were such terms imposed by Nerissa? What meaning did they have? Nerissa must have been sure that Bassanio would win Portia—sure enough to stake her own happiness upon it. And how did she become so sure of such a fate? [See Additional Note, 3.2.196]

{play with them}

20. Where along the way could they have met?—the way in question is the 20-mile stretch of land that lies between Venice and Belmont.

—Salerio I did, my lord,
And with good reason:²² Antonio sends^o / good cause: Signor Antonio sends
An urgent message.²³

— Salerio
Not sick, my lord, but neither is he well.^{25 26}
His letter there will show you his condition.^{o 27} {show you his estate}

27. / His note will show the state of his affairs.

Bassanio opens the letter and reads it.

—Gratziano

Nerissa cheer our guest,²⁸ [*Jessica*] entreat^o her welcome.
Your note,^o Salerio. What news from Venice?
How is^o that royal merchant,³⁰ good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success:
Like Jason, we have won the golden fleece.³¹

{bid} / beseech
{hand}²⁹
{doth} / does / goes

—Salerio

I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.³²
[I loathe to say,^o but all his ships are gone.]³³

/ I tell you now

—Portia [*seeing Bassanio*]

Yon paper must display^o some cursèd^o content^o ³⁴
To steal the color^o from Bassanio's cheek.
Some dear friend dead?—else nothing in the world
Could turn to such^o extent³⁵ the disposition^o ³⁶
Of so constant a man.^o ³⁷

/ dispatch // evil / baleful
/ roses
/ full // steady nature
{Of any constant man}

Bassanio looks worse than before

What, worse and worse? ³⁸

With leave^o Bassanio, I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of all^o

/ O please
{anything} / whate'er

28. {cheer yon stranger} Jessica, who was previously called 'infidel' is here referred to as 'stranger'—meaning an outsider, i.e., non-Christian. Thus Gratziano wants to make a special effort to welcome her.

29. **hand:** > the note or news you carry in your hand

30. **that royal merchant:** This address is somewhat aloof. Had Salerio been a friend of Antonio (as is Salarino and Salanio), Gratziano might have said, "How is our good friend, Antonio?" *Royal*, in this context, is a superlative meaning, 'princely,' 'grand,' 'great,' etc.

31. {We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.}

32. *Fleece* is a pun on *fleets*: I wish you had won the fleece [fleets] that he has lost, i.e., Antonio has lost all his fleets, and I wish the fleets that you had won could make up for his losses.

33. / I'm loathe to say it: all his ships are gone

Grat: We are the Jasons: both of us have won
The golden fleece.

/ We are the Argonauts, and we have won

Sal: O had you won the fleece

/ I wish you'd won

That he hath lost: [for all his ships are gone.]

/ Alas, his ships are gone.

34. {There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper}

/ It seems yon paper holds some cursèd content / carries cursèd news / carries news afoul

shrewd: often interpreted to mean, 'evil,' 'cursed,' 'unfortunate,' 'harmful,' 'grievous' etc. but the term is more likely taken at face value, to mean, 'clever,' or 'crafty' (or 'sharp') in that the words are able to steal away (by some clever or tricky means) the color from Bassanio's face. We often see the word 'Beshrew' which is mild scold or swear.

35. / Could turn with such resolve / Could move with such extent / Could so completely turn

36. {Could turn so much the constitution}

/ Could turn with such precision,^o the nature / dreadful

/ Could so fully reverse^o the disposition / alter

37. **constant man:** steady, unwavering, self-controlled

Portia is describing Bassanio as a *constant*, steadfast, reliable, and steady man. Clearly she is not aware of Bassanio's true character—as a irresponsible spendthrift and risk-taker. (But this is something she is going to soon learn about). Here she is judging him on her idealized and imagined version of him.

38. / Of such a self-controlled man. What, and worse?

That this same paper brings you.

—Bassanio

O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the most dreadful^o words,

{unpleasant'st} / dreaded

That ever blotted^o paper. Gentle lady,³⁹

/ tarnished / stained / ruined

When I did first impart my love to you,

I freely told you all the wealth I had

Came from my bloodline, from my favored status

Of having so been born a gentleman.⁴⁰

And what I spoke was true.^{o41} And yet, dear lady,

{And then I told you true}

Rating myself at nothing,^o you shall see,

/ as worthless

How much I was a braggart.^o When I said^o

/ overstated {told you}

My state was nothing, I should then have said^o

{told you}

That I was less^o than nothing, for indeed

{worse}

I have indebted myself to 'a dear friend^o ⁴²

{engaged myself to a dear friend}

⟨And out of love for me, he was enforced^o⟩

/ generosity for me

To debt^o himself to a dear enemy.^{43 44}

/ bind

What have I done? Here is the letter, lady,

{To feed my means} / It was for me

The paper is the body of my friend⁴⁵

And every word in it a gaping wound

Issuing life-blood.⁴⁶ But it is true, Salerio,

Hath all his ventures failed? What,^o not one hit?^{o 47}

/ With // Not one return

From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,

39. **blotted**: marred. *Blotted* in this context may also suggest words that are also “tear-blotted”—smeared or blotted by tears (either Antonio's or Bassanio's).

40. { . . . all the wealth I had }

{Ran in my veins: I was a gentleman.}

/ Ran in my veins, that I had nothing but^o | The social status of a gentleman. / no more than

/ Came from the favored status (/social standing) of my birth, | From my position as a gentleman.

/ Came from the societal benefits of birth / Came from my favorable status of birth

41. In the brief time that they spent together, Bassanio told Portia that the only wealth he had ran in his veins (i.e. was due to his social standing as a gentleman). yet, in the context of Bassanio's appearing to have substantial wealth, Portia would not have taken this humble claim literally. Such a comment would have conveyed the sense that Bassanio held his true wealth (and thing of most value) to be his bloodline and opposed to outer wealth. (It could also mean—though unlikely—that the only wealth Bassanio had ran in his veins, i.e., that the only wealth he considered of value was the love he held for Portia. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.254]

42. / I am indebted much to a dear friend / I borrowed money from my dearest friend / I have indebted myself to a dear friend

43. / To borrow funds from his dearest enemy.

44. {I have engaged myself to a dear friend, | Engaged my friend to his mere enemy}

mere: worst, fullest; stark, singular, unconditioned

45. A shift of lines could yield the following:

. . . for indeed

To feed my means, [so as to make this journey,]

I bound myself in debt to a dear friend

Who bound himself to a dear enemy.

Here is the letter, lady; the paper

Is but the lifeless body of my friend,

46. A rude and awakening image (of death) in stark contrast to the pristine and anew surroundings of Belmont.

47. Bassanio, having left Venice two days ago, was well aware of the status of Antonio's ships at that time, and he was aware that some of Antonio's ventures had failed and that none of his ships (as of two days ago) had come home to port. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.265]

From Lisbon, Africa,^o and India—
And not one vessel scape^o the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

{Barbary}
/ 'scaped > escaped

—Salerio Not one, my lord.

Besides, it doth^o appear that if he had^o
The present money^o to discharge^o the Jew
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and wolfish to destroy^o a man.
He plies^o the Duke at morning and at night
And calls in doubt⁴⁸ the freedom of the state
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port have all tried to dissuade^o him^o ⁴⁹
But none can drive him from the savage^o plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

/ should / should he have
/ full amount // pay off
/ have I known

{confound}
/ spurs

/ persuade
{envious} / spiteful / malice

—Jessica ⁵⁰

Before I heard from friends,^o that he did swear ⁵¹
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Then twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, the duke, and power stay him not
It will go hard with^o poor Antonio.

{When I was with him}

{If law, authority, and power deny not}
/ on

—Portia [*to Bassanio*]
Is it your dear friend who is thus in trouble?

—Bassanio
The dearest friend to me; the kindest man,

48. {doth impeach} / doth rebuke / reprimands > calls into question

49. {have all persuaded with him} > have all tried to dissuade him, have all argued with him

50. Portia may suspect that Jessica is Jewish from her appearance and from Gratziano's former greeting— *But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?* [216]—yet she has no way of knowing that she is daughter of the 'Jew' whom Salerio is so loathsomely describing. From this reference, however, it may become clear to that Jessica is related to the 'Jew' in question.

51. {When I was with him I have heard him swear | To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen}

This is an unlikely statement since Shylock began swearing and making oaths to have his bond (and go hard on Antonio) only *after* Jessica betrayed him. Thus, she was no longer with him to hear him make such an oath. The original line clearly states that Shylock's intention, from the very beginning (before he became enraged by Jessica's betrayal) was to have his bond from Antonio (i.e. to kill Antonio). His making a statement to his fellow Jews confirms that it was said in truth. In this rendition, Shylock does not actually intend to kill Antonio, and his professions about having taken an oath is a rouse which belies his intended actions. It could also be that Shylock may not be clear as to what he intends to do (even though he tells others that he is clear—and he may be telling others as a way to try and convince himself). [See Additional Notes, 3.2.283]

The most benev'lent and unwearied^o spirit⁵²
In serving others;^o and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears ⁵³
Than any man who draws breath in Italia. ⁵⁴

—Portia
What sum owes he the Jew?

—Portia What—no more? ⁵⁵
Pay him six thousand and deface^o the bond.
Double six thousand and then triple^o that ⁵⁶
Before a friend of this description ⁵⁷
Shall^o lose a hair through^o Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church, and call me ‘wife,’^o
And then away to Venice, to your friend.⁵⁸
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul.⁵⁹ You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over. ⁶⁰
When it is paid, bring your friend home with you.
Meantime, my good Nerissa and myself
 Shall live as maids^o and widows. Come, away,

52. {The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit}
best-conditioned:

For you shall hence^o upon your wedding day.^{61 62}
Since you were bought at O so dear a price
I'll bear the wait for love^o not once but twice.^{63 64}

/ leave > go forth hence
/ at such a heavy price
/ the weight of love

—Gratziano

But let us hear^o the letter^o from Antonio.⁶⁵

/ But wait—let's hear

—Bassanio [*reads*]

'Dear Bassanio, my ships have all been lost,⁶⁶ my creditors grow cruel, my estate 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 but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, do as you please.⁶⁷ If your love does not persuade you to come, let not my letter.'

—Portia

O love, dispatch all business and be gone!^o

/ betake your vows and then be gone

—Bassanio

Since I have your good leave to go away

61. / To wed me now and leave upon the day!

62. / We'll live as widows. Come, no more delay | You'll marry me now and leave the same day!

63. In Q1, the rhyming couplet is as follows:

{Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer,}
{Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.}

Many commentators are troubled by the closing line feeling that it shows Portia as indelicate and insensitive. There are several possible interpretations, the foremost being somewhat negative: Portia having paid dearly for Bassanio (in terms of a high price and hardship) will now love him dearly (i.e. painfully). The wordplay on *dear* would also have a positive meaning: the high price she paid for Bassanio was well worth it: as much as she paid for him (in terms of wealth and sacrifice) that is how much she shall willingly love him: "Since you are dear bought (paid for with a high price, after much sacrifice) I will love you dear (with the same sacrifice, i.e., I will bear this pain of waiting for you)."

The dear price was Portia's having to subject herself (and risk her future happiness) to the uncertain lottery set up by her father. Thus, having paid such a high price (the risk of her happiness) she will wait for Bassanio again, to finish up the task at hand and return. Said another way, I have waited so long for love, that I am willing to wait a little longer. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.311]

64. / Since you have come^o at such a heavy^o price, {were bought} / were found // tearful / dearly

/ Since I have paid and paid so dear a price / a heavy price

/ I'll long await your love not once but twice

/ I'll dearly wait for you, not once but twice

/ Since I have suffered^o so dear a price / sacrificed / forfeited / fully paid / paid and paid

/ Since you have come at oh so^o dear a price / very / much too

/ I'll thus^o await your love not once but twice. / I will

/ You're worth the suffering wait not once but twice

/ You're worth^o the long delay not once but twice / I'll bear

65. {Portia: But let me hear the letter of your friend.}

/ But let us hear what Antonio has written / But let us hear the good Antonio's letter

Due to Portia's double-rhyming couplet (which typically signifies the end of scene—and could fittingly end this scene) many editors believe that her previous lines originally marked the end of the scene. The following lines, including Bassanio's reading of Antonio's letter, were probable later additions. In support of this, Q1 contains no speech heading for Bassanio (signifying him to read Antonio's letter) and several anomalous line spaces have found their way into the text (before and after Antonio's letter, and after Bassanio's closing lines). In standard copy, no such line spaces would appear. (The additional lines were added, in a later draft, to indicate the urgent nature of the crisis and give cause for Portia's intervention.) Hence, to preserve some of the conclusiveness of Portia's rhyming couplet, this generic request to hear Antonio's letter is given to Gratziano—who has, up to this point, remained curiously silent. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.312]

66. **been lost:** {miscarried}

67. {use your pleasure} / do as your heart now bids you.

I will make haste, but I go in dismay ⁶⁸
All beds that beckon,° I'll solemnly spurn, ⁶⁹ / E'er bed that beckons
And slumber ne'er° a wink, til I° return. ⁷⁰ / And shall not sleep // ere my

Exeunt ⁷¹

68. / And now that I have your good leave to part | I will make haste but I'll make a sad start;
/ Now that I have your good leave to depart / And as I have your permission to part
/ I go in haste, yet with a saddened heart;

69. / E'er bed that beckons, that bed I will spurn / All beds that call, I will solemnly spurn

70. {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,
Nor rest be interposed 'twixt us twain.}

Here Bassanio makes the customary vow of the romantic hero—which is that he will not sleep until the task is completed and he returns to his beloved. This passage remains a vestige of the fairy tale qualities of a romantic hero and not a vow one would take at face value. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.324]

71. A comical stage direction could be as follows: *Bassanio rushes to make a hasty exit, stage right—toward Venice—but is caught by the elbow, and swung do-see-do, to stage left by Portia—toward the church.*

A street outside Shylock's house.

*Enter Shylock,¹ Antonio, [Salarino, Salanio, and a Jailer.]*²

—Shylock³

Jailor, keep your watch.^o Tell not me of mercy.

{Jailor look to him} / Keep watch on him

This is the fool who lends^o out money gratis.

{that lent} {F1: that lends} / who loans

Jailor, keep your watch.^o

{look to him}

—Antonio

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

— Shylock

⟨ Now I am good? I say,^o my bond is good! ⟩⁴

/ Methinks

I'll have my bond.^o Speak not against my bond.

/ And I'll have it

I've sworn an oath that I will have my bond.⁵

You call'dst me 'dog' before thou hadst a cause,

But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.

The Duke shall⁶ grant me justice. I do^o wonder,

/ but

Thou wicked^o jailor, why art thou so foolish^o

{naughty} / corrupt {fond} / stupid

To let him walk about at his request.^{o 7}

/ To let the captive walk around like this

1. The stage direction of Q1 reads 'Enter the *Jew*' and all speech headings read '*Jew*.' (The actually reading is 'Enter the *Jew*,' as *I* was often replaced *J*.)

2. The stage direction of Q1 reads:

Enter the *Jew*, and *Salerio*, and *Anthonio*,
and the Jaylor.

The name *Salerio* in the stage heading (instead of *Salarino* or *Salanio*) is likely an error made by the compositor (or print house editor). The original stage heading may have read: 'Enter the *Jew*, *Anthonio*, and others'—where the 'others' was meant to indicate *Salarino* and *Salanio* and the Jaylor, but not *Salerio*. (Another anomaly in this stage direction is that the name of a minor character, *Salerio*, appears before *Anthonio*.) *Salerio*, as we know, is in Belmont delivering a message to Bassanio and could not be present in this scene (which takes place in Venice). Most editors rectify this error in the stage heading, by replacing 'Salerio' with 'Salanio' (or *Salanio*), assuming that there is a one-to-one correspondence between *Salerio* and one of the two other Sals. (Q2 replaces *Salerio* with *Salarino*, while F1 has *Solanio*). Thus, this scene is almost always played with *Salanio* (alone) or in some cases with *Salarino* (alone) but not with both characters present, which is the most likely scenario. In sum, the name of *Salerio* in the stage direction is clearly an error but the singular replacement of *Salerio* with either *Salanio* or *Salarino* is not certain; it is most likely that both *Salarino* and *Salanio* appear, and were intended to appear, in this scene [See Additional Notes, 3.3.0a]

3. In this scene Shylock is dwelling in the newfound sense of power he has over Antonio by not letting Antonio speak. [See Additional Notes, 3.3.0]

4. **good:** reference is made to the double meaning of this word: *good* in the sense of being righteous, and *good* in the sense of being sound and firm. A similar play on the word *good* was made in 1.3.12-17 when Shylock says to Bassanio, *Antonio is a good man*—not meaning that he is a man who is good (i.e., who has a good character) but a man who is sufficient (good to cover the loan).

5. Why, and for what purpose, does Shylock tell Antonio that he has sworn an oath? What does this accomplish for Shylock? [See Additional Notes, 3.3.5]

6. **shall:** > a) must, b) will

7. {Thou naughty jailor, thou that art so fond | To come abroad with him at his request.}

naughty: unfit, no good, corrupt, foolish

to come abroad: to walk outside the jail, in the street

[See Additional Notes, 3.3.10]

—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. / and not your pleading words
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,⁸
To shake my head, relent, and^o sigh,^o and yield / so meekly, // moan
To Christian meddlers.^o Stay there, follow not.⁹ {intercessors}
I'll have no speaking—I will have my bond.¹⁰

Exit Shylock

—Salanio¹¹
It is the most impenetrable dog^o {cur}
That ever kept^o with men.¹² / stayed

—Antonio Let him alone.
I'll follow him no more with feckless^o prayers.¹³ {bootless} / useless
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:^{o14} / I know well / I well know
(Many a time he would make loans of money / Many a time he would make loans to men
To those who could not pay the sums on time; / Who could not then repay the debt on time
And thus, as forfeit, would lose all their goods .) / And they'd be forced to forfeit all their goods
Such men would come to me and moan their fate,^o / bemoaning their fate
And I, compelled, would loan them money, gratis,^{o 15} / funds, sans int'rest
Which freed them from his brutal^o forfeitures.^{16 17 18} / crushing / grievous / scathing

8. dull-eyed fool: one who cannot see clearly; one who has the wool pulled over his eyes; one who is hoodwinked; one who is easily deceived

9. {To Christian intercessors. Follow not} / To interfering Christians. Follow not.
The term *interfering* resonates with *God-fearing*.

10. In this short scene, Shylock bids Antonio to *speak not* four times; and he speaks the words, *my bond*, six times.

11. The characters of Salanio and Salarino are virtually the same, like two voices of one characters; as such, their lines are virtually interchangeable. On closer examination, however, we see that Salanio is often given lines which are more forceful and philosophical in nature than those of Salarino: in 1.1 he waxes philosophical, in 2.4 he disagrees with the plan to steal Jessica, and here he expresses outright loathing. Salarino and Salanio come as a pair and often play the role of dual sounding-boards which allow the central characters to express their thoughts. In this line Salanio is uncharacteristically forceful (and expressive of a definite opinion). His words resemble those spoken by Salerio in the previous scene: 'Never did I know | A creature that did bear the shape of a man | So keen and greedy to confound a man.' [3.2.272-74]

12. **That ever kept with men:** a) that every kept the company of men, b) that ever appeared as a man

13. {I'll follow him no more with these bootless prayers.}
bootless: lit. 'without boots'; unable to run, i.e., ineffectual, hopeless, unavailing, feckless, 'going nowhere,' etc.
/ I'll follow not with prayers that go nowhere / I'll follow not with such meaningless pleas / I'll follow not with stale and feckless prayers

14. / I know the reason why he seeks my life

15. / And I would loan them funds, without interest

16. / Which delivered them from his forfeitures

17. The original passage (now replaced by six lines) reads as follows:

{I oft delivered from his forfeitures | Many that have at times made moan to me}

18. A more introspective Antonio might have added: (Moreover, I have oft-times cursed the man | Railing his presence at the Rialto, | Spitting upon his face each time I passed.)

Belmont. Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar, Portia's servant

—Lorenzo

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,

⟨And hesitate^o to volunteer^o such praise,⟩²

/ am not wont // offer you

You have a true and noble understanding³

Of godlike friendship,^o which appears most strongly^o

{amity} // so fully

In bearing, thus, the absence of your lord.

But if you knew the one to whom you honor,^o⁴

/ favor

How true a gentleman you deem to help,^o

{send relief}

How dear he's held within^o thine husband's heart⁵

/ placèd in / placed within

I know you would be prouder of this work⁶

Than from the customary^o acts^o of kindness⁷

/ usual / common {works} / deeds

That your good^o nature moves^o you to perform.^{8 9}

// Your godly nature / prompts

1. At this point Portia has decided to go to Venice and intervene on Antonio's behalf—now believing that such an intervention is necessary (because neither the justice system of Venice, nor the ducats she has armed Bassanio with, are sufficient to save Antonio). But upon what information has she come to make this decision? Initially she thought that her tens of thousands of ducats would be enough to save Antonio—despite Jessica's statement, 'That he would rather have Antonio's flesh | Than twenty times the value of the sum.' [3.2.284-85] However, something has since changed her mind, and now she believes that neither her money nor the justice system of Venice would be sufficient to save Antonio—and she concludes that she must go to Venice and intervene. Thus, this change in Portia's opinion (which resulted in her changing her course of action) could only have come about as a result of her continued (and more informed) conversation with Jessica. We are not clear on how Portia came to conclude that only her legal intervention could help Antonio, especially since she had no legal training and was not familiar with the specifics of the case. We are also not clear as to how she knew that her cousin, Bellario, had been summoned by the Duke to rule on the case—and was too sick to do so—unless she had received a prior communication from Bellario telling her of these matters.)

Thus, it is clear that Portia had a change of heart due to her continued conversation with Jessica, who was intimately knowledgeable about the matter. To indicate this ongoing conversation (which began in 3.2) the two could be seen entering the scene together (ahead of the others), in conversation—even where Portia could appear to be asking questions with Jessica answering. [See Additional Notes, 3.4.0]

2. A line to clarify Lorenzo's reticence has been added here:

a) The sense may be that it is impolite to praise a person in his/her own presence—as this might cause embarrassment (to those who would be modest) or self-aggrandizement (to those inclined in this direction), or b) that words spoken in one's presence are likely to be embellishments (toward positive praise) and therefore may not reflect the total truth (whereas words spoken when the subject is absent, are more likely to be truthful). In this instance, it could be that Lorenzo is reiterating that, although his words are spoken in her presence, they are not said lightly, as hollow praise, but truly reflect his opinion.

a) / ⟨And loathe to offer such excessive praise⟩

b) / ⟨And you may doubt the truth of what I say⟩

3. {Madam, although I speak it in your presence | You have a noble and true conceit}

although: even though

/ Although I pause to speak it in your presence | Madam, you have a noble understanding

/ Madam, I pause to say it is your presence, | And yet, you show a noble understanding

/ I hope it's not too bold of me to say, | Madam, and yet I think you have a true sense

4. {But if you knew to whom you show this honor}

/ But if you knew the one whom you thus honor

5. {How dear a lover of my lord your husband}

/ How dear he's placèd in your husband's heart

6. / You'd be more honored by this virtuous work^o / kindly act / generous deed

7. / Than from the custom'ry displays of kindness

8. / Your gen'rous nature moves you to perform / Than your good heart obliges you to enact

9. {Than customary bounty can enforce you} / Than from obligèd acts of charity

customary: usual, regular, standard

bounty: goodness, benevolence, generosity, overflowing kindness, etc.

—Portia

I never praised myself ^o for doing good, ¹⁰	{did repent}
And ^o shall not now; for in such fond companions ^o —	{Nor} {for in companions}
Who do converse and pass ^o their time together,	{waste} / spend
Whose souls do bear an equal ^o yoke of love— ¹¹	/ are joined by the same
There must be needs a like proportion ¹²	
Of character, ^o of manners, and of spirit, ¹³	{lineaments}
Which makes me think that this Antonio,	
Being the dearest comrade ^o of my lord, ¹⁴	{bosom lover}
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,	
How little is the cost I have bestowed ^o	/ put forth / tendered
In rescuing ^o the semblance ^o of my soul ¹⁵	{purchasing} / saving now / likeness
From out the state ^o of hellish cruelty.	/ From this affront
This comes too near the ^o praising of myself ¹⁶	/ This near approaches
Therefore, no more of it. Hear ^o other things:	/ Now
Lorenzo, I commit into ^o your hands,	/ transfer unto
The oversight ^o and ^o manage of my house ¹⁷	{husbandry}
Until my lord's return. For mine own part,	
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow	
To live in prayer and contemplation, ¹⁸	
Attended only ^o by Nerissa here,	{Only attended}
Until her husband and my lord ^o return.	{lord's}
There is a monastery two miles off, ¹⁹	

enforce you: prompt, impel, incline you; make you feel

Herein, the original line has been expanded into two. The sense here is that the act of kindness Portia is performing (in helping Antonio) would be more pleasing to her than from the usual and regular acts of kindness that she, out of the goodness of her heart, is wont to perform. This action goes above and beyond the normal generosity (the *customary bounty*) of her usual charitable acts.

Various editors interpret this line as follows: 'Than your wonted generosity make you feel' (Cam); 'Than ordinary acts of kindness allow you to feel' (Appl); 'Than ordinary kindness can make you.' (Pelican); 'Than ordinary acts of kindness can incline you to be' (Ar); 'Than your usual acts of benevolence make you perform' (Ox); 'Then the usual acts of kindness you are prompted (by your good nature) to perform.'

10. {I never did repent^o for doing good} / regret / seek praise
/ I ne'er did pride myself for doing good

11. / Whose souls unite by the same yoke of love

12. {There must be needs a like proportion}
/ There must be needs a likeness of manner / Must share an inclination of like manner

13. / . . . a like proportion of | Characteristics, manner, and of spirit,
/ . . . a like proportion | Of character, sentiment, and of spirit
/ Must share a like proportion of manner | Of character, sentiment, and of spirit

14. / Being my lord's most true and dearest friend / Being the dearest-most friend of my lord

15. / How little is the price I pay to save | One, so like one, with whom I share a soul

16. {This comes too near the praising of myself}
/ This comes too near to mine own self-endorsement!
/ This near approaches self-praise and conceit

17. / The running and management of my house / The management and care of my estate

18. Here Portia is saying she has made a vow to heaven, when clearly she has not. This white lie gives her an unsuspecting reason to leave the estate for a few days.

19. **a monastery two miles off:** This suggests that Belmont is an island, which is close enough to the mainland to be connected by a bridge, or that it is a peninsula which appears to be an island as one approaches it from the sea.

Lines 3.4.81-84 (where Portia indicates a 20 miles journey by coach, to Padua) and the arrival of other characters, by

And there we will abide. I do desire^o you,
Not to deny this sudden^o imposition,²⁰
The which my love and some necessity^o
Now lays upon you.

/ ask of / request
/ curt / rude / brusque
/ more pressing needs

—Lorenzo Madam, with all my heart
I shall obey you in all fair commands.^o

/ you request

—Portia
My people do already know my wish^o
And will acknowledge^o you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
So fare you well till we shall meet again.

{mind}
/ recognize / accept both

—Lorenzo
Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you! ^o

/ happiness all be with you!

—Jessica [*turning back toward Portia*]
I wish your ladyship all^o heart's content.

/ you, dear lady, all / your lady every

—Portia
I thank you for your wish, and am well-pleased
To wish the same for you.^o Fare you well, Jessica.²¹

{it back on you}

Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo

Now, Balthazar,²²
As I have ever found thee plain and true,^o
So let me find thee still: Take this same letter,
And use thou all thy acumen and skill^o ²³
In speed^o to Padua. See thou render^o this
Into the hands of my cousin, Bellario,²⁴

{honest true} / true and honest

{the endeavor of a man}
/ haste / giveth

foot, also suggests that Belmont is connected to the mainland.

20. {Not to deny this imposition} / Not to deny this imposing request

To fulfill the meter, *imposition*, would be pronounced as: IMpoZIseeOWN

21. Portia's farewell is directed to Jessica alone. The most likely scenario is that Portia is closer to Jessica, and perhaps face-to-face with Jessica, holding her at elbow's length, and mentions her name to indicate a more personal farewell. Some productions, feeling the need to have Portia and Jessica alone on stage, have Jessica suddenly running back (as she and Lorenzo are exiting) to bid Portia farewell. Such a staging, however, draws too much attention to itself and is not necessary.

22. Portia uses the name of her servant, *Balthazar*, when she comes into court dressed as a man

23. {And use thou all th'endeavour of a man} / And use the fullest of thy manly prowess / And use thou all thy gained skill and power / And use thou all your manly skill and power

24. Portia's self-made plan to have Bellario provide her with all the books and garments she needs, as well as a glowing letter of recommendation to appear in Bellario's stead— is contingent upon: a) her knowing that Bellario had since been requested, by the Duke, to oversee this very matter in Venice, b) that Bellario was too ill to comply, and c) her confidence in her ability to school herself in all matters of Venician law so as to credibly rule over the matter. (And, if she did not live up the heights of Bellario's recommendation, it would seriously impair Bellario's hard-won reputation. So, in her letter, she would have to have convinced Bellario to stake his reputation upon her

〈Who is a most learned doctor of law.²⁵
 He must prepare the books, review the case,
 And then instruct me on how to proceed.
 We'll meet this evening.〉 Waste no time in words,
 But get thee gone. I shall be there anon.²⁶

—Balthazar

Madam, I go with all availing^o speed.

{convenient} / available / possible

Exit

—Portia

Come on, Nerissa. I have work in hand
 That you have yet to know.^o We'll see our husbands
 Before they think of us.²⁷

{That you yet know not of}

—Nerissa

Shall they see us?

—Portia

They shall, Nerissa, but in such a manner^o
 That they shall think we are but well-equipped^o ²⁸
 With what^o we lack. I'll hold^o thee any wager ²⁹
 That when we're both accoutered^o like young men
 I'll prove the more convincing^o of the two,

{habit} / garb / in such apparel

{accomplishèd}

{that} // make / stake

/ attired / in raiments of

{prettier fellow}³⁰ / bolder fellow

ability to preside over the matter in his stead). A more likely plan would have been for Portia to visit Bellario, where they could study the case together, and where she could receive expert legal advice, and where she could convince him to write the necessary letter to the Duke. Portia making such a journey to Padua would have taken the same amount of travel time as Balthazar, who was instructed to go to Padua, find Bellario, get the items, and then meet Portia at the ferry landing (on the mainland) where the ferry leaves for Venice. The best plan (though lacking the necessary dramatic element) would have been for Portia to go to Padua, tell Bellario of the urgency and personal nature of the matter, and convince him to intervene, as was originally requested by the Duke.) [See Additional Notes, 3.4.55]

25. A man of gravid legal acumen / One of Italia's greatest legal minds / Who commands crucial legal acumen / Who wields considerable legal skill / Who doth possess the greatest legal mind

26. These emended lines introduce a new scenario whereby Portia intends to visit Bellario, and where they will 'pour over the books,' and where she will furnish him with his legal opinion with regards to the case. (Such a scenario would be consistent with logic, efficiency, and with Bellario's letter to the Duke, where he says: 'We turned o'er many books together,' and 'He is furnished with my opinion.' [4.1.154-55])

In terms of a production, realism at this point is not crucial and the audience can be relied upon to forgive the gaps in Portia's plan. Thus, the original lines could be preserved without any appreciable loss. In the original, no meeting takes place: Balthazar is instructed to pick up various books and garments from Bellario (and a letter of recommendation) and then meet Portia at the ferry port (*traject*) where the ferry travels back and forth ('trades') between the mainland and Venice. The original reads as follows:

And look^o what notes and garments he doth give thee, / take

Bring them, I pray, with all imagined speed

Unto the *traject*, to the^o common ferry

Which trades to Venice.^o Waste no time in words

But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

/ Unto the landing where the

/ Departs to Venice

27. **before they think of us:** a) before they think about us (being so busy with their own affairs), b) before they think of seeing us, before they think they will be going to see us (i.e., upon their return to Belmont)

28. / we're suitably equipped / we are fully equipped / we are but well-endowed

29. / I'll bet any amount / I'll bet thee any sum

30. **prettier:** more pleasing, more gallant, more manly

And wear my dagger with the braver grace,^{o 31} / bolder sway
 And speak a vocal pitch^o that comes between / reed-like voice / piping voice
 The change from boy to man;³² and I will turn
 Two mincing^o steps into a manly stride, / dainty
 And speak of brawls^o like a fine, bragging youth; {frays} / fights
 And tell concocted^o lies, how noble ladies {quaint} / fantastic / ingenious / far-fetchèd
 Did seek my love which, upon my denial,^o / when it was denied
 Led them to grave illness and death by heartbreak—^{33 34}
 I could not *do* them all.^{o35} Then I'll repent {do withal} / help it / do otherwise
 And wish for all that my charm had not killed them.³⁶
 And I'll tell twenty of these puny^o lies,³⁷ / empty / brainless
 That men shall swear I had dropped out of^o school {have discontinued}
 Aft' but one year.^o I have within my mind³⁸ {Above a twelvemonth}
 A thousand raw^o tricks of these bragging Jacks^o boys / youths
 Which I will use.^{o 39} {practice} / put to use

—Nerissa Why, shall we turn to men?⁴⁰

—Portia
 Fie, what a question that is!^o <Shall we turn / lewd question!

31. The brave wearing of one's dagger (or sword) can be seen as a phallic symbol, and a symbol of one's manhood.

32. {And speak between the change of man and boy | With a reed voice} Xxx
 / And speak a piping voice that comes between | The change from boy to man; and turn two mincing | Steps to a manly stride.

33. / They fell to sickness and died of heartbreak

34. And show the piping voice of some younker^o / fair youth
 Not yet a man; and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride; and speak of brawls
 Like a fine, bragging youth; and tell quaint lies
 How noble ladies sought my manly love
 Which, I denying, they^o fell sick and died. / Which, when denied, they soon

35. {I could not do withal} I could not do anything about it; I could not help it. Pun on the word *do*—I could not *do* (make love with) them all, thus suggesting that the woman he could not (or would not) make love with, fell sick and died of heartbreak.

36. {And wish for all that, that I had not killed them}
 / And wish my darling^o had not killed them so. / mantrap / beauty / charming
for all that: for having refused them / for all the actions which were beyond my control / “in spite of that — that I could not prevent their dying.” (Kit)

37. {And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell}

38. {Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind} / More than a year ago. I have in mind
above a twelvemonth: a) after one year, b) more than a year ago, above a year

39. These lines uttered by Portia show a total embrace of her assumed role as a man. It is clear that Portia is not going to carry out any of the manly behavior she brags about, nor would she have any need, nor reason, nor time to carry out such acts, despite (*I have within my mind | A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks | Which I will practice.* [3.4.76-78]) Her staid legal garb, and its corresponding manner, are going to show her more like a seasoned man—somewhat reserved and asexual—rather than the rowdy youth she is describing. What we see here is Portia's willingness to embrace this male role (and come full out of her docile romantic princess mode), which is a metaphor for her leaving the fairy-tale world of Belmont and coming into the thick of the Venetian world. In this description, as in 1.2, we see her mocking men and their ways. Portia's ready acceptance of her male role (even more so than is required) is in full contrast to Jessica's embarrassment and 'shame' at having to simply dress up as a boy—and make a clandestine escape.

40. **turn to men:** Nerissa surmises that as part of the plan that they will “turn into men” (disguise themselves as men); Portia then plays upon another possible meaning, suggesting that (if she interpreted Nerissa's meaning in a lewd way) she might think Nerissa is suggesting that they turn to, or approach, men for sexual satisfaction.

To men for carnal pleasures ^o ?—I think not! ⁴¹ > ⁴²	/ satisfaction
But come, I'll tell thee all of my good plan ^o	{my whole device}
When we are in my coach, which stays ^o for us	/ waits
At the main ^o gate; and therefore haste away, ^o	{park} ⁴³
For we must journey ^o twenty miles today.	{measure}/ travel

Exeunt

41. / To men to satisfy our needs? Fie, fie!

42. {Fie, what a question's that? | If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!}
 / Fie, what a question's that? | We shall not turn to men for carnal favors!
 / Fie, what a question's that?— <We turn to men | For carnal pleasures?—no, I thinketh not.>
 / Fie, what a lewd question is that! <We turn | To men for carnal pleasures—I think not!>
 / Fie, what a question's that? | If thou resembled a lewd interpreter | <Methinks you say we turn to men for pleasures!> [See Additional Notes, 3.4.80]

43. **park gate:** the gate leading beyond the grounds, beyond the estate surrounding the mansion

ACT THREE - Scene Five ¹

[Optional Scene—replaces 3.5 in the original]

Venice. Shylock's House.

Shylock is alone in his house, feeling an oppressive emptiness from his daughter's flight and betrayal. He also feels isolated (from the merchant and Jewish communities) due to his strange course of action against Antonio (one which is going to bode badly for every Jew in Venice). Here he is getting ready for the trial; and with no object upon which to express his anger (such as the presence of Antonio), he is starkly confronted by his own sadness.² He picks up the bond and safely places it in his breast pocket, perhaps knowing too well that exacting the cruel terms of his bond will do little to appease this own emptiness. He readies his bag, selecting it with some reluctance. This is one of the bags he uses to transport money. He goes to the scale, takes it apart, and places it into the bag. He picks up a one-pound weight, gauges its weight by lifting it up and down in his hand, and places it in the bag. He goes to his knife collection and ponders which knife to use; he selects the most ominous-looking one, which is thick and pointed. He places the knife in his bag.^{3 4}

1. Act 3, Scene 5, as found in the original, is a 'filler' scene which provides a light-hearted distraction and some psychological time which allows the main characters to reach Venice. Nothing is advanced in the scene. (As it now stands, the dynamic court scene is sandwiched between two, more playful scenes, involving the two lovers and the fool.) The quality of this scene (especially the first half), moreover, is tiresome and lacking. At the onset of the scene, Launcelet is oddly confronting and harsh; it is unlikely that he would address Jessica in such a cruel manner (as they were friends and allies during his term with Shylock) though some have argued that Jessica, now a Christian, is 'fair game for Launcelet's foolery.' Moreover, Launcelet's fluency with Homer's *The Odyssey* is questionable; his banter with Lorenzo is dull; and the later conversation between Lorenzo and Jessica is uninspired. Due to the weakness of the scene, some scholars have doubted its authenticity and most productions simply delete it.

In sum, the scene is lacking and anomalous though a scene is needed here to provide time for the main characters to reach Venice. Thus, the original 3.5 should be included with trepidation, deleted altogether, or wholly replaced with another scene. In this emendation, 3.5 is replaced with one involving Shylock. One way to keep a short scene here would be to import the early portions of the 5.1 involving Lorenzo and Jessica. (Specifically, 5.1.1-21 and 5.1.54-109, or some portion thereof, could be included). This importation would help to reduce the length of Act Five and accomplish the aim of bringing the story to a swift conclusion after its crescendo at the end of the trial scene. As it now stands, the concluding Act Five is much too long and most productions seek ways to reduce it. It was a common practice, before 1800, to simply omit Act Five altogether, rather than tax the audience with the tie up of loose ends after the dramatic close of the court scene. However, such convenient editing is wholly unacceptable.

The filler scene provided here—which replaces the original—can be staged in one of three ways: a) Shylock appears alone, without any spoken lines, b) Shylock appears alone, then Tubal enters, then a short dialogue between the two—one which does not reveal Shylock's motivation, or c) Shylock appears alone, then Tubal enters, then a dialogue between the two—one which reveals Shylock's motivation (which is that he does not intend to actually kill Antonio but to teach him a lesson, to psychologically torture him). Explicitly revealing Shylock's motivation (i.e., not to kill Antonio) tenuously redeems his character: as such, he is not solely motivated by misplaced hatred and self-defeating rage but by a more skillful and 'elevated' stratagem—that of 'teaching Antonio a lesson.' Revealing such a motivation (which is contrary to the assumed motivation found in the original) holds the risk of changing the vector (and tension) of the court scene. In the original, the audience is led to believe that Shylock fully intends to kill Antonio (if he gets the chance). With the introduction of Shylock's motivation, the audience may not feel any real threat to Antonio's life (which Antonio and everyone else in the play is made to feel it). In addition, when Shylock is finally defeated, he is defeated before he has a chance to make known his true motivations, and everyone is left with the false impression that he truly intended to kill Antonio (and would have done it if he were not stopped by Portia's wit). This, then, would add another dimension to the defeat of Shylock's character—his never being able to redeem himself in the eyes of others. In this scenario, Shylock could not come back and claim he had no intention of killing Antonio, for in such a position of defeat, no one would believe him. [See Additional Notes, 3.5.0]

2. Previously, when there was an object for its expression, we see Shylock able to express his anger and rage; here, in isolation, only sadness penetrates, and, for the first time, he feels a deep and alien sense of loss: "The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now."

3. To include an element of black humor, Shylock could be made to test the sharpness of his blade on a tomato (which may or may not be a symbol for the heart). In his first try, he finds the blade to be hopelessly dull and

Enter Tubal

—Tubal

Shylock, do you intend to go through with this heinous act? ⁵

—Shylock

Until the very end.

—Tubal

But you have nothing to gain and all to lose. He's already broken. He cannot interfere with your business. And such an act would destroy us in the eyes of Venice; they would have cause to treat us Jews as a cruel and faithless people.

—Shylock

And do they not already treat us that way? ⁶

—Tubal

But why go through with this? Just take the principal—or double—and be done with it.

—Shylock

Why does Antonio spit on me? Why do Christians despise us? We are different. We are not like them—thus, they cannot see us. They choose not to see us. But now they will see. Now they must look upon the Jew and hear him. I will play this hand til the very end. ⁷

—Tubal

What end is that?

squashes the tomato instead of cleanly cutting it. In frustration, he discards the knife and tries another, with equal lack of success. After a few failures (perhaps the knives are dull because Launcelet is no longer there to sharpen them) he picks up the first knife again, wipes the knife with a towel, and puts it into his bag. (He will sharpen the blade on the sole of his shoe at a later time).

One could also add a symbolic element here and have Shylock mistakenly cut himself with one of the knives as he is distractedly testing it. This notion reflects a line from the ancient Chinese text, the *Tao Te Ching*, which states: "He who kills is like he who cuts with the blade of the Great Wood-Carver. Truly, whoever cuts with the blade of the Great Wood-Carver is likely cut himself." (Verse 74)

4. The scene could end here (without any words spoken and without the entrance of Tubal). Ending the scene here would accentuate Shylock's sense of aloneness. This speechless added scene could be used in a production which stays true to the original text—such 'trueness' allows for additional staging (and deletions of text) but does not tolerate the addition of any new dialogue. The general rule allows for some archaic words to be modernized and for a character to say the name of another characters, even if that name does not appear in the text. (For example, some productions have Shylock call out 'Jessica, Jessica' upon his return from Bassanio's dinner, even though her name—and this direction to call out her name—does not appear in the original text.)

5. add: '—this act of cutting out Antonio's heart before the Duke and magistrates?'

6. A few lines of explanatory dialogue, relating to the oath that Shylock made, could be inserted here. [See Additional Notes, 3.5.02]

7. The scene could—and possibly should—end here. The addition of further dialogue reveals Shylock's motivation—which is not to kill Antonio but only to psychologically 'torture' him. Without this motive explicated, the audience would assume that Shylock is motivated by blind hatred and revenge and that he fully intends to kill Antonio when he enters the court.

[See Additional Notes, 3.5.01]

—Shylock

I will torment him as he has tormented me. I will make him feel as he has made me feel. I will teach him something he will not soon forget. Perhaps he will have reason to pause next time he thinks to spit on me (I who held his life in my hands). They have pleaded with me. They have asked me to alter my course. It is now I who cannot hear them. I turn a deaf ear to all their pleas.⁸ Antonio, the Duke, and all the magnificoes have pleaded with me, yet I will not hear them. I need not hear them.

—Tubal

Your deeds will handicap the freedom that every Jew affords in Venice. Methinks you carry this too far.

—Shylock

No, no, not far enough. I'll make him suffer. I'll hold him in my grip till the last moment—and when I see the desperate fear in his eyes, a man made to feel utterly powerless—then I will let him go and take thrice the principle. 'Tis my right. 'Tis a right I have dearly bought—and not with ducats but with the years I have suffered under his hand. 'Tis my right. I'll have my day. I'll have Antonio suffer. I'll have my ducats three times over.^{9 10}

Exeunt

8. Optional lines which include a reference to Antonio, could be added: (And I will not allow Antonio to speak. And how will that make a man feel?)

9. The last sentence could be deleted if the intent is to make Shylock's motivation purely righteous, with no financial scheming, though the financial intent—coming as an afterthought, and keeping Shylock in the character of a business—does not undermine his so-called 'righteous' intention.

10. This addition of dialogue reveals Shylock's true motivation: which is to revel in his new position of power, to psychologically 'torture' Antonio (leading Antonio to believe, until the last moment, that he is going to die), to get back three times what he is owed, and then to let Antonio go free. Without Shylock revealing his exact motivation, one could surmise one of the following: One: Shylock, deranged by hatred—and the sadness of his daughter's betrayal—fully intends to take his revenge upon Antonio and kill him, without moral ambivalence, as is allowed by the bond (even though Antonio had nothing to do with Jessica's flight). Here Shylock is psychopathically certain about his rights, which he mistakenly views as being lawful and defensible. (As the play now stands, this is the hateful and depraved course of action which the audience believes Shylock intends to take. With his loathsome and indefensible intention so apparent, Shylock's character cannot be redeemed. Despite the numerous and well-intentioned attempts, made in various productions, to place Shylock in the role of 'victim,' such a depraved intention insures that Shylock remains a heartless villain, beyond the reach of redemption or pity. Two: Shylock is conflicted and is unsure about what he is going to do, but he is siding with the intention to kill Antonio. One part of him wants to kill Antonio ('the fiend at his elbow') and the other part knows that such an action—though legally within his rights—is wrong (his conscience). He is enmeshed in a conflict similar to the one played out by his servant Launcelot in 2.2. In the context of this conflict—where Shylock knows that his conscience may eventually win out over his fiend—he 'ups the ante' and 'goes past the point of return' by making a vow his holy *Sabaoth* (God of Hosts) that (his 'fiend' will prevail) and that he will kill Antonio. Thus, he enters the court conflicted but with the irreversible intention (and added motivation, imparted by his vow) to kill Antonio. He might have also needed the added strength imparted by his vow to overshadow his own conscience when faced with the brutal reality of the actual deed. Three: Shylock intends to carrying out this 'strange course of action,' to the last minute, to teach Antonio a 'hard' lesson—and, as surmised by the Duke—to then let Antonio go.

ACT FOUR — Scene One

Venice. A court of justice. Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and others.

—Duke

What,^o is Antonio here?

/ Well

—Antonio

Ready,^o so please your grace.¹

/ I am

—Duke

I am sorry for thee. Thou art^o come to answer^o

/ You've // You've come against

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

Incapable of pity—void,² and empty^o

/ and lacking / without

From any hint^o of mercy.

{dram}

—Antonio

I have heard

Your grace hath ta'en^o great pains to modify^o ³

/ borne {qualify} / mollify

His savage^o course, but since he stands unshaken^o

{rigorous} {obdurate} / unmoved

And, as^o no lawful means can carry^o me

{that} / since // render / deliver

Beyond ⁴ his envy's reach, I do^o oppose^o

/ now / doth // pit against

My patience to his fury, and am armed ⁵

/ braced / ready

To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,

The very tyranny and rage of his.^o ⁶

/ he portions / he levies

—Duke

Go one, and^o call the Jew into the court.

> Someone go,

—Salerio

He's ready at^o the door. He comes, my lord.

/ standing by

*Enter Shylock*⁷

1. The first three lines of the original play have six iambs (twelve syllables) as opposed to the standard iambic pentameter (ten syllables)

2. **void:** > a) heartless, b) without Christian grace

3. / taken great measures^o to curb / utmost pains

4. {Out of}

5. {My patience to his fury, and am armed} / His fury with my patience; I am braced

patience: *Patience*, as used in this context, is somewhat synonymous with *forbearance*, and suggests to the Renaissance virtue which is advocated as the best way to meet adversity. [*Lear* 1.4.240, 2.2. 445]. More deeply, it refers to faith in God and the short-term corporeal suffering which is often needed to bring about long-term and divine gain. "The ability to bear misfortune with confidence in the ultimate justice and goodness of God. This is a Christian notion not to be confused with classical Stoicism." (Kit).

6. {The very tyranny and rage of his.}

/ The very brunt and tyranny of his rage. / The very tyranny of this man's rage / The very brunt and onslaught of his rage / The very despotism of his rage

7. The stage heading in Q1 reads, *Enter Shylocke*, yet the speech headings shift—with no real significance—between *Jew* and *Shy*.

Jewe (or Iew): [34— *I have possessed your grace*, 64, 66, 68, 84, 88, 121, 126, 138, 173]

—Duke

Make room, and let him stand before our face. . . .⁸

Shylock,⁹ the world thinks—and I think so too—

That thou but ledest^o this fashion of thy malice

/ lead / forward

To the last hour of act^o and then, 'tis thought,

/ Until the final hour

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse; and yet

This ill-conceived^o action is e'er more strange^o ¹⁰

/ ill-advised / queer / baffling

Than is the strangeness of thy feigned^o cruelty. ¹¹

{apparent} / open / obvious

And where thou now exact'st^o the penalty,¹²

/ demand / exact

Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,

Thou wilt not only lose the forfeiture^o

/ pardon all the fees

But, touched with human^o gentleness and love,^o

{humane} // kindness and compassion

Forgive a portion^o of the principal,^o

{moiety}

And glance^o an eye^o of pity on his losses ¹³

{Glancing} / Showing // Shedding a tear

That have, of late, so huddled on his back—

Enough to press a royal merchant down. ¹⁴

/ burden a royal merchant

And such a loss^o should pluck a strain of pathos ¹⁵

/ A loss so great

From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,

From stubborn^o brutes and warriors^o never trained ¹⁶

/ faithless {Turks and Tartars}

In such demeanor that were soft or tender. ¹⁷

Shy: [180— *On what compulsion must I?*, 203, 220, 223, 225, 232, 243]

Jew (or Jew): [247—*'Tis very true, O wise and upright judge*, 249, 253, 256, 259, 292, 298, 301]

Shy: [311— *Is that the law?*]

Jew: [315— *I take this offer then, pay the bond thrice*]

Shy: [332— *Give me my principal and let me go*, 338, 341, 370, 389, 391, 394] Note: the speech heading of line 394—*In christening shalt thou have two Godfathers*—attributes the line to Shylock {*Shy.*} which is clearly in error—the line belongs to Gratiano.

8. > have him stand in such a way that we can clearly see him

9. Though the Duke is partial to Antonio's plight (as evidenced in the opening lines of the scene) here he is showing deference to Shylock (and giving him the opportunity to change his position) by asking others to make room for him and by calling him by his name.

10. {Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange}

/ This ill-conceived course is even more strange / And yet this course conceived is e'en more strange / Yet this recourse is even more bizarre / Yet such an ill-bred action is e'en more queer

/ That thou wilt show thy mercy and remorse; | Yet such a course is even more bizarre

11. {Than is thy strange apparent cruelty}

apparent: a) obvious, visible, b) show of, what appears to be

12. / Thou'lt show thy mercy; yet such course is stranger | Than is the strangeness of thy apparent |

/ Yet this conceived course is even more strange | Then is the strangeness of thy apparent |

/ Cruelty. And where you now demand the forfeit,

13. / And looking on his losses with some pity

14. {Enough to press a royal merchant down} / And now do burden a royal merchant

It is odd that the Duke is calling for Shylock to take pity on Antonio and forgive some portion of the principal (in light of Shylock's overtly merciless intentions). Having the Duke call on Shylock to forgive the forfeiture (and then have Antonio pay him back when he was able) would be more likely an appeal. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.28]

15. {And pluck commiseration of his state}

/ Such loss would pluck a strain of pathos, e'en / a requiem of pity / a dirge of remorse

> And bring about some pity (in your heart) as a result of his (unfortunate) condition

16. {From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained | To offices of tender courtesy}

Turks: generally classed with Jews, infidels, and heretics—i.e., those in need of redemption

Tartars: the brutal and bellicose warriors who made up the hordes of Ghengis Khan

17. {From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained | To offices of tender courtesy}

/ From stubborn brutes and vicious fighters ne'er | Trained in demeanor that were soft or tender

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

—Shylock

I have informed ^o your grace of my intention, ^o	{possessed} {of what I purpose}
And by our holy God of Hosts ^o I've sworn ^{18 19}	{Sabaoth}
To have the due ^o and forfeit of my bond. ²⁰	/ debt > the amount owed
If you deny it, let disaster fall ^o	{the danger light} / the doubt be cast
Upon your charter and your city's freedom. ²¹	/ fall 'pon / alight
You'll ask me why I rather choose to have	
A pound ^o of carrion ^o flesh than to receive	{weight} // lifeless
Three thousand ducats? I'll not answer that	
But say it is my bent ^o — ²² <The way my nature	{humour}
Has come to fashion me.> Now is it answered?	
What if my house be troubled with ^o a rat	/ by
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats	
To have it banned? ^o Well, ^o are you answered yet?	/ killed {What}/ Now

18. / And by God's holy army have I sworn
/ And by our trust in God's holy^o army, / righteous

19. {And by our holy Sabaoth have I sworn}

Many commentators have transposed the term found in Q1, *Sabaoth*—which is a reference to *Yahweh Sabaoth*, God of Hosts or God's armies—into *Sabbath* (the holy seventh day). Thus, with this change, Shylock is made to say: *And by our holy Sabbath I have sworn*. Such a statement makes little sense in this context. It becomes even more problematic, as Shylock swears upon *our* holy Sabbath (and the commandment of God which demands that a Jew keep the Sabbath holy) in order to break another of God's commandments: "thou shall not kill." Hence, Shylock has sworn himself into a predicament. What this shows, moreover, is Shylock's imperfect brand of Judaism and his foul understanding of his own tradition. Here he making an oath to the God of the Jews as a device to further his own personal and ungodly aims and defy the commandments of his own God. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.35]

20. {To have the due and forfeit of my bond}.

The contract that usurers entered into usually had two parts: a) the amount due, which is the principle of the bond, the amount actually loaned out (plus any interest which accrued), plus b) the forfeit or forfeiture, which is the penalty that must be paid if the amount due is not paid back on time. Usually the forfeit was a person's land or other great expense. Here the forfeit is one pound of flesh. Present usury laws in most countries render such contracts illegal (especially between individuals). These include loan contracts which carry too high an interest rate and/or contracts which contain some kind of penalty. For instance, the usury rate in New York is 18%, which means that a loan between individuals cannot carry an interest rate higher than 18%. In New Jersey, the rate is 30%. Hence, contracts that charge a interest rate above a state's usury rate is illegal. In most states, the loaning party would lose all rights to collect interest on such a loan; in New York, such a contract being illegal, would be null and void and the borrowing party would not be required to pay back any of the money borrowed

21. / If you deny it, let the consequence | Befall^o your charter and your city's freedom

/ defame / debase / debauch / besmirch / destroy

/ If you deny it, let all doubt alight | Upon the charter that grants your city | It's renown freedom of commerce and trade.^o

/ It's reputation of fair trade and commerce.

22. {But say it is my humour; it is answered?}

my humour: my particular, inborn disposition or nature. This refers to the unchanging bent of ones character or disposition which is determined by the balance of the four main humours or fluids of the body—i.e., blood, phlegm, clear or yellow bile [choler], and dark bile. Blood is associated with the liver (and a lack thereof produces cowardice); phlegm with the lungs / brain; yellow bile with the spleen (producing anger or one who is choleric or splenetic); and dark bile with the gall bladder (producing one who has a gall or choler). [See 3.5.58, for Launcelot's use of the term].

Shylock's point is that a person cannot give reason as to why he has a particular dominance of humour (and why he acts in a particular way), as that is simply the way he was born—it is his unchangeable nature. Thus, again, with imperfect logic, Shylock is saying that he is really not responsible for his actions, that he cannot change them, that he is prompted by his nature. (This goes against the central Jewish doctrine of man's free choice). Shylock then goes on to describe—with limited success—the various actions of persons who are inclined toward one particular humour or the other: those who are sad, fearful, sluggish, etc. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.42]

The term *humour* can also refer to one's whim, one's wish, one's liking—and this is the way that most people would hear this line: 'why do you want the pound of flesh?' Shylock is asked—and he replies: 'it is my humour, it is my whim, it pleases me (and that is the reason).'

Some men are dull and^o not inclined to eat / sluggish,
 Even when served a feast of gaping pig.^{23 24}
 Some men^o go mad if they behold a cat;²⁵ / that
 And others, when the bagpipe sings a note,^o {sings i'th'nose} / plays a tune
 Do wet their pants in fright.²⁶ And thus one's nature^o 27 {For affection}
 Rules over feeling^o and sways it²⁸ t'the mood^o 29 / Rules our emotion // bent / temper
 Of what it^o likes or loathes.³⁰ Now, for your answer: it > our nature
 As there is no^o firm reason to be rendered^o / Just as there's no / given

23. / Even before a feast of gaping pig. / A meal so served upon a gaping pig. / When seeing plates of food and stuffed pig meat.

24. {Some men there are love not a gaping pig}

/ Some men there are dislike to see a pig, | (It's mouth agape and served upon a platter.)

Refers to someone who is not moved to eat, even when sitting at a feast, where such grand items as a gaping pig—a pig with its mouth held open by an apple—are served. Shylock may be making an oblique reference to himself: he would not eat (i.e., loves not) the feast of the pork which Christians find so desirable.

25. {Some that are mad if they behold a cat} The reference is unclear, but suggests the humor of black bile, which commonly refers to melancholy but also to one beset by haunting dreams and 'vain imaginations.' Thus, the image of a cat, in this instance, may refer to a person who is mad in terms of false imaginings and superstition—which is the kind of misplaced fear and superstition he may attribute to harmless alley cats.

26. {And others when the bag-pipes sings i'th'nose | Cannot contain their urine;}

sings i'th'nose: sings in the nose: a) sings its sad song through its nose (horn), b) sings with a nasal type voice or sound

Bagpipes were known to play mournful tunes. Crying tears (from the eyes) would be the natural response of most men, whereas peeing in one's own pants would not. Here, according to one's humour, Shylock is describing someone overtaken by fear (so much so that he would pee in his pants out of fright) as opposed to someone besieged by sadness. Perhaps the confusion is intentional on the part of the playwright, suggesting that Shylock knows the basic theory of the humours but is confused as to their correct application.

This confusion could be rectified (and Shylock made to appear more apt) by associating the bagpipe with melancholy, rather than that fright; thus, by replacing 'urine' with 'weeping,' the reference would be to a person besieged by sadness (and tears) rather than by fright (and urine). Thus, a more cogent reference to the humours would be: 'And others when the bagpipe sings i'th nose | Cannot contain their weeping.'

27. {For affection}

affection: a) one's affect; one's disposition, inherent temperament, or inborn nature; b) affections, such as likes and desires. [See 3.1.55: 'Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions;']

28. **it:** one's emotions, feelings, passions, etc.

29. {Masters of passion, sways it to the mood}

passion: emotions, feelings, sentiments. Generally refers to the full range of emotional responses a person can have, including but not limited to, passion. The sense here is that one's nature (one's humour or inherent disposition), rules over all his emotions, and sways it (one's emotions) to the mood (mold, color, structure) of how one's nature is so inclined (i.e., to what it likes or loathes). [See Additional Notes, 4.1.49]

Masters of passion: That which rules over our emotions and feelings (passion). 'Masters' could also be seen as a reference to young men, young counterparts of emotions—but this is an unwarranted stretch. Likewise, *Masters of passion* is often emended to read, *Mistress of passion* (Oxford, Norton, Applause, Bevington, Kittredge), suggesting that affection (interpreted as desires) is the cohort of (the mistress of) our emotions (passion). Interpreting 'affection' to mean 'desire (as opposed to one's natural inclination or disposition) is problematic since such and interpretation makes no meaningful connection to the whole of the passage, which is about man's unchanging nature (or humour). Thus, affection should relate to one's humour or inherent nature, as opposed to the more tenuous interpretation as 'desires.'

The phrase, as it appears in Q1, *Maisters of passion*, is problematic and some editors emending it as, *Masters oft passion* (Cambridge), or *Masters [oft] passion* (Folger)—neither of which illumine or clarify. (These emendations, though lacking, are still superior to the mishandled, *Mistress of passion*). It is likely that the intended passage was simply: 'Masters our passion' which is in keeping with the general idea that our inherent nature or disposition (affection) rules over (masters) our various feelings and emotions (passion).

30. / . . . 'Tis one's own nature | That rules o'er feeling and doth sway our mood | To what it likes or loathes

/ . . . For our own nature, | Ruler of passion, ever sways our mood | To what it likes or loathes.

/ . . . and sways it to move | By what it likes or loathes

/ . . . and affects our mood | To what it likes or loathes

Why one° cannot endure° a gaping pig³¹
 Why one° is crazed to see° a harmless cat,^{32 33}
 Why one° who hears the playing° of a bagpipe
 Must yield to shame by wetting his own pants,³⁴
 So can I give no reason, more than° to say,°
 There is° a lodged° hate and a certain loathing³⁵
 I bear Antonio, that I follow° thus°
 A losing° suit against him. Are you answered?^{36 37}

{he} {abide} / partake
 {he} / fearful of
 {he} / song / strains / notes
 / but {nor I will not}
 {More than} // staunch / long
 / pursue // this
 / A gainless // Profitless

—Bassanio

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
 To° excuse the current° of thy cruelty.³⁸

/ To thus // o'erflow

—Shylock

I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

—Bassanio

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

—Shylock

Do men not want to kill the things they hate?³⁹

—Bassanio

A first offense cannot bestow° such hatred.⁴⁰

/ amass / afford / a'bring

—Shylock

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

—Antonio

31. {Why he cannot abide a gaping pig} / cannot endure / cannot stomach
abide: tolerate, bear, be unaffected by, stand the sight of

32. / Why he is superstitious of a cat See Note 18 xx.

33. {Why he a harmless, necessary cat}

necessary: useful, needed to perform the function of catching mice

harmless: refers to an ordinary house cat, as opposed to a 'harmful' cat, as might be employed by a witch

34. {Must yield to such inevitable shame | As to offend, himself being offended,}

/ Is forced to bear the shame of wetting his | Own pants, offending others as himself.

35. / There is a long-standing hate and loathing

36. {More than a lodged hatred and a certain loathing | I bear Antonio, that I follow thus | A losing suit against him. Are you answered?}

losing suit: an unprofitable action where Shylock gains a worthless pound of flesh as as opposed to the usual monetary gain.

37. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.62]

38. / To excuse thy overflowing° cruelty / over-bounding
 / But mere excuse for thy vengeful cruelty° / boundless / flooding / avid / ardent

39. {Hates any man the thing he would not kill?}

/ Every man kills the thing that would kill him.° / he does hate.

40. {Every offence is not a hate at first} / How can there be such hatred from one offence?

I pray you, think,^o you argue with a stone.^o ⁴¹ / Remind yourself {the Jew} / a block
 You may as well⁴² go stand upon the beach
 And bid the high tide^o bate its usual height; ⁴³ {main flood}
 You may as well use question^o with the wolf^o / long argue
 Why he hath killed the lamb and made the ewe cry. ⁴⁴
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops and to make no noise
 When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;^o / a gust of wind
 You may as well do anything most hard
 As seek to soften^o that which none is harder— ⁴⁵ / To try an' soften
 His godless^o heart.⁴⁶ Therefore, I do beseech you, ⁴⁷ / faithless / vengeful
 Make no more offers, use no further means,
 But with all brief^o and plain efficiency^o / speed {conveniency} / propriety
 Let me have judgement and the Jew his will. ⁴⁸

—Bassanio [*to Shylock*]

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^o them. I would have my bond. ⁴⁹ / take

—Duke

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring^o none? / giving

—Shylock

41. {I pray you think, you question with the Jew}

the Jew: refers specifically to Shylock, and not to Jews in general, else Antonio would have said, 'you question with a Jew.'

42. **You may as well:** Antonio repeats this phrase four times.

43. / And bid the tide to lower its usual height / And bid the high tide not rise with the moon. / And bid the tide abate its rising waters.

44. {Why he hath made the ewe bleake for the lamb}
bleat: cry loudly. Q1 has *bleake*, which is likely an error for *bleat* (or *bleat*).

45. {As seel to soften that—than which what's harder?—}
 / To try and soften that which is hardest—
 / To try and soften the hardest thing of all—

46. {His Jewish heart.} / His vacant heart / vacuous heart / faithless heart. / His merciless heart. Thus
 This line is somewhat out of place for Antonio, as his contention with Shylock has been over usury, yet here is a direct attack against Shylock's Jewishness. Under the circumstances, where Antonio is about to be killed by this unforgiving enemy, such a slur is not out of place, and may reveal what Antonio believes to the 'thick-necked' and unflinching aspect of Shylock's character. An normal usurer, having been offered three times the principle owed, would have taken the offer. Thus, there is something more than mere usurious greed which is entrenching Shylock in the 'unprofitable course.' Antonio, unable to fathom Shylock's alien course of action, is here linking it to his Jewishness, since Antonio can find nothing else.

47. / His unforgiving heart. Thus, I beseech you

48. {But with all brief and plain expediency} / But with all plain and efficient dispatch

49. Shylock is saying that he would refuse an offer of 36,000 ducats. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.86]

What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong? ⁵⁰
 You have acquired^o many a purchased slave ⁵¹ {among you}
 Which, like your donkeys^o and your dogs and mules, {asses}
 You use in abject^o and in slavish roles^{o52} / lowly {parts} / tasks/ chores / functions
 Because you bought them. Shall I say to you:
 ‘Let them be free. Marry them to your heirs.
 Why sweat them under burdens?^o Let their beds {burthens}
 Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates^o / mouths / meals
 Be seasoned with your spices.’^o You will answer: {viands}
 The slaves are ours. So do I answer you:⁵³
 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. ⁵⁴
 I stand^o for judgement.^o Answer—shall I have it? / wait // justice

—Duke

Upon my power I may dismiss this court,^o ⁵⁵ / case
 Unless Bellario, a learned judge,^o {a learned doctor} / a doctor of law
 Whom I have sent for to determine this, ⁵⁶
 Come here today. ⁵⁷

50. / What fate should I dread, having done no wrong? / For what mercy should I hope, doing no wrong? / Why hope for mercy, having done no wrong?

Here is the blunder of Shylock’s position—he is doing a great wrong. He is holding to the letter of the law to justify his doing something he knows (by his own conscience and the laws of Judaism) to be wrong. Hence, it is Shylock’s own feeble consciousness (or greed-infested anger) which does not allow him to understand the truth of the law—and this is his undoing. His position is untruthful in every respect and violates the spirit of every law: thus he tries to empower himself by cleaving to the strict letter of the Venetian law—for his own selfish gain—as opposed to upholding the law of human righteousness. Thus, by his own lack of truth, he is undone.

51. / Many among you have a purchased slave,

52. / You burden with despised and slavish means

53. / Be seasoned with the same viands.’ Your answer
 Shall be: ‘The slaves belong to us; (we have
 Purchased them.’) So, I answer you the same:

54. / There is no power in the laws of Venice.

55. {Upon my power I may dismiss this court}
 upon my power: by virtue of my power, in accord with my power (as Duke)

I may dismiss: a) dismiss the case entirely, b) adjourn the case until such time as Bellario appears. The legal proceedings of the play corresponds to neither Venetian nor English law of the time.

The Duke states that he has the power to dismiss this case, contrary to the assertions made that the Duke does not have that power, and must follow the strict letter of the law (and thereby honor the contract) [Antonio: 3.4.26-31; Portia: 4.1.215-219]. One of the earliest cases in US law involved individual rights, and it was ruled that the state could not nullify a contract made between individuals—if it did have that power the (as stated in Chief Justice Marshall’s opinion) the very institution and fabric of the economic livelihood of the country would be undermined. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.103]

56. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.105]

57. There is a causality implied here: “I, the Duke, have the power to dismiss this case, *unless* Bellario comes to determine it.” Hence, if Bellario does not come, the Duke may dismiss the case (due to its unusual nature). Hence, Portia’s arrival on behalf of Bellario—and with Bellario’s glowing recommendation—is the very thing that stalls the Duke and prevents him from dismissing the case. Thus, Portia’s arrival has unwittingly put Antonio’s life in new jeopardy. As such, it becomes increasingly clear that Portia was fully versed in the law and was well aware that she could save Antonio before she dared such a bold intervention.

—Salerio My lord, there waits⁵⁸ without {stays}
A messenger with letters from the judge,^o {doctor}
New^o come from Padua. / Just

—Duke
Bring us^o the letters! Call the messenger! / me

Exit Salerio

—Bassanio
Good cheer, Antonio! What man, courage yet.⁵⁹
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 servant^o of the flock, {tainted wether}⁶⁰ / feeble creature
Meetest^o for death. The weakest kind of fruit / Most fit
Drops earliest to the ground—and so let me.
Now then, Bassanio, you are best employed
To live, that you may write^o my epitaph.⁶¹ / To stay alive and write

Enter Salerio with Nerissa, dressed as a lawyer's clerk

—Duke
Come you from Padua, from Bellario?

—Nerissa
From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

She hands him a letter
Shylock sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe

—Bassanio [*to Shylock*]
Why dost thou whet^o thy knife so earnestly? > sharpen

—Shylock
To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt^o there. {bankrout}

—Gratziano
Not on thy sole,⁶² but on thy soul, harsh Jew,

58. / My Lord, there's waiting outside / My Lord, remains outside

59. / Hold fast man, have courage!

60. **wether**: weak or castrated ram. From *bellwether*: a ram with a bell hung round its neck

61. {You cannot be better employed, Bassanio, | Than to live still and write mine epitaph.}

62. **sole**: Shylock whets his knife on the sole of his shoe or boot

Thou mak'st thy knife keen.⁶³ But no metal can—
 No, not the hoodman's axe°—bear half the keenness
 Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce° thee?

{hangman's axe}⁶⁴
 / reach

—Shylock
 No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

—Gratziano
 O, be thou damned, thou ever-cursèd° dog!
 And for thy life let justice be accused!
 Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,
 And° hold the same opinion as the Greeks⁶⁵
 That souls of animals infuse° themselves
 Into the trunks of men. Thy beastly spirit
 Lived in° a wolf who° hanged for killing humans;⁶⁶
 Then° from the gallows did his° fell soul fleet,⁶⁷
 And whilst thou lay in thy unhallowed womb,°
 Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
 Are wolvis, blood-thirsty,° and ravenous.^{68 69}

{inexecrable}

 / sight
 {To} > And to
 / instill / install
 {currish} / brutal
 {Governed} / who's
 {Even} / Thus / its
 {dam}

 {bloody, starved}

—Shylock
 Till thou canst rail° the seal from off my bond
 Thou but offend'st° thy lungs to speak so loud.°
 Repair⁷⁰ thy wit, young man,° or it will fall
 To cureless° ruin. I stand here for law.

> remove
 / only harm // with all thy shouting
 {good youth}
 / hopeless

—Duke
 This letter from Ballario doth commend°

> recommend

63. / Thou makest keen thy knife. No metal can

64. **hangman's axe**: executioner's axe. Here the term *hangman's* is begrudgingly emended with *hoodman's* or *hooded man's*, to clarify the reference to an executioner (who is usually hooded) and who employs a sharp axe, rather than to a hangman, who is more likely to be associated with a rope rather than an axe. In an alternative rendering the more precise term, *executioner*—though long-winded—could be used: 'No, not the ex'cutioner's sharpest axe | Bear half the keenness of thy sharp envy. | Can nothing get through? Can no prayer piece thee?'
 / Not even that of a head-chopper's axe / Not even the fell axe of a hoodman

65. {To hold the opinion with Pythagoras} / To hold a common tenet with the Greeks / To share the same belief as ancient Greeks.

Gratziano is referring to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding reincarnation and the transmigration of souls (where an animal soul could incarnate in a human body), which is heresy to Christians.

66. {Governed a wolf, who hanged for human slaughter}

67. {did his fell soul fleet}

fell: deadly, cruel, savage

fleet: pass on, leave (flee) the body

68. / Inhabited a wolf who was but hanged
 For human slaughter. Then,° from the gallows,
 His deadly soul did flee and thus infused
 Itself in thee whilst thou lay in thy mother's
 Vile and unholy womb; for thy desires
 Are wolvis, blood-thirsty,° and ravenous.

/ Unhallowed womb; for all thy desires

69. [See Additional Notes: 4.1.137]

70. **repair**: use to good end, put to good use, rectify, set in order

A young and learned scholar^o to our court.
Where is he?

{doctor} / lawyer

—Nerissa He is waiting here, nearby^o ⁷¹
To know your answer, whether you'll admit^o him.

/ outside

/ receive

—Duke
With all my heart. Some three or four of you,
Go give him courteous escort^o to this place. ⁷²

{conduct} / passage

Exeunt three or four

Meanwhile,^o the court shall hear Bellario's letter:

{Meantime} > In the meantime

The Duke hands the letter to an officer of the court, who reads: ⁷³

'Your Grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter I was very ill,^o but at the instant that your messenger arrived, a young doctor of law from Rome, named Balthazar, was paying me a kindly visit.⁷⁴ I acquainted him with the case^o in controversy between the Jew and Antonio, the merchant. We turned o'er many books together. He is furnished with my opinion,⁷⁵ which is bettered with his own learning—the greatness of which I cannot enough commend. In response to your grace's request, I have importuned him to rule on this matter in my stead.⁷⁶ I beseech you, let not his lack of years bring a lack in your revered estimation of him, for I've never known so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose conduct^o shall, better than my words, disclose^o his worthiness.^o ^{77 78}

Enter Portia as Balthazar, Doctor of Law, with others

You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes?
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.^o

/ comes the young doctor

71. {He attendeth here hard by} / He doth eagerly await / He is eagerly awaiting

72. / With courteous intent, go bring him here.

73. Q1 offers no stage direction here; and since no character is designated to read the letter, most productions simply have the Duke read it. However, it is more likely (and dramatically apt) that a court official read the letter (which could be Salerio). Had the Duke said, 'Meantime, I will read Bellario's letter' the direction for him to read would be clear. The reference, however, to the court hearing Bellario's letter, suggests that it be read by a court official and not by the Duke.

74. {in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar} In the original, no visitation was made between Portia and Bellario: Portia's servant was sent to Bellario, who fetched clothes and books, and who then gave them to Portia at the port where the ferry traveled to Venice. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.151]

75. This indicates that Bellario reviewed the matter and furnished Portia with his opinion—as opposed to simply supplying her with the books.

76. [See Additional Note, 4.1.159]

77. {I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.}

78. **I was very ill:** {I am very sick}

arrived: {came}

the case: {the cause} / matter

whose conduct: {whose trial} / evidence of his judgement / your test of him

disclose: {publish} / make known / reveal

worthiness: {commendation}

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

—Portia

I did,^o my lord.

/ I do / I have

—Duke You're welcome. Take your place.

Are you acquainted with the grave dispute^o

{difference} / disagreement

That holds this present question^o in the court? ⁷⁹

/ matter / issue

—Portia

I am informed thoroughly of the case.^o ⁸⁰

/ informed with respect to the cause

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew? ⁸¹

—Duke

Antonio and old Shylock, both step forward.^o ⁸²

{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 ruling,^o the Venetian law ⁸³

/ matters

Cannot impugn^o you as you do proceed. ⁸⁴

/ oppose / o'erturn / dissuade

[to Antonio]

79. / That occupies the question now in court?

80. Portia, being well-informed as to the present matter (and the law governing it), suggests that she met with Bellario, rather than thoroughly educating herself in all nuance of Venetian law. Yet, such a meeting is not indicated in the original. Two possibilities thus exist: a) that Balthazar reviewed the matter and took the time to write out an opinion for Portia, along with his letter of recommendation to the Duke, or b) Portia changed her plans midstream and decided it would be best to visit Balthazar in person, in Padua.

81. This action demonstrates Portia's impartiality—rather than being a ploy, a rouse, or some kind of indulgence. Though Portia is likely to know which is Antonio and which is Shylock—through a difference in appearance and dress—with this opening question she demonstrates the true impartial qualities of a judge and makes it known that she is entering into the case without any assumptions, prejudices, or preconceptions. Questioning even that which is most obvious testifies to her impartiality. In some productions, the courtroom is crowded, and she has reason to ask this question. In other productions the difference in appearance between Antonio and Shylock is not so obvious and, thus, she is prompted to ask this question. In other cases the difference is obvious and apparent, and Portia already knows the answer to her question before she asks.

82. It is possible, that this could be read as part of a stage direction, rather than a directive from the Duke.

83. / Yet, in such rule, the Venetian edicts

84. / Cannot oppose the course you choose to follow

In terms of reason (and the reason as to why Portia intervened in the first place) what possible interest could Portia have in preserving Venetian law over the life of her husband's dear friend? Why did she intervene in the first place?—to uphold Venetian law or bend the law to save Antonio? Surely, at this point, her best course would be to seek to have the case dismissed, or call on the Duke to dismiss it (as he stated he had the power to do). Her continued defense of the Venetian law—which bodes against Antonio's position—apart from purely dramatic reasons—must be seen as part of her overall stratagem. Rather than trying to deliver Antonio, she is also setting up a test for Shylock and Bassanio. For Portia to play this card (which goes against her intended position) we must assume that she is in total control of the case (and its outcome) from the onset. In other words, she is well aware that she can stop Shylock (at any time), if he does not willingly drop the case against Antonio.

You stand within his danger,⁸⁵ do you not?

—Antonio
Ay, so he says.

—Portia Do you confess the bond?

—Antonio
I do.

—Portia Then the Jew must be merciful.

—Shylock
On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

—Portia
The quality of mercy is not strained^o ⁸⁶ / forced
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the earth below.^o It is twice blessed: {the place beneath}
It blesseth him^o who gives and him who gets.^{o87} / one {takes}
'Tis mightiest when rendered^o by the mighty^{88 89} / given
<Upon the^o weak and hopeless.> Thus, a monarch^o ⁹⁰ / To those who're // For a king
It makes more worthy of a kingdom's rule / to rule a kingdom
Than all the power vested by his crown.⁹¹
His scepter shows the force of temporal⁹² power,

85. **within his danger:** within his power to harm you; within the reaches of his bond and the danger of its consequence; within harm's way.

86. **strained:** forced, compelled. By the reference to rain, it implies that mercy cannot be 'squeezed' out of a person.

/ The quality of our mercy is such | That it can not be forced. It drops as heaven's | Gentle rain, falling 'pon the earth below. | Thus, it is twice blessed.

87. {It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.} / him who gives and who receives

that takes: the imagery of *him that takes* is somewhat inferior to that *him who receives*, as the former suggest a willful action rather than a passive reception. *Taking* thus implies the acquisition of some benefit which comes from personal action (without the need of a giver), whereas *receiving* implies a benefit bestowed by a giver. One need not take rain, it falls from the sky freely—all one need do is receive it.

88. / 'Tis mightiest in the mighty, when rendered

89. Much of Shylock's action relates to power (or lack thereof): his power before the court (backed by the laws of Venice), his power over Antonio (whose life he holds in his hands), as well as the previous sense of powerless that he felt in regard to Antonio's oppression. Here Portia is telling Shylock that mercy is *mightiest in the mightiest*—a lesson which is irrelevant to Shylock's station as a dehumanized Jew, but something she hopes will resonate with Shylock's legally assigned position of power (which is the power he seemingly has to grant or to take away Antonio's life).

90. / <To those found helpless and weak.> A monarch / <To those who're powerless and weak.> A king

91. {It becomes | the throned monarch better than his crown.}

The image is that a kingdom is better ruled by mercy than by power; that (a disposition of) mercy makes a king better fit to rule than the authority vested in him by his crown.

92. **temporal:** worldly, material, assigned; temporary and passing

Portia is suggesting that the king's power is temporal, whereas the quality of mercy, which reflects God's attributes, is ever-lasting—it is *above this sceptered sway*. "By the greatest fate a powerful king may rule the earth for a hundred years; but through the power of love, he may rule the earth forever." (Adopted from the Tao Te Ching)

That which commands^o both awe and majesty,⁹³ / evokes
And brings about^o the dread and fear of kings;⁹⁴ {Wherein doth sit}
But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute of^o God himself. {to}
And earthly power shares kinship with God^o ⁹⁵ / is akin to God
When mercy tempers^o justice.⁹⁶ Therefore, Jew,^o ⁹⁷ {seasons} placates
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
That in the course of justice none of us
Would^o seek^o salvation.⁹⁸ We do pray for mercy,⁹⁹ {Should} {see} / find
And that same prayer¹⁰⁰ doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.¹⁰¹ ¹⁰² I have spoken thus
To mitigate thy rig'rous^o plea¹⁰³ for justice,¹⁰⁴ / froward / steadfast / headstrong / wilful
Which, if thou follow, this strict¹⁰⁵ court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst^o the merchant there. / rule against

93. {The attribute to awe and majesty}

attribute to: a) the claim or entitlement to; b) having the attributes, quality, or character of

/ The given claim^o to awe and majesty, / The sanctioned rights

/ That which confers to him reverence and awe /

94. / Wherein he rules the state with fear and dread / Whereby the people are governed by fear

95. {And earthly power doth then show likest God's}

96. / And earthly power holds (/shows) the most kinship

With God's, when justice is balanced (/seasoned) with mercy.

97. {And earthly power doth then show likest God's | When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,}

The use of the term 'Jew,' in this instance, is somewhat amiss—along with the entire appeal, which involves sentiments relating to kingly power, awe, and majesty rather than a Jew who only feels oppression (at the hands of more powerful Christians). Portia, however, is addressing the position of power which Shylock now hold over Antonio (likening it to the power which a king has over his subjects) and, at the same time, she is revealing the poverty of that power (which a king gets by virtue of his crown and which Shylock has obtained through the legal backing of his bond) when compared to a position in kinship with God, a position of mercy.

98. This is an oblique reference to the doctrine of original sin and the notion that it is impossible to attain salvation through one's work alone (i.e. without the grace of God).

99. *We* in this regard refers to Christians (who recite the Lord's Prayer) and not to Jews. Though her words are directed to Shylock, the heart of her appeal resonates with her Christian audience and the sentiments to which they can relate. Since she has no knowledge of Jews, she must assume that they are like Christians in both manner, sentiment, and religious bent.

100. {And that same prayer}

This is an overt reference to the Lord's Prayer. In the previous line Portia says, *we do pray for mercy* but the 'we' refers to those Christians who recite the Lord's Prayer—not Jews. Again, Portia's plea is made from the vantage of her own world and not from that of Shylock's. Thus, by citing her all-inclusive Christian stance she is unwittingly dismissing the value and relevance of Shylock and his non-Christian worldview.

101. *The Lord's Prayer*: "Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever."

102. Some commentators have claimed that Portia's plea also has a 'Hebrew resonance' and that some likeness can be found in Psalm 143.2 and Ecclus. 28.2 ('Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done thee, so shall thy sins be forgiven thee also, when thou pray.') This, however, is an *ex post facto* stretch. Neither of these passages refer to prayers that are known or recited by Jews. Shylock, moreover, holds himself to be sinless (and not in need of forgiveness) and so neither passage would register with him. In addition, most Hebrew interpretations—including that of the very famous passage, 'love thy neighbor as thyself'—hold the term *neighbor* to mean one's Jewish neighbor. Thus the edict to 'forgive thy neighbor' would not apply to Antonio, a Christian.

103. / staunch appeal / stern appeal

104. {To mitigate the justice of thy plea}

105. **strict**: bound, inflexible, rigid (in that it is bound to follow the letter of the law)

—Shylock

My deeds upon my head!¹⁰⁶ I crave^o the law,^o
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.^{107 108}

/ seek // demand justice

(optional dialogue)¹⁰⁹

—Portia

Is he not able to discharge the money?

—Bassanio

Yes, here I tender^o it for him in the court;

/ have / offer

Yea, thrice^o the sum. If that will not suffice,

{twice}¹¹⁰

I will be bound to pay it ten times over,^o

/ more

And put as bond^o my hands, my head, my heart.

{On forfeit of}

If this will not suffice, it must appear^o

/ be such

That malice outweighs^o truth.¹¹¹ And I beseech you,¹¹²

{bears down} / conquers,

Bend^o once the law to your authority.

{Wrest} / Sway

To do a great right, do a little wrong,

106. **My deeds upon my head!:** Let my own deeds be upon my head; let me bear the consequence (or divine retribution) of my own deeds (which are blameless). Shylock is saying: I will take responsibility for my own actions (since my actions are blameless and will not bring about retribution). He mistakenly believes himself and his actions to be sinless; thus he need not fear retribution nor seek mercy (which pertains to someone who has sinned). Portia says that mercy falls like gentle rain from heaven: here Shylock is dismissing her plea and says, 'I don't care about heaven's mercy falling upon me like rain (since I don't need it)—let my own deeds fall upon my head.' Shylock, blinded by hatred, and strictly devoted to the letter of the written law, is unable to see the divine discord of his own actions. Rather than craving that which God desires, Shylock craves the law which will grant him the unjust penalty and forfeit of his bond.

107. **the penalty and forfeit of my bond** > that part of the bond (above and beyond the principal and interest) which is due if the full sums borrowed are not paid back in time. In this case, the penalty Shylock is demanding—which is owed according to the terms of the bond— is a pound of Antonio's flesh.

108. / Let my own deeds now fall upon my head! | I crave the law, the forfeit of my bond.

109. Additional lines (A):

Shy: Here, now, we see the face of good Antonio,
Showing his virtue like a stained-glass window;
But I have only felt the broken glass
Of his abuse, whose shards did rip upon
My humanness and rend my Jewish honor.

Additional lines (B):

Shy: How is a man to feel when he is treated
With cruelty and contempt? With years of insult?
With spitting, cursing, torment, and abuse—
(As this man, lacking goodness, treated me?)
Is there no law in your book against that?

Por: [looking in book] Not in this book.

Shy: Then where is it written?—
In the same place where one can find your mercy.

110. Later in the scene [224, 231] Portia states that an offer of *thrice* the sum has been made, whereas here, in Q1 [207] Bassanio only offers *twice* the sum. Either Portia is mistaken in her recall, she intentionally ups the offer, or Bassanio offered *thrice* the sum (and *twice* is a typo). The discrepancy is rectified by having Bassanio offer *thrice* the sum and Portia referring to this same amount.

111. {malice bears down truth} 'Malice oppresses honesty' (Johnson)

bears down: overwhelms, overthrows, oppresses, defeats; weighs more than, is more important than
truth: 'reason,' 'honesty,' 'righteousness,' 'rule of equity,' etc.

112. / That malice overthrows^o truth. I beseech you / vanquishes / overwhelms / overturns

And curb^o this cruel devil of his will.^{113 114}

/ thwart / bar

—Portia

It must not^o be. There is no power in Venice

/ cannot

That can reverse^o an established decree.¹¹⁵

{alter} / turn back / o'return

'Twill then be counted as^o a precedent,

{'Twill be recorded for}

And many an error,^o by the same example,^o

/ many errors // as herein applied

Will rush into the state. It cannot be.^o ¹¹⁶

/ must not

—Shylock

A Daniel come to judgement, yea, a Daniel!

O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

—Portia

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

—Shylock [*eagerly handing it over*]

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

—Portia [*accepting the document but not yet reading it*]

Shylock,¹¹⁷ there's thrice the money offered thee.¹¹⁸

—Shylock

An oath, an oath. I have^o an oath in^o heaven!¹¹⁹

/ I've made

Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?—

No, not for Venice.

—Portia [*looking over the bond*]

Yes,^o this bond is forfeit,

{Why}

And lawfully, by this, the Jew may claim

113. / And curb this devil of his hellish will

114. / This time alone, by your authority, | Wrest once the reigns of law: for a great right | Do but a little wrong, and curb this devil | From the cruel execution of his will.

115. {Can alter a decree established}

116. Such a defense of Venetian law—over the direct concerns of her husband, and also over what is morally right, merciful, and fair—are amiss. Why is Portia (who took so many measures to impersonate a doctor of law and intervene on behalf of Antonio) now taking pains to preserve precedent in Venetian law? What is she offering here that a normal Venetian judge could not offer?— if not a straight-forward reading of the law. We must assume, by this strange course, that Portia is 'playing' this hand to the end, and that even before entering the court she was aware of holding a trump card, and being able to stopping Shylock at any time. See footnote for line 176. [See Additional Note, 4.1.219]

117. **Shylock:** Portia is still calling him by first name.

118. **thrice:** In Q1, Bassanio offers *twice* the sum [207]. This amount was emended to read *thrice* the sum, in order to align it with Portia's statement: *Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee*. [224] If Bassanio only offered *twice* the sum then here, it seems, that Portia is upping the ante, as Shylock has already refused twice the sum. If she offered the same sum, already refused, it would not be as effective a plea as offering a higher amount. It is possible, as some have speculated, that either Shakespeare (or Portia) forgot that twice was offered, and herein stated *thrice*, in error (with no objection from Bassanio). More likely, the error slipped in as a result of a copyists error.

119. To remind the audience that Shylock's oath refers to exacting the forfeit of his bond—a reminder which no mature audience would need—the following line, could be added: ⟨I swore to have the forfeit of my bond.⟩

A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. [*to Shylock*] Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

—Shylock

When it is paid according to the tenor.^o {tenure} / terms
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your most learned opinion^{o120} {exposition}
Has been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof^o you are a well-deserving^o pillar, / Of which // unwavering / unfaltering
Proceed to judgement. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on^o my bond. / stand fast to

—Antonio

Most heartily, do I 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!

⟨*The Duke bids Portia to approach him; they talk aside.*⟩¹²¹

—Portia¹²²

For the intent and purpose of the law
Gives^o full enforcement of^o the penalty¹²³ / Holds / Bears {Hath full relation to}
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

—Shylock

120. // your good interpreting / your interpretation

121. There is a break in rhythm here, (as well as between lines 301-02) which could suggest some type of staged intervention in the ongoing dialogue. In the exchange between Portia and Shylock, the next three lines [244-46] are essentially vacuous and a bland recap of what we've already heard, which suggests a break in the action, or that Portia is thinking about something else (perhaps what had just been discussed with the Duke). A deletion of these repetitive lines I snot needed but it might render the exchange more concise and powerful.

As a stage direction, the Duke could call Portia over after Shylock delivers line 243. The staged conversation between Portia and the Duke could reveal that the Duke is not convinced about her course of action; we could see Portia assuring the Duke (perhaps with a subtle hand motion) that she has no intention of letting Shylock carry out the deed, as he intends, and that everything will be OK. Thus, after the silent aside, Portia returns and repeats what has already been said, with lines 244-46, as a way to regain her bearings and continue the conversation where she left off. (Portia's silent aside with the Duke would command our full attention as these are the two most powerful players on the stage, either of whom can determine Antonio's fate.) A similar aside between the Duke and Portia could also take place again, after line 310, where Shylock says, 'Come, prepare!' Here the Duke could call Portia again, feeling that this has gone far enough, and now he wants closure. Thus, after this second aside, Portia is ready for her *coupe de grace*, and utters the lines, 'Tarry a little.'

122. As stated in the previous note, the following five lines are repetitive and could be deleted.

123. / Fully supports the given penalty / Gives full upholding to the penalty / Deems to fulfill the terms of penalty

‘Tis very true, O wise and righteous^o judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

—Portia [*to Antonio*]
Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

—Portia
‘Tis so. Are scales^o here to weigh the flesh? {balance}

—Shylock [*opening a bag to reveal them*]
I have them ready. 〈They are in my bag.〉

—Shylock [*looks at the bond*]
Is it so nominated in^o the bond? ¹²⁶ / specified within

—Portia
It is not so expressed, but what of that?^o / it
'Twere good you do so much out of compassion^o 127 128 {for charity}

—Shylock [*handing back the bond*]
I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond. ¹²⁹

—Portia

125. {Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge.}

126. / Is that condition listed in the bond? / Is that mentioned in the terms of the bond? / Is that specified in the written bond?

128. Portia, seeing the futility of trying to reason with Shylock—and his showing not one iota of compassion or mercy—now shifts her position and seeks to actuate her course of action against Shylock. She has given him every chance to be merciful and charitable—actions that are in line with higher principles—all of which he refused.

You, merchant,¹³⁰ have you anything to say?

—Antonio

But little. I am braced^o and well-prepared. {armed} / ready
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 e'er^o her way^o / ever {still her use}
To let the wretched^o man outlive his wealth, / des'late
To view with hollow^o eye and wrinkled brow / sunken
His final years of pain and^o poverty— / painful
But from the misery of this ling'ring penance
Doth she, <with bitter^o kindness,> now release me.^{131 132} / loving
Speak well of me^o unto your honored wife.¹³³
Tell her the story^o of Antonio's end. {process} / events
Say how I loved you, even at my death.^o {speak me fair in death}
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once been loved.^{o134} {a love} / a friend
Regret but you^o that you shall lose your friend; {Repent} // Regret one thing—¹³⁵
And he regrets^o not that he pays your debt: {repents}
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly^o with all my heart.¹³⁶ / willingly

—Bassanio

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Who^o is as dear to me as life itself; {Which}
But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not with me more dear than is^o thy life.¹³⁷ {esteemed above}

130. Portia calls Shylock by name on many occasions, but herein does not refer to Antonio impersonally as, 'you, merchant.' After the turning point [259]—when Portia gives up hope to try and dissuade Shylock from his inhumane course—she never again refers to him by name, but as the 'Jew.' During the trial, Portia refers to Antonio as 'the merchant,' [260, 296]; after Shylock is thwarted, she calls him by his proper name [369, 374].

131. / I am, by Fortune's kindness, now released. / I am, by her sweet kindness so delivered.

132. 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.}

a) / An age of poverty—and now she saves | Me from the ling'ring penance of such misery.

b) / Long years of aging pain and poverty | The misery from which I am now released.

c) / Long years of poverty, the ling'ring penance | Of which she now so kindly cuts from me.

d) / His final years of pain and poverty: | 'Tis from the misery of this lingering | Penance, which I am so kindly released. (/delivered).

133. {Commend me to you honourable wife}

134. {Whether Bassanio had not once a love}

love: a dear friend, friend who loved him

/ Whether Bassanio was not truly loved. / Whether or not Bassanio had been loved.

135. / Have one regret— / Hold one regret— / Regret alone

136. **with all my heart:** wholeheartedly; with total embrace; implies something done with total love and willingness. Here Antonio is saying, 'I'll pay your debts most willingly, without regret, with love, and wholeheartedly.'

/ I will most willingly give up my life / I will—with all my heart—give up my life

137. {Are not with me esteemed above thy life}

/ Are not with me more dear than is thy life. / Are not so dear to me as is thy life / I do not hold more dearly

I would give^o all, I'd^o sacrifice them all,
Here, to this devil, to deliver you.

{lose} / ay,

—Portia [*aside*]

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

/ Were she nearby

—Gratziano

I have a wife whom, I declare,^o I love.
I wish^o she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this dogged^o Jew. ¹³⁸

{protest}

{would}

{currish}

—Nerissa [*aside*]

'Tis well you offer it behind her back,
For^o such a wish would make a troubled^o house. ¹³⁹

/ Else {unquiet} / noisy

—Shylock

These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter— ¹⁴⁰
I'd prefer^o any kin^o of Barrabas ¹⁴¹
Had been^o her husband, rather than a Christian. ¹⁴²
We trifle^o time. I pray thee, pursue^o sentence. ¹⁴³

/ rather {stock}

/ Would be / To be

/ squander / play with

—Portia

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

—Shylock

Most rightful^o judge!

/ righteous > correct in judgement

—Portia

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

than thy life

138. Gratziano's plea is a comic relief—his friendly love for Antonio would not give him cause to sacrifice his wife on Antonio's behalf. His comment serves to support the theme of his pairing with Bassanio, a theme that was seen earlier (in the mutual wedding) and which we will see later (with the misplacement of rings). Gratziano's plea, though misplaced, also gives Shylock some fodder upon which to comment.

139. {The wish would make else an unquiet house}

unquiet: a) noisy—from all the screaming; b) restless, anxious, troubled

/ Else the wish 'twould make an unquiet house. / Else the wish would bring yelling in the house

140. Shylock still claims that he has a daughter. He has not disowned her, nor stated, 'she is dead to me'— which would usually be the case where a daughter married a Christian (and betrayed her father in doing so).

141. Barrabas: a thief chosen to be released over Jesus. Shylock (after seeing the way that Christians treat their wives) is saying that he would rather have the lowest of all Jews (a thief) marry his daughter rather than a) a Christian (even the highest among Christians), or b) a Christian thief such as Lorenzo.

142. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.294]

143. / I pray, proceed to sentence

—Shylock

Most learnèd judge! A sentence! [*To Antonio*] Come, prepare! ^{144 145}

Antonio is strapped to a chair.

Shylock prepares his blade. (Shylock approaches Antonio.) ^{146 147 148}

—Portia

Tarry a little— there is something else. ^{o149}

/ more

This bond doth gives thee here no drop^o of blood:

{jot}

The words expressly are, ^o ‘a pound of flesh.’

/ say

Take then 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, forfeited^o

{confiscate} / assigné / hereby sent

Unto the state of Venice.

—Gratziano

O upright judge!

144. This line is somewhat haunting in that Shylock is addressing Antonio right before he is about to kill him. A more haunting line would be one where Shylock calls Antonio by name, in a familiar tone, such as: ‘A learnèd judge. Come, Antonio, prepare.’

145. No stage direction follows this line in Q1. It reads:

Jew. Most learned Iudge, a sentence, come prepare.

Por. Tarry a little, there is some thing else,
this bond doth give thee heere no iote of blood,
the words expresly are a pound of flesh:

Most productions add staging (for dramatic effect) after Shylock’s says, ‘come prepare.’ We typically see Shylock take out his knife and approach Antonio, about to cut off his flesh, when Portia suddenly shouts out ‘Tarry a little!’—which brings a halt to Shylock’s immanent action. It is unlikely that the words, *tarry a little*, were intended to stop an action, as they are far too casual and lack the urgency. In Q1 these lingering words are a continuation of the verbal repartee and are not intended to halt any immanent action. The charge of *stop* or *wait* might be more apt a command to stop or stay an immanent action, if this were the author’s intent. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.301a]

146. Here is an alternative stage direction, which fulfills the premise that Shylock had no intention to kill Antonio, but only to teach him a ‘hard’ lesson:

Shylock circles around Antonio, menacingly, inspecting his breast. After tormenting Antonio in this way, prolonging the moment of his power, Shylock turns away, drops his sharpened knife onto a table and (with his back to the law/court) walks toward the chest of ducats that is sitting on the floor, ready to take his 900 ducats and depart

[See Additional Notes, 4.1.301b]

147. For the possible insertion of some added lines, see: Additional Notes, 4.1.300

148. There is an energetic break between lines 301 (Most learnèd judge) and 302 (Tarry a little)—as well as between 242 and 243—which suggests a pause and makes way for some staged action. One staging could be that Portia is summoned over to confer with the Duke (after 301) though such a displacement of the audience’s attention would slow the action and cripple the tension. More apt, Portia could watch Shylock’s action with a knowing smile—knowing that she has the power to stop Shylock whenever she deems it so.

149. / Tarry a little more—there’s something else

tarry a little: hold on, wait a moment, stick around a little more

This casual, lingering line could suggest a) that Portia has just found something in the books, such as a new way to read the letter of the law—which is very unlikely, or b) that, at this seemingly final moment, she has decided to play her trump card and bring up a legal argument which would thwart Shylock’s intended course. She could have brought up this legal argument at any time but—for the sake of Shylock and to test Bassanio—she played her course to the very end. Such a casual line would come at a moment of pause and not shouted out as a way to urgently stop some impending action. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.302]

—Portia [*raising her hand*]

Soft,^o he shall have all justice. Soft, no haste—^{155 156}

/ Wait / No

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

—Gratziano

O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge!

—Portia

Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh:

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a^o pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more

/ But a just

Or less than a just pound, be it by^o so much

{but}

As makes it light or heavy by the weight^o ¹⁵⁷

{in the substance}

Or the division of a twentieth part

Of one poor scruple^o—nay, if the scales do turn^o

/ gram / ounce¹⁵⁸ // tip / move

But in^o the measure^o of a single hair, ¹⁵⁹

/ Upon // distance / burden

Thou diest,^o and all thy goods will be taken.^o ¹⁶⁰

/ You'll die {are confiscate} / are forfeited

—Gratziano

A second Daniel. Here, O Jew, a Daniel!¹⁶¹

Now, infidel, I have thee in my grip.^o

{on the hip} ¹⁶²

—Portia

part of her own financial motivation? Her purpose to save Antonio has already been accomplished; her destruction of Shylock is something she herself—beyond the call of duty and purpose—has brought to bear.

155. **soft, no haste:** don't rush things, there is no need to take any rash actions—hold back and let the matter follow its course.

156. {Soft! The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.}

/ Soft, for the Jew shall have only justice / The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste!

The line, as it appears in Q1 and F [Soft, the Jew shall have all justice, soft no haste] is problematic in that it contains 11 syllables and does not conform to the standard meter, where the 4th syllable is emphatic. To correct this problem, most editions break the line into two, with one word [Soft!] on the first line, the additional ten syllables on the second line:

Por: Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.

157. / As that which makes it high or low in weight | By the

158. **a scruple:** a very small weight, equal to 1/24 oz.

159. {But in the estimation of a hair}

/ But in the measure equal to a hair / Upon the measured difference of a hair / By but the distance
(/measure) of a single hair

estimation: refers to some measure or value, either a) the distance that the indicator of the scale moves (if the balance indicator of the scales move by a distance of a hair, in either direction) or b) the weight of one hair (if one side weighs a hair more than the other).

160. / Of but one twentieth part of an ounce— | Nay, if the scales do tip upon the weight | Of but a single hair, then thou will die | And all thy goods will go unto the state.

161. {A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew}

162. **on the hip:** Refers to a wrestling term where one opponent has the other by the hip, and thus commands a position of advantage. It could also be stated: 'Now I have the better of you,' 'Now I have the advantage' or, more literally, 'Now I've got hold of you' or 'Now I've got a grip on you.' The same expression was used by Shylock when first referring to Antonio [1.3.43-44]: 'If I can catch him once upon the hip | I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.'—'If I can, but once, grab hold of him . . .'

Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

—Shylock

Give me my principle,^o and let me go.

/ the sum I'm owed

—Bassanio

I have it ready for thee—here it is.¹⁶³

—Portia [*to Bassanio*]

He hath refused it in the open court.^o

> publicly

He shall have only^o justice and his bond.¹⁶⁴

{merely}

—Gratziano

A Daniel! Still say I, a second Daniel!¹⁶⁵

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

—Shylock

Shall I not have even^o my principle?¹⁶⁶

{have barely}

—Portia

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,

To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.¹⁶⁷

—Shylock¹⁶⁸

Well then, the devil has made good of it!^o¹⁶⁹

/ has found his defender / cohort

163. {I have it ready for thee. Here it is}. Bassanio offers Shylock the money—and again Portia denies this offer. For Bassanio the matter is over, the fate of the 3000 ducats is unimportant (in light of Antonio being saved). Bassanio is not at all focused on Shylock nor interested in his fate, nor in Venetian justice, nor is he concerned with some legal maneuver to get out of paying Shylock—his only interest is Antonio [See Additional Notes, 4.1.333]

164. Portia is addressing Bassanio's offer, not Shylock. And, despite her husband's wishes, she is over-riding his generous and merciful offer. She, on the other hand is now protracting the case; it seems she has a new agenda—to destroy Shylock as opposed to simply saving Antonio (who is already saved). [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335]

165. Shylock likened Portia's judgement (when it sided with him) to that of Daniel. Here, when the tables have turned against him, Gratziano uses that same praise, calling Portia *a Daniel*. Daniel, like Portia, was a youth with the wisdom of an elder. He was so renowned for wisdom and knowledge that his name became a proverb among the Babylonians, 'As wise as Daniel' [Ezek. 28.3]. In the *Book of Daniel* [2.26], Daniel is named *Baltassar* (Hebrew: Belshazzar). Portia enters the court under the name *Balthasar* (or *Balthazar*).

166. When Shylock is thwarted from getting the penalty of the bond (which is a pound of flesh), he accepts the prior offer of thrice the principal. When this seems unlikely, he accepts defeat, and is ready to be done with the matter: thus, asking for the minimum amount he can expect, which is the return of his principle, the money he loaned out. Yet Portia refuses even this, and Shylock replies in disbelief.

167. / Which thou must take at thine own peril, Jew.

168. After Portia provides her superior position, Shylock markedly retreats. Rather than being defiant he gives no defense at all (and later we seem he as being even more sheepish when he, without protest or an appeal, meekly voices the words, *I am content*, after being stripped of his faith and his wealth. To appease the abrupt reversal of his demeanor, the following lines could be added:

 {And who works now to do the devil's bidding?—

 'Tis not a thief who comes by cover of night

 But one who walks in the full light of day,

 And hides beneath the ripe pretense of justice.}

/ Beneath the cozen pretenses of justice.

169. {Why then, the devil give him good of it!}

 > Why then, the devil has made good of it—has done some good work here.

{I'll stay no longer question}

—Portia Tarry, Jew,
The law hath yet another hold on you.¹⁷¹
It is enacted^o in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against a foreigner,^o¹⁷²
That by direct, or indirect, attempts,
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth conspire¹⁷⁴
Shall seize^o one half^o his goods; the other half
Comes^o to the private^o coffer^o of the state,
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
So granted by the Duke, whose word is final.^o¹⁷⁵
And now you stand in this predicament.^o

/ here written

{an alien}¹⁷³

{contrive} /thus has plotted

```
/ get    // come by half
```

```
/ Goes {privy} // treasury
```

/ very position

/ Why then, the devil's work has well been done! / Well then, to hell with you and all your justice! / Why then, I'm done—and to hell with it all!

170. {I'll stay no longer question}

question: to argue, to debate the case.

Here Shylock gives up, accepts defeat, and accepts the loss of his principle—and now, in a position of weakness, he is trying to make a quick exit (before some other surprise emerges.) But alas, he again hears the ominous words, *Tarry, Jew*.

171. The Authorship Question revolves around the question, ‘Who wrote the plays attributed to ‘William Shakespeare’?’ There is a question with respect to authorship since there is no evidence that William Shakespeare, the actor, actually wrote the plays—and much to suggest that he did not—other than the fact that his name (or some embodiment of it) appears upon most of the plays contained in the canon. The basis of the argument that William Shakespeare, the actor, did not (or could) write the plays that bear his name (and that the name ‘William Shakespeare’ was a pen name for someone else—perhaps someone of high standing who did not want his or her name associated with the plays—is as follows: a) Shakespeare, the actor, did not have the means nor the wherewithal to write the plays, b) there is no evidence of any manuscript, nor any portion thereof, written in the hand of Shakespeare (nor anyone else for that matter), c) that he lacked a university education, and moreover was without access to the source material used for most of the plays (which could only have been secured through a university library), and d) that he could not read Italian—as many of his plays’s source materials, including the major source for this play, were written in Italian and not available in English during Shakespeare’s time.

I bring up the Authorship Question here, because in my mind, the change in the original text, by the author, in this very place, may offer a clue as to the true author. In the source novella, (*Il Perecone*) upon which the story of *The Merchant of Venice* is based, the Jewish usurer is defeated by the wits of the female judge, the merchant is saved, and the Jew leaves the court with nothing, not even his principal. Here, the author radically departs from the source story, and adds additional proceedings, whereby the Jew is not only defeated but destroyed—both in terms of his wealth and his Judaism. The forced conversion of Shylock was something not found in the source story, and something added by the author. This ‘resolution’ may offer some fodder in terms of the Authorship Question.

For mine own part, I am of the opine—which comes after much review and my own insights—that Mary Sidney Herbert was the true author of the plays, and that William Shakespeare (an actor in the company of Lord Chamberlain, and known to Mary Sidney) loaned his name to the canon of plays that she did not want her high-standing name associated with. Such anonymity would also give her more freedom to truly express herself and her ideas—most of which were in support of the superiority of women. Even in this play, all the men need the help of a woman, who can only accomplish her task (and be taken seriously) when in the guise of a man. [See Additional Note. 4.1.342]

172. Shylock is held to be an *alien*, and not a *citizen*.

173. **alien:** refers to foreigners and non-Venetians. Jews, at the time, were not allowed to own property in Venice and were therefore held as ‘aliens.’

174. / The party 'gainst whom he hath so contrived

175. {Of the Duke only 'gainst all other voice}

/ So granted by the Duke, whose word is final / Of the good Duke, who has the final word / Of the Duke—and his word's above all others / Of the Duke's favor, 'bove all other voices

/ And the offender's life lies in what mercy | Is bestowed by the Duke

For it appears, by all that has transpired,^{o 176 177}
 That indirectly, and directly, too,^o
 Thou hast contrived against the very life
 Of the defendant,^o and thou hast incurred
 The penalty, by me, formerly stated.^{o178}
 Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke. ¹⁷⁹

/ occurred / that's taken place
 / That both directly, and indirectly

/ this same merchant
 / erstwhile described

—Gratziano ¹⁸⁰

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself!
 And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 Thou hast not sums enough to buy the rope.^o
 Therefore, thou must be hanged at the state's charge. ¹⁸¹

{not left the value of the cord}

—Duke

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
 I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
 For half thy wealth—it is Antonio's;
 The other half comes^o to the general state,
 Which humbleness may drive unto^o a fine. ¹⁸²

/ As for thy wealth, one half goes to Antonio.
 / goes
 / lesson to

—Portia

Ay, for the state, and for what it is owed,^{183 184}
 〈Still half the Jew's wealth goes unto Antonio.^o〉

{Ay, for the state, not for Antonio}
 / the merchant

—Shylock¹⁸⁵

176. / For it appears, as all those here have witnessed

177. {In which predicament I say thou stand'st; | For it appears by manifest proceeding}

/ And this predicament is one in which

Thou stand. For it appears, by these proceedings^o / by your own actions / all we've witnessed

/ And this predicament, I say, is one | In which thou stand. As everyone has witnessed

/ And this, I say, is the predicament | In which thou stand. For it has so appeared, | By the proceedings,
 witnessed here by all

178. {The danger formerly by me rehearsed}

/ The penalty that I have erstwhile stated / The punishment of which I have just stated

179. Again, we see that Portia's actions—aiming to harm Shylock—go beyond the call of what was needed to free Antonio. We can only surmise that her intention changed midstream after she encountered Shylock, a person whose demeanor, vengefulness, and complete lack of mercy was alien and offensive to Portia's human sentiments. As such, she found herself newly motivated—after she had delivered Antonio—to now try and destroy or diminish this abhorrent person.

180. As part of the staging, Gratziano could run over to 'help' Shylock get down on his knees.

181. For some dialogue which could be included here, see Additional Notes: 4.1.363

182. / Lest humbleness reduce it to a fine.

183. / Ay, only the portion^o the state is owed / that for which

184. Here Portia is revealing her position. Why is Portia making sure that Antonio be given half of Shylock's money? What is her agenda in assuring this outcome? Why not have the Duke forgive the whole amount—both the state's and Antonio's—or simply drive both “unto a fine”? Why is Portia laboring to get Antonio half of Shylock's money? [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335] 4.1.369 ???

185. Original passage—which is replaced herein—reads:

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

‘Tis more esteemed^o that^o you take a man’s life / preferred / fitting
 Than cast him into hellish poverty.
 You take^o my wealth, the labor of my life, / have
 The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope—
 Nay, rather show^o your Christian charity, / Rather show me
 And kill me now. ^{o186} 187 188 / Nay, show your Christian mercy—kill me now!

—Portia
 What mercy can you render him, Antonio? ¹⁸⁹

—Gratziano
 A noose, for free^o—and nothing else, for God’s sake! ¹⁹⁰ {A halter, gratis.}

—Antonio
 So please my lord, the Duke, to hear the state^o {and all the court}
 Forgive^o the fine for one half of his goods. {To quit} / to drop
 I am content with that,¹⁹¹ so long as he
 Will let me use the other half in trust

When you do take the means whereby I live.

house: in the first instance, it is used in the biblical sense of one’s ancestral lineage or the ‘the house of Abraham’; in the second instance it refers to Shylock’s house (or symbolically, his life) and the wealth (prop) which sustains or supports it.

186. / And kill me now, right where I stand.

187. The emended passage was derived from Marlow’s, *The Jew of Malta*, and echos the sentiment found in Shakespeare’s original. It is possible that Shakespeare fashioned Shylock’s lines after those of Marlow’s Barabas, who uttered these lines after losing all his money:

Bar: Why I esteem the injury far less,
 To take the lives of miserable men,
 Than be the causers of their misery;
 You have my wealth, the labor of my life,
 The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope;
 And there ne’er distinguish of the wrong.

188. This plea is somewhat imprecise since all of Shylock’s wealth had not been taken—only half. (In Marlow’s play, Barabas makes such a plea after all his wealth is taken). Shylock is still a rich man and able to sustain his house. What kind of mercy is Antonio being asked to show? Shylock has already managed to retain half his wealth (less a small fine). Is Antonio being asked to forgive his deserved half or a portion thereof? If so, will Shylock pay nothing for his crime of attempted murder? In all fairness, he needs to suffer some loss, to pay in some way for his crime—and perhaps the loss he suffers (as in all previous versions of the story) is the loss of his principle, which in this case is the large sum of 3000 ducats. In the end, Antonio’s ‘show of mercy,’ called upon by the Duke, delivers Shylock to a much worse position than he was in before Antonio was called on to show his mercy. Before, Shylock lost his principle and half his wealth; after, Shylock lost his principle, half his money was put into a trust, and he was forced to convert to Christianity—which deprived him of his faith, his lifestyle, his livelihood, (usury), and the support of his fellow Jews.

189. Shylock’s plea may have softened Portia, who a few moments before was quick to make certain that the Duke’s forgiveness only extended so far as the state, and not Antonio. Here, her very questioning of Antonio for mercy, prompts a merciful response; she just as easily could have held to her previous position, assigned half the wealth to Antonio (without asking him for mercy—as the Duke’s forgiveness of half the penalty was merciful enough), and dismiss the court. As it turns out, this request of Antonio to show mercy—wherein his brand of mercy was Shylock’s forced conversion to Christianity (as found in the original play)—was a grave punishment for Shylock. Thus, it would have been better for Shylock had no such request of Antonio been made—and had he not made such a heartened plea to the court. (As mentioned, only half his wealth had been taken, but he was his plea seemed as though all his wealth had been taken).

190. For additional lines, see Additional Notes, 4.1.379

191. Antonio is ‘content’ and agrees with the Duke’s show of mercy, that the state forgives the fine for one half of Shylock’s wealth—under the condition that Antonio gets the other have to use in trust.

To give, upon his death, unto the Christian¹⁹² Xxx
 Who, as of late,^o did steal away^o his daughter.¹⁹³ / recently
 And two conditions more:^o that for this favour^{o194} {Two things provided more} / kindness
 He presently forswear^o all acts of usury.^{o 195} / renounce {become a Christian}¹⁹⁶
 <That he may garner a more Christian kindness.^o> / cultivate a Christian kindness
 The other, that he do record a gift,
 Which leaves, upon his death, all his possession,¹⁹⁷
 Unto his son Lorenzo, and his daughter.

—Duke

192. {I am content, so he will let me have | The other half in use, to render it | Upon his death, unto the gentleman}
 / I am content with that, so long as I | Can use the other half in trust, and give it | Upon his death . . .
 / The other half I am hereby content | To use in trust, and then to render it | Upon his death . . .

193. {That lately stole his daughter}
 The original line is short, containing three iambs as opposed to five.
 / That, as of late, did steal away his daughter.

194. Antonio has provided a meager ‘favour’ to Shylock: instead of taking half his wealth he is going to have the money put into a trust (which Antonio manages). This arrangement is set up by Antonio to preserve the principal, so that Lorenzo (and Jessica) will have some assured wealth when Shylock dies. The benefit afforded to Shylock with this arrangement—which is unclear—would be if Shylock were the beneficiary of any profit gained from the management of the trust. Hence, the most favorable arrangement set up by Antonio would be as follows: Shylock would put up half his money in trust, Antonio would manage the money, Shylock would gain whatever profit was made, and Lorenzo and Jessica would receive the principal upon Shylock’s death.

195. The original line reads: ‘He presently become a Christian.’ This forced conversion of Shylock is the most controversial and problematic line in the play. Such a conversion was not found in any of the source stories used by Shakespeare (such as the plays major source, *Il Perecone*). In those versions the Jewish money-lender is foiled, the bond is forfeit, the merchant is saved, and the Jew loses his principal—and he storms out of court in defeat. The conversion of Shylock is wholly Shakespeare’s addition—and rather than ‘the Jew’ storming out of court, he leaves an enfeebled and broken man. Some productions use this destructive ending to further present Shylock as a victim, while some productions chose to delete this controversial line altogether. The primary reason I have deleted it—and replaced it with a sanction barring Shylock from the practice of usury—is that the line as it now stands is unnecessary, confusing, and diminishes the character of both Antonio and Shylock. This forced conversion would likely be interpreted—certainly from a Jewish point of view—as a brutal and vengeful act by Antonio, which was probably the opposite of his charitable, yet partial, intention. All of Antonio’s actions, thus far, have been identifiably noble and generous—and displays of Christian charity: this line, however, is not likely to be interpreted as such. The line also diminishes Shylock who does not argue with such a directive; rather he leaves the stage broken and stripped of all dignity. Some productions, wishing to show Shylock as a character more sinned against than sinning, may use this conversion as a way to bring pity to the plight of Shylock and thus try to appease the anti-Semitic sentiment of the play. Such a course does not allow us to reveal the vengeful and self-defeating psyche of Shylock’s character—which has nothing whatsoever to do with his Jewishness.

In this rectification, I have made it clear that the whole of Antonio’s dispute with Shylock is founded upon his usury, not his Jewishness. Thus, Antonio’s forcing Shylock to convert to Christianity obscures and displaces the real issue, as it is now presented as a difference between Christianity and Judaism (rather than Antonio’s Christian ideal verses the morally bereft practice of usury). One could assume that Shylock’s obsession with revenge, and the self-destruction which follows, came about by his usurious mindset (one of greed, deception, and other virtue-less qualities), or perhaps a character flaw—or an exaggerated reaction to his own feelings of oppression—rather than anything involving his Jewishness. In fact, he labors to entertain these notions—which defy his inherent Jewish sense of righteousness—despite his Jewishness, in defiance of his Jewish nature. (In other words, his Jewish soul causes him to know that his actions are wrong, but his flawed understanding of Judaism, and his injured soul, causes him to go against his own faith and what he knows to be right. So conflicted is he, that he must resort to extreme measures in order to keep his illicit course, such as swearing to God that he will kill Antonio.)

In the end, Antonio’s intention with this conversion may be merciful—and may be intended to show his mercy—at least to a Christian audience. He may be trying to save Shylock’s hell-bound Jewish soul, for Shylock’s own good—even if he has to do this by force. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.383] [For further discussion on Shylock’s forced conversion see Appendix.

196. A production that preserves Shylock’s conversion, could have him voice a few lines of protest rather than the presenting—as in the original—a stark implosion of his character and an uncharacteristically sheepish acceptance of his fate. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.382]

197. {Here in the court, of all he dies possessed} / Here in the court, which leaves all owned at death / In court, that all he owns at death will go / Here in the court, all he owns at his death,

He shall do this or else I do recant
The pardon that I just^o pronouncèd here.

/ withdraw / retract
{late} // The pardon I of late

—Portia
Art thou contented Jew? ¹⁹⁸ What dost thou say?

—Shylock
I am content. ¹⁹⁹

—Portia [*to Nerissa*] Clerk, write^o a deed of gift. {draw} > draw up / write up

—Shylock
I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. ²⁰⁰ Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

—Duke Get thee gone,^o but do it. / You may go

—Gratziano [*to Shylock*]
Had I been judge, thou would not walk from court:
I would have found twelve men to make a jury
Who, upon finding you guilty, would drag
You by the feet straightway^o unto the gallows. ²⁰¹ / a-straight / away / direct

198. Portia is still calling Shylock ‘Jew.’ Though, in the original, where he must convert to Christianity, we see that the ‘conversion’ is merely a glossing over; Shylock will, at heart and in secret—and in the eyes of all Christians—remain a Jew. Even his daughter, who married a Christian, and willingly converted to Christianity, is still regarded by her fellow Christians as an ‘infidel’ [3.2.216]—a Jew masquerading as a Christian.

199. At this point, Shylock is portrayed as a broken man—having been stripped of half his wealth and forced (without a fight) to convert to Christianity. Here he utters a feckless and feeble, *I am content*, simply mouthing back Portia’s own words, without any hint of protest. It may be that Shylock’s quick acceptance may be a result of calculation rather than total defeat: he may be wanting to protect the money he has left and avoid opening himself up to, yet unknown, further harm. His words, *I am content*, surely belies his true position—he is not content. He might be thinking: ‘I am content to say ‘I am content.’ But as for the Christian duplicity—cheating me of my earned wealth, I am very far from being content.’

200. In productions where Shylock is a ‘broken man,’ he is not well—and because he is not well, and feeling sickly—he desires to leave the court. In productions where Shylock is still intact, this is clearly a rouse to get himself out of the court and removed from harm’s way. *I am not feeling well* is decidedly a cliché excuse, which cannot be taken at face value. Like the mouthed words, *I am content*, Shylock’s *I am not well* is not likely to express his true state.

201. In the original, where Shylock is converted to Christianity, Gratziano refers to the ‘mercy’ of Shylock’s upcoming baptism:

{In christ’ning shalt thou have two godfathers.
Had I been the judge, thou shouldst have had ten more—
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.}

An emended version of this passage might read as follows:

/ In christening^o shalt thou have two godfathers. / baptism
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more—
To make a jury which, finding you guilty,
‘Twould bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

Gratziano is saying: Besides the two godfathers (who will accompany you at baptism) I, being judge, would have rather asked for ten more men, to make up a jury of twelve men, who would then find you guilty of the charge and bring you to the gallows (to be hanged) instead of to the font (to be baptized).

Exit Shylock ²⁰²

—Duke [*to Portia*]

Sir, I entreat you with me home for dinner.

—Portia

I humbly do request^o your grace of^o pardon.

{desire} / graceful

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is best^o I presently set forth.^o

{meet} / fitting I set forth at once

—Duke

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, fully thank^o this gentleman^o

{gratify} // thank wholeheartedly this man

For, in my mind, you are much in his debt.^o ²⁰³

{much bound to him}

Exeunt Duke and his attendants

—Bassanio [*to Portia*]

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend

Have, by your wisdom, been this day delivered^o

{acquitted} / relieved

From grievous penalties, in lieu whereof,

Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew, ²⁰⁴

We freely give^o for all your courteous^o pains. ²⁰⁵

/ We give to you // gracious

—Antonio

Yet, over and above, in love and service, ²⁰⁶

We stand forevermore within your debt.^o ²⁰⁷ ²⁰⁸

/ indebted to you evermore

—Portia [*refusing*]

He is well-paid who^o is well-satisfied,

{that}

And I, in helping you,^o am satisfied,

{delivering you}

And therein do account myself well-paid.

202. Shylock's exit determines the amount of sympathy the audience has for him. He could glumly walk out of the court, leaving behind his bag. He could be jeered at as he walks out. Or, more brutally, Gratiano could literally grab Shylock 'by the hip,' wrestle him to the ground, and then (along with several helpers) drag him out of court by his feet. (When tackled to the ground, Shylock drops his bag. It could be emptied and mockingly placed over his head. Then the faceless Shylock is dragged out of court.).

203. / Antonio, give your fullest gratitude | To this man; thinks me you're much in his debt.

204. / Have, by the wisdom you've shown us this day, | Been spared of grievous penalties; in lieu / Whereof, three thousand ducats owed the Jew,

205. {We freely cope your courteous pains withal}

/ We freely offer you for all your pains. / We freely give to you for all your pains.

cope: match, give in exchange for

206. / O'er and above,^o in both love and in service / Far and beyond

207. / We stand forever indebted to you / We stand here now forever in your debt

208. {And stand indebted, over and above | In love and service to you evermore.}

It ne'er did cross^o my mind to ask for payment. ²⁰⁹ / never crossed
 [to Bassanio] I pray you 'know' me when we meet again. ²¹⁰
 I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

—Bassanio ²¹¹
 Dear sir, perforce^o I must beseech^o you further—²¹² { of force} {attempt} / now urge
 Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
 Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
 Not to deny me this kind-hearted^o offer / a sincere and kind
 And here to pardon me for such insistence.^o ²¹³ / persistence // being so bold

—Portia
 You press me far,^o and therefore I will yield: / hard / deep
 Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake. ²¹⁴ / to oblige you
 And for your love, I'll take this ring from you. ²¹⁵
 [he draws back his hand]
 Do not draw back your hand—I'll take no more. ²¹⁶
 And you, in love, shall not deny me this! ²¹⁷

—Bassanio
 This ring, good sir, alas it is^o a trifle. ²¹⁸ / is but
 I will not shame myself to give you this.

—Portia

209. {My mind was never yet more mercenary}
 / My mind was never bent on compensation / hope of payment / on recompense

210. **know me:** a) recognize me, b) make love with me.
 This word is found in a biblical context, as in 'Adam *knew* Eve.' Portia is saying, 'I pray (hope) you know me in a different way (as husband and wife) when we meet again.' She might also be saying: 'I pray (hope) you make love with me when we meet again'—as you failed to do so on our wedding night."

211. Some productions have Bassanio run after Portia, and these lines are delivered without Antonio being immediately present. Other productions have the dialogue continues with Antonio present.

212. / Dear sir, please wait, I must insist again—

213. {Not to deny me, and to pardon me.}

214. Many editions add the stage direction, [to Antonio], indicating that Antonio is present and that Portia is requesting of him his gloves. This is possible, however, it is likely that Portia requests the gloves from Bassanio, as Antonio may not be sporting a pair of gloves at this time. If Bassanio is wearing gloves, then Portia's request would be apt, because the removal of Bassanio's gloves would then reveal his ring. This is the real intention of why Portia would ask for Bassanio's gloves—so she can see, and then ask for, his ring. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.422]

215. **for your love:** A customary politeness, which, in the usual sense would mean, 'as a token of your love,' or 'as a sign of your affection and/or gratitude.'

take this ring: A more forceful position than, 'I'll accept this ring.' *Take* is used here in contrast to *give*: Portia's initial statement, which placed the ring on Bassanio's finger—and the giving of herself and all she owned to him—was *I give them with this ring*. [3.2.171]. She is here playing the one who *gives* and the one who *takes*—as opposed to the more docile figure who would *receive*.

216. **I'll take no more:** Here she light-heartedly suggests to Bassanio that he need not be afraid, she will not take his hand, just the ring. Ironically, Bassanio later thinks to cut off his own hand (and say he lost the ring in a fight) in order to avert Portia's rage at him for giving away the ring. [5.1.177-78].

217. **in love:** in kindness. It could mean, 'you, in the name of love.' This statement carries an ironic overtone, for Bassanio in giving away the ring *in love* to the doctor, is symbolically giving away his love for Portia (who gave him the ring).

218. / This ring good sir?—Alas it is a trifle.

I will have nothing else, but only this;
And now, methinks, I have a wish for it.^o

{I have a mind to it} / I am quite fond of it

—Bassanio

There's more depends on this than on the value.²¹⁹
The dearest^o ring in Venice will I give you;
And find it out by searching through the city.^{o 220}
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

> most expensive
{by a public announcement}

—Portia

I see, sir, you are liberal^o in offers.²²¹
You taught^o me first to beg and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should^o be answered.²²²

/ generous
/ urged
/ must

—Bassanio

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

{should} / never

—Portia

That 'scuse^o serves^o many men to save their gifts.²²³
And if your wife be not a madwoman,²²⁴
And know how well I have deserved this ring,²²⁵
She would not bear you enmity^o forever²²⁶
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

/ ploy // helps

{hold out enemy} / hold her angriness

Exeunt Portia and Nerissa

—Antonio

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.²²⁷

219. This ring has more upon it than its value / This ring holds something more than outer value

220. {And find it out by proclamation}

/ And find it through a public advertisement / And go in search of it both near and far

Bassanio offers to find the most valuable ring in Venice by way of proclamation (making an announcement or distributing a printed advertisement). This offer suggests the great lengths that Bassanio is willing to go through in order to find another ring (a much more valuable ring), even to suggest the image of Bassanio standing in a public square, yelling out (by proclamation) that he seeks to buy the most valuable ring in Venice.

221. > You are liberal (only) in what you offer but not in what you actually give (once the offer is accepted).

222. / You answer me now as you would a beggar

223. / By that excuse, a man may save his gift.

224. / And if your wife be not wrought^o with madness / tinged / struck

225. / Should she know how well I deserved this ring

226. {She would not hold out enemy for ever}

hold out enemy: hold you as an enemy; hate you; be angry with you

/ She would not be your enemy forever / She'd not be angry at you forever / She would not hold a long grudge against you

227. **My Lord:** a formal term which appeals to Bassanio's newfound status—and refers to his being lord over his house and his wife. A more likely expression may have been, 'My dear Bassanio.'

Let his deservings^o and my love for you^o
Be valued 'gainst^o the vow made to^o your wife. ²²⁸

{withal} / in all
/ weighed against

—Bassanio [*gives the ring to Gratziano*]

Go, Gratziano, run and overtake him.

Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,^o

/ and bid him dine with us

Unto Antonio's house. Away! Make haste!

Exit Gratziano

Come now dear friend,^o it seems the world is right,

/ my dearest one

'Tis time we^o cheer and laugh into night;^o

/ Now let us // all through the night

When morning comes,^o to Belmont we will go,

/ And when dawn breaks

In bliss and freedom^o—come Antonio. ^{229 230 231}

/ In blessed freedom

Exeunt

228. {Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment}

/ Be weighed against the vow you made your wife / the promise made to your wife

229. Oftentimes a rhyming couplet is used to mark the close of a scene. However, in this most significant scene, the original provides no such couplet. To emphasize closure of the scene, a rhyming couplet has been added. Q1 reads as follows: {Come, you and I will go thither presently.

And in the morning, early, we will both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio. }

230. / And in the morning, early we will go
And fly^o to Belmont. Come, Antonio.

/ Flying / Away / Onward

/ When morning comes, to Belmont we will fly,
Without a care, together, you and I.

231. / Come my Antonio, all the world is right;
Now let us cheer with friends into the night.
And in the morning, early, will we go

/ all is now set right / everything's alright

/ Flying to Belmont, bereft of all woe.
/ Come, you and I have finishèd^o this plight,
Now let us cheer with friends into^o the night.
Unto your house, let's go, without delay
And fly to Belmont 'pon the break of day.

/ with no care to show.
/ are over with / are finished with
/ all through

ACT FOUR - Scene 2

*A street in Venice. Enter Portia and Nerissa, still in disguise*¹

—Portia

Inquire the way unto the Jew's abode,² / Find out
And have him sign the deed. We'll then away³ / We'll leave tonight
And be at home a day before our husbands.
This deed will be a blessing^o to Lorenzo. {well welcome}

Enter Gratziano

—Gratziano

Fair sir, at last, I have ov'rtaken you.^o⁴ / I have caught up with you
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,^o / reflection > consideration
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat / request
Your company at dinner.

—Portia

That cannot be . . .⁵
<For we must leave for Padua tonight.^o> / at once
But I accept his ring^o most thankfully, {His ring I do accept}
And so^o I pray you tell him. Furthermore, / thus
I pray you show my youth old Shylock's house.

—Gratziano

That I will do.

1. Of course, Portia, who was called in to settle the matter between Shylock and Antonio, would not be involved in the tedious administration of drafting the deed of gifts nor would she be sent to Shylock's house to have it signed by him—especially not after she brought him to ruin. In addition, the fact that Portia has no legal experience would be revealed had she anything to do with the drafting of Shylock's deed of gift. All the more unlikely that Portia would be involved with the drafting and execution of the deed of gift, since she was not of Venice and she was keen on returning to Padua. Yet, despite the unlikelihood of the scene, it is needed to allow time for Nerissa to obtain her ring from Gratziano, and also allow her time to get hold of the deed of gift to give to Lorenzo.

2. / Inquire directions unto the Jew's house / Have someone show you the way to the Jew's house

3. {Inquire the Jew's house out, give him the deed | And let him sign it. We'll away tonight.}

4. {Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en} **o'erta'en**: overtaken. Q1: ore-tane

Some editors feel that this line was truncated so that Gratziano had a chance to regain his breath, after a chase. The pause, however, is not warranted, and the shortened line (along with the awkward contraction, 'o'erta'en, —may be a result of an unreadable portion of text. Since this truncated line add no appreciable meaning to the iambic pentameter has been restored.

/ Fair sir, I have at last, caught up with you. / Fair sir, I've come upon you at last. Hence,

5. The subject of Portia's negation ('that cannot be') is unclear: it could refer to her disbelief that Bassanio gave up his ring and/or to the impossibility of her joining Bassanio for dinner (though, if this be her intent, then the response 'I cannot' would bring more clarity. (The Duke had already entreated her to join him for dinner—which she humbly pardoned herself [397-400] so there would be no way for her accept Bassanio's invitation. Obviously Bassanio did not near the Duke's prior invitation nor Portia's reply).

The most likely playing of this line is for Portia to speak the words in disbelief (to others or bemuseingly to herself)—it referring to Bassanio having given up his ring. But then she catches herself, pauses, and qualifies her previous line as a reference to her not being able to meet Bassanio for dinner. In the original, the reference of 'that cannot be' is uncertain, though it later seems to refer to the dinner invitation. In the rectification, a clarifying line has been added to make her intent more explicit— and to support the staging which is suggested above.

—Nerissa [to *Portia*] Sir, I would° speak with you? / may I
[*aside*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep forever.

—Portia [to *Nerissa*]
Thou mayst,° I'm sure. And then we'll have much° swearing° / You shall {old} / all
That they did give the rings away to men.
But we'll outstare° them and outswear them too. {outface}
Away! Make haste! Thou know'st where I will tarry.° / wait / be

Exit

—Nerissa [to *Gratziano*]
Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

Exeunt

ACT FIVE - Scene One ¹

Portia's house in Belmont. A garden. Moonlight.

—Lorenzo

The moon shines bright. On ^o such a night as this,	{In}
When the sweet ^o wind did gently kiss the trees—	/ soft
And they did make no noise. On such a night	
Did young ^o prince Troilus mount ^o the Trojan walls	/ climb
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,	
Where Cressid lay that night. ²	/ Where his beloved lay / Where his Cressida lay

—Jessica	On ^o such a night,	{In} ³
Did Thisbe go to meet with Pyramus; ^o		/ her beloved
But saw the lion's shadow ere his frame ^o		{himself}
And ran away in fright. ^o		{And ran away dismayed}

—Lorenzo	On such a night,	
Queen Dido stood upon the wild shore ^o		{wild sea banks}

1. As it stands, Act Five is much too long, and most productions seek ways to reduce it.. (Before 1900 (xxx) it was common practice to simply delete the whole of Act Five—an overly-aggressive maneuver which leaves too much of the play ‘hanging.’ This, however, was favored to leaving the audience burdened and dissipated by an overly protracted Act Five.)

One way to reduce the length of Act Five is to export the whole of Lorenzo’s and Jessica’s dialogue, and have it replace 3.5. (Specifically, 5.1.1-21 and 5.1.54-110, could be exported). As such, the scene would open at 5.1.88 with the entrance of Portia and Nerissa. To further shorten Act Five, the scene could open at 5.1.110, with the entrance of Lorenzo and Jessica, from one side, and Portia and Nerissa from the other:

Lor: Is that dear Portia? Lady, welcome home!
Por: We have been praying for our husband’s welfare
Which speed we hope the better for our words.
Has my husband returned?
Lor: Madam, not yet:
But there is come a messenger before
To signify their coming.
Por: Lorenzo, Jessica—quickly go in
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence.

In this reduction of Act Five Lorenzo and Jessica would exit after line 122 [*Lor:* ‘We are no telltales, madam, fear not’] and re-enter after 288 [*Por:* How now Lorenzo?]. The action of having Lorenzo and Jessica exit (to inform the servants) accomplishes two things: a) it resolves the anomaly of line 117 where Portia instructs Nerissa to ‘give order’ to the servants but, because Nerissa is involved in the following action, she cannot leave the stage to accomplish this task; and b) it allows Lorenzo and Jessica to leave the stage and not dissipate the action by their presence (for none of the following dialogue, over 150 lines of it, [123-287] involve Lorenzo and Jessica. The pair’s later re-entrance (a few minutes later) could come after 288, as Portia ask, ‘How now Lorenzo?’ which is a perfect greeting for a character’s entrance upon the stage. In addition, the resolution involving the misgiven rings contains repetitions, and could be reduced: a) delete 32 lines: 192-217 and 229-233 and 235, or b) delete 11 lines: 207-217.

2. / Methinks the Trojan prince Troilus did mount
The city walls, and sighed his soul toward
The Grecian tents below, where his beloved
Cressida lay that night.

3. Every verse in this night game begins with ‘In such a night’ rather than ‘On such a night.’

/ Holding a willow, and

/ did bring

{an unthrift love} / wasteful love⁸
{As far as Belmont}

{And ne'er a true one}

/ but then she was forgiven.

{out-night}¹⁰
{footing} / footsteps

Enter Stephano, a messenger

4. {Stood Dido with a willow in her hand | Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love | To come again to Carthage}

/ Stood the forsaken queen Dido upon | The wild shore wafting her love to return,
/ Stood queen Dido, with willow in her hand, | Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
/ Upon the banks of a billowing sea | Stood the forsaken queen Dido, wafting | Her beloved to return.

5. An additional line, concerning the legend, could be added: *⟨ But alas, | Aeneas ne'er returned. ⟩*

6. An additional line could be added: *‘Yet Jason still left her for Creon’s daughter.’*

7. It is revealing that the lovers, shown together for the first time, only cite stories and legends which tell of betrayal, abandonment, and tragedy—all ending in death. Thus, the outer appearance of harmony belies the underlying turmoil of the two lovers. Perhaps the author has used this game of free-association as a way to reveal some of this unspoken, yet looming, inner conflict.

It is interesting to note that the portions of the legends recalled by these two lovers tell only of the romanticized aspects—such as the images of the legends that take place under the full moon. Yet, when the full scope of these stories are revealed, we see that they all end in tragedy. Outwardly, Lorenzo and Jessica are surrounded by the lush gardens of Belmont, christened by the moonlight—which allows them the luxury of a borrowed moment. Soon they must give up this moon lite world and face the harsh reality of their situation. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.13] [See Appendix: “Night Game” for summaries of the four legends].

8. **unthrift love:** a) a poor or wasteful lover, or love, (such as Lorenzo) or b) a wasteful, carefree (or extravagant) kind of love that is unconcerned with wealth; a love with spends now and is not concerned with the future.

9. {and he forgave it her}

10. **out-night:** outplay you (in mention of all these things that the night reminds us of)

11. / I would outplay you at this night game—but | Listen, I hear the stepping of a man.

—Lorenzo

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?¹²

—Stephano

A friend.

—Lorenzo What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend? ¹³

—Stephano

Stephano is my name, and I bring word:

My mistress will, before the break of day,

Be here at Belmont. She doth pause nearby^o

The holy crosses where^o she kneels and prays ¹⁴

For happy wedlock hours.

{stray about} / stop beside

/ Each holy cross, and there

—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, and we have not heard from him.

But go we in,^o I pray thee, Jessica

And, with respect and love,^o let us prepare

Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

/ But let's go in

{ceremoniously} / with good graciousness

Trumpet sound, made by Launcelet, is heard offstage.

Enter Launcelet

—Launcelet

Da-doo! Da-doo! Wo ha ho! Do-ta-da-do-ta-da-doooo! ¹⁵

12. This line has five iambs which, when combined with the next line (of one iamb), creates a line of six iambs. To rectify this, one iamb could be removed. Hence: / Who comes in silence of the night? / Who comes to break the night's silence? / Who comes so fast to break the silence?

13. The original seems to have a stray iamb, which suggests that the phrase, 'a friend,' was mistakenly repeated by Lorenzo. Q1 reads as follows:

Mess: A friend!

Lor: A friend, what friend? Your name I pray you friend?

Rectified:

Mess: A friend!

Lor: What friend? Your name I pray you friend?

14. {She doth stray about | By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays}

15. {Sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!}

Some commentators hold that this is an imitation of a post horn and that Launcelet is mouthing this tune to announce the arrival of himself, as a postman or courier ('a post'), who has come to deliver a message. *Sola* is used as a hunting cry in *Love's Labor Lost* and Launcelet could be imitating this cry or bleating out the sound of a hunting horn. *Wo ha, ho* is used as a falconer's call. What we have here, then, is another case of Launcelet's mis-mashing. Consistent with the fool's with mocking and irreverent tone—found amply in 3.5, and also in the next few lines— it

—Lorenzo Who calls?

—Launcelet Da-doo! Did you see Master Lorenzo? [*calling*] Master Lorenzo! Da-doo, Da-doo!¹⁶

—Lorenzo Leave^o hollering^o man: I am here!¹⁷ /Stop {halloaing}

—Launcelet Where? Where?^{18 19}

—Lorenzo Here!

—Launcelet
Tell him there's a messenger^o come from my master, with his mouth^o full of good news. My master will be here before the morning.²⁰ messenger: {post} mouth: {horn}

Exit

—Lorenzo
Sweet soul, let's in^o and there await^o their coming. {expect}
And yet no matter—why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, please announce,^o I pray you, {signify}/ please tell them
Within the house, their mistress is at hand,^o / soon approaches / is nearby

may be that Launcelet is parodying a tucket, which is a distinct trumpet signature played to announce the arrival of royalty or a very important person. Indeed, later in the scene we find Bassanio—who is hardly royalty—being announced with a tucket [5.1.122] and perhaps Launcelet, knowing about Bassanio's newfangled tucket (which may be seen as a pretentious self-assignment of status), is here mocking it (and all like him) with his own, self-styled tucket. It could also be that he is using this new tucket to mockingly announce Lorenzo, who is temporarily acting in stead of Bassanio, as master of the house.

In this rectification, Launcelet mouths a more familiar tone, which most people would recognize as a trumpet melody which announces someone's arrival. More effective than mouthing the entry found in the original (*sola*!) or in this rectification (*da-doo*!) would be for Launcelet to form a mouthpiece with his fingers and actually blow out the sound of a mock trumpet—playing 'da-doo' and speaking 'wa ha ho.'

16. {Sola, did you see M. Lorenzo, & M. Lorenzo sola, sola}— Q1

Most editions treat the ampersand as a misprint for question mark, which is suspect—since there is also a comma—but a justifiable reading since this line is in the form of a question. 'M.' is also an abbreviation for Master (or Mistress) and most editions fill out the 'M. Lorenzo' to read 'Master Lorenzo.'

Various forms of punctuation are: 'Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola.' (Oxford, Cambridge, Arden, Folger); 'Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? [*Calls.*] Master Lorenzo! Sola! Sola!' (Arden); 'Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo? Sola, sola!' (Norton, Signet)

17. {Leave hollowing man, here.}

hollering (Oxford, Applause); holloaing (Cambridge, Kittredge Norton, Pelican, Signet); hollowing (Bevington)

leave hollowing: a) leave hollering—stop hollering, b) leave halloaing—stop making hunting calls

18. {Sola! Where, where?}

In the previous line, a second iamb was added (instead of 'here' it reads, 'here I am'); thus, in this line, one iamb has been removed 45('sola') to preserve the meter.

19. Launcelet continues with his mocking: he clearly knows the whereabouts of Lorenzo but continues to ignore him. This could be a metaphor for Lorenzo's low status and wealth (which no one can see). Launcelet's mockery continues in the next line when he is delivering a message to Lorenzo yet referring to him in the third person, as though he were not there: *Tell him there's a post come from my master.*

20. Q1 reads, {My master will be here ere morning, sweet soul.} Most editions transpose the last iamb ('sweet soul') which is decidedly out of place here, to Lorenzo's next line, which not only fits the context, but completes the meter.

And bring musicians° forth into the air. ²¹

{your music} / some music

Exit Stephano

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank.

Here we will sit and let the sounds° of music

/ strains

Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night

/ Let

Become the touches of sweet harmony.²²

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor° of heaven°

/ vault // the nighted sky

Is thick inlaid with patterns° of bright gold.

{patens}²³

In but° the smallest orb° which thou behold'st

/ Even // star / light

There sounds° the heavenly voice of an angel ^{24 25}

/ plays / shines

In the e'erlasting° choir of cherubim. ^{26 27}

/ eternal / unending

Such harmony is in immortal souls,

But whilst this earthly body° of decay

{muddy vesture}

Doth grossly close it in,° we cannot hear it. ^{28 29}

/ cover it

Enter musicians

[*to the musicians*]

Come ho, and wake Diana° with a hymn; ^{30 31}

/ the moonlight

21. / And have the players fill the air with music.

22. **touches:** notes produced by the fingers touching the strings of an instrument, especially a harp

23. **patens:** small dishes or plates, often made of gold, used in Holy Communion. F2 emends *patens* with *patterns*, which is in keeping with the imagery of harmony—especially since constellations were thought to reflect the patterns of human life—but less precise. Herein *pattern* is used, not because it is more apt, but because it is more readily understood than *patens*.

24. / There, in his motion, sings as would an angel / Sings in his motion like a blessed angel / There, in his motion, like an angel sings / His motion plays like the song of an angel / His motion sings with the voice of an angel / His motion sounds as does an angel sing

25. {There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st | But in his motion like an angel sings}
/ There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st | That, in his motion, sings not like an angel

26. {Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins} Q1: still quiring
still choiring: eternally singing, always singing in perfect harmony.

cherubins: This is an irregular plural form, which, along with *cherubims*, was used up til the mid seventeenth century. (The common plural for *cherub* is *cherubim*). *Young-eyed cherubins* refers to their sight being ever-young—eternally clear-sighted, but also it could refer to a child's sight which is ever-innocent, accepting, and non-judgmental. Being *young-eyed* could also refer to cherubim who *appear* as young-eyed, as beautiful children (with wings), which is the way they were often represented in Renaissance art. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.62]

27. Even the motion of the smallest orb,
Is part of a grand symphony, his motion
Plays a song which none but an angel sings, / Plays notes which only an angel could sing.
In a choir of heavenly voices.

28. Lorenzo is saying that we cannot hear the 'music of the spheres'—which resonates with our immortal soul—because our soul is entombed in this gross body which, through its senses, is not keen or refined enough to hear the divine music.

29. This philosophical (and lovely) exposition is impersonal and neither speaks of nor reflects any feelings of love he might have for Jessica. Such a discourse does not compare in sentiment to the single line: 'If music be the food of love, play on.'

30. Diana is the goddess of the moon. Lorenzo is asking the musicians to play so as to coax out Diana (the moon) and have her come out from behind a cloud.

31. An additional line could be added to clarify the reference to Diana, as goddess of the moon: <And let her shining face alight the sky> / <Let her illumine the sky with her face.>

With^o sweetest touches³² reach^o your mistress' ear,³³ {pierce}
 And draw^o her home with music. / guide

Music plays

—Jessica
 I'm^o never merry when I hear sweet³⁴ music.^{35 36} {I am}

—Lorenzo
 The reason is your mind is too engrossed^o³⁷ / distracted
 〈With all your^o thoughts and it cannot enjoy / every
 The peace and beauty that^o embraces you.³⁸〉³⁹ / The wonderment that now
 〈All you need do is listen with your heart.〉

[Lines Deleted]⁴⁰

Enter Portia and Nerissa, approaching

32. **touches:** / strains / chords > notes played by the fingers touching, or plucking, a string

33. **mistress ear:** Q1 does not use an apostrophe to imply the possessive form (i.e., mistress's) since it is understood to be possessive, and since the extra syllable would corrupt the meter.

34. **sweet:** soft, gentle, pleasing, soothing, melodious, etc.

35. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.69]

36. Jessica says that she is never merry when hearing sweet music, which suggests that even the most sublime and beautiful exterior circumstances cannot bring joy to Jessica (whose mind is occupied and besieged with turmoil). We might interpret her use of the term *never* however, to mean 'lately,' thus indicating that something is now disturbing her, so much so, that even sweet music cannot allay it. Similar to the mix-matched response that Antonio receives in regard to his inner sadness (*Your mind is tossing on the ocean*) Jessica receives the same kind of reply from Lorenzo: (*For do but note a wild and wanton herd | Or race of youthful and unhandled colts | Fetching mad bounds*). Lorenzo's winded exposition (that follows this line) is lost on Jessica—neither music nor Lorenzo's reply about the calming effect of music, has any calming or joyful effect on her.

37. {The reason is, your spirits are attentive}

38. / cannot delight | In all the beauty that embraces you.

39. {The reason is your spirits are attentive}

/ The reason is you're too concerned with^o every / involved with / engrossed in

Thought and emotion. Sweet, just let them be;

spirits: mindstuff, awareness, consciousness; the senses, faculties of perception, the mind and its thoughts/emotions. Hence, Lorenzo is saying that Jessica's spirits (thoughts) are attentive to her inner state (i.e., distress) and therefore cannot hear the outer music. In other words, she is too pre-occupied with her own thoughts and state of mind to enjoy and appreciate the beauty around her. Her spirit (awareness, attention) too focused upon, occupied by (attentive to) her thoughts, concerns, troubles, etc.

40. The whole of Lorenzo's discourse is filled with discordant and accusative images—ironic when speaking about the beauty of music and far less harmonious than his prior words. After Jessica's statement that she is never merry when she hears sweet music, Lorenzo does not inquire as to the reason why she feels this way, nor tries to comfort her, but continues with his philosophical waxing. In response to Lorenzo, we hear no reply from Jessica, nor do we ever hear her speak again (except as part of a group command given by Portia [119-121]). Thus, the last entry regarding Lorenzo and Jessica remains one of stark division, with Jessica's last words being: *I am never merry when I hear sweet music*. We see that Shylock's last line in the original is equally as feeble [*I pray you, give me leave to go from hence; | I am not well. send the deed after me, | And I will sign it.*].

In deference to brevity and aesthetics, the whole of Lorenzo's passage (or major portions thereof) could be deleted. The close of the scene between the two lovers might have an ominous sense if it simply ended with Jessica's last line, *I am never merry when I hear sweet music* [69]. In this rectification, the dialogue is made to end on a softer tone with four, somewhat appeasing, lines offered by Lorenzo. The original text (of 18 lines) most of which are harsh, accusatory, and ill-rubbing have been deleted from this version. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.71, for Lorenzo's full discourse].

—Portia [*looking toward the house*]
That light we see is burning in my hall—
How far that little candle throws its beams!
So shines a good deed in a wicked^o world.

{his}
{naughty} / darkened

—Nerissa
When the moon shone, we did^o not see the candle.

/ could

—Portia
So doth the greater glory dim the lesser.^o
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until the king arrives^o and then his status^o
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
Into the vaster ocean.^o Music. Listen!^o

{less}
{be by} / returns // state / rank
{main of waters} / endless ocean {hark}

Music plays.

—Nerissa
It is your music, madam, from the house.

—Portia
Nothing is good without a proper context.^o 41
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.^o

/ setting
/ in the night

—Nerissa
Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

—Portia
The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither one is heard;^o and yet, I think,
The nightingale, if she should sing by day—
When every goose is cackling—^o would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things, by proper setting, rise^o 42

{attended}
{honking} / bird is crowing
/ set are lifted

41. {Nothing is good, I see, without respect}

respect: a) context, comparison to something else, b) appreciation

Portia is saying: Things are made good by context; one can appreciate the goodness of a things when they are set in the right context. Hence, the music sounds better in the context of night (which is still) as opposed to day (which is filled with noise and activity). [See Additional Note, 5.1.99]

42. {How many things by season seasoned are}

/ How many things by season are delivered^o / inspired / uplifted

Unto their rightful^o praise and true perfection.^{43 44}
Peace—how the moon sleeps with her secret love
And would not be awakened.

/ To their right
/ in a darkened cave⁴⁵

Light fades as the moon passes behind a cloud
Music stops

—Lorenzo

That is the voice
Of Portia, else I am much deceived.^o

/ mistaken

—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, who
Prosper, we hope, the better for our words.^{46 47}

-
43. / All things, by right occasion, realize^o / come upon / discover
Their highest place and find their true perfection.
/ How many things by their appointed season
Are thus delivered to their true perfection.
/ All things, by season,^o are delivered to / setting / context
Their rightful place and to their true perfection.

44. {To their right praise and true perfection.}
/ To their right place and to their true perfection!

45. {Peace, how the moon sleeps with Endymion}
/ Peace, how the moon sleeps behind a dark cloud / Peace, how the moon sleeps with her youthful shepherd
Q1 reads: {Peace, how the moone sleepes with Endimion}. Many editions (such as Oxford, Cambridge, Bevington, etc.) punctuate the verse as: *Peace ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion. Peace, ho!* would indicate a surprise (such as ‘Oh look!’ or ‘Wait now!’). The scene can be staged in two ways: a) Portia makes a reference to the moon in the sky, saying, ‘Peace, the moon is still behind a cloud’ or b) Portia makes a reference to Lorenzo and Jessica (who are asleep) likening the two to Diana (the moon) and Endymion (who, according to myth, sleep together). The later staging, is adopted by many editions—so much so that an extra stage direction, indicating that Portia sees Lorenzo and Jessica, is sometimes added to the text. (It could also be that two are not asleep, but resting in each other’s arms). This staging, though clever, is unlikely since Lorenzo and Jessica are eagerly awaiting the near arrival of Portia and would not fall asleep at this time (nor would Portia refer to them as sleeping if they were merely resting together). The more likely staging is that Portia is referring to the moon, still behind a cloud—perhaps indicating an uneasy darkness as she arrives back home—and Lorenzo (attentively awaiting her arrival) overhears her comments. Most editions indicate that the music ceases when Portia arrives home. The Oxford Edition (Halio) emends Portia’s lines as follows:

To their right place and true perfection!
[*She sees Lorenzo and Jessica*]
Peace ho! [*Music ceases*] The moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awakened.

In Greek legend, Endymion was a young shepherd who lived on Mount Latmos. Enamored by his beauty, Selene (Diana), the goddess of the moon, put him to sleep forever, in a cave, so she could visit him whenever it pleased her. Portia is saying that moon—now hidden behind a cloud—has gone into a cave to sleep with Endymion. [See Additional Note, 5.1.109]

46. {Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.} / That their endeavor may be quick and prosperous
which speed: a) who succeed, who prosper, b) who quickly come to a beneficial result

Have^o they returned?

—Lorenzo Madam, they are not yet.

But there has come a messenger, before,

To tell of their arrival.^o

—Portia Go, Nerissa,
Give order to my servants to say nothing,
To take no note^o of our being absent hence,^o 48
Nor you Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.

A tucket sounds ⁴⁹

—Lorenzo
Your husband is at hand, I hear his trumpet.
Fear not, madam, we will not say a thing.^{o50}

The cloud passes and the moon shines again

—Portia
 This night methinks is but the daylight sick.^o / a sickly day
 It looks a little paler, like a day
 Wherein the sun is hidden^o by a cloud.^{51 52} / darkened

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers

—Bassanio [*overhearing Portia*]
Our night would share the day with all who tread^o / walk / stand / live
Upon the other side of the planet⁵³

we hope, the better for our words: whose success, we hope, has been supported by our prayers

47. / We have been praying for our husbands' welfare | And hope they prosper the more by our words.
/ We have been praying for our husbands' welfare | That they have quick and prosperous results | Which, we
do hope, has been aided^o by our words. / bettered / helped

48. {Give order to my servants that they take | No note at all of our being absent hence}

49. A tucket is a distinctive 'signature tune' played on a trumpet to announce the arrival of those of high or royal standing. The tucket we hear is to signify the arrival of Bassanio. It is not likely that any of the parties have yet heard this tucket but, by inference, and by knowing of Bassanio's immanent arrival, they surmise that it is Bassanio's tucket.

50. {We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not}

51. {'Tis a day | Such as the day is when the sun is hed}.

52. It is telling that after hearing Bassanio's tucket the only words Portia states—which serve as *her* announcement of him—is a reference to the night, which looks like *daylight sick*, as pale as a day *when the sun is hid*. Perhaps the metaphor is in reference to herself, as the sun, and to her own shining, which (upon her new master's return) will be obscured, like a dull cloud obscuring the bright sun. (In the next line, Bassanio unwittingly extends this analogy by likening Portia to the sun).

One could interpret Portia's 'talk about the weather' in a more innocuous way: she abruptly changes the subject to talk about something banal, chit-chat as it were, as a way to hide her expectancy and appear somewhat coy and nonchalant about Bassanio's immanent arrival. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.126]

53. {We should hold day with the Antipodes}

Antipodes: (lit. 'opposite feet'); those who walk on the opposite side of the globe.

Should you^o walk ‘round in lieu o’th shining sun.^o 54 55

/ If you’d

—Portia

Let me give light but let me not be light:⁵⁶

For when a wife is light^o in keeping vows

/ Because a wife who’s light . . . Doth

It makest for^o a heavy-hearted husband—^o 57 58

/ brings about / a husband’s heavy-heart

And never shall Bassanio be for me.^o

/ my lord be so for me

But God wills^o all!^{o59} You are welcome home, my lord. 60

{sort} > orders, ordains

—Bassanio

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio,

To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Gratziano and Nerissa converse on their own

—Portia

You should, in all sense,^o be much bound to him 61

/ good sense / reason

/ We should hold day with those who live in China | If you ‘d walk ‘round in absence of the sun.

54. {If you would walk in absence of the sun} / If you would walk when sunlight was not shining

walk: A metaphor for the sun’s apparent journey, or walk, through the sky, which brings about night and day. Herein Portia is likened to the brightness of the sun and her walking to the sun’s movement. Thus, she brings illumination, or daylight, even when the sun is absent (i.e. during the night). Notice the complete opposite sentiment in Portia’s first comments about Bassanio—as *daylight sick*—and Bassanio comments about Portia, as the light-giving sun. ‘If you would always walk in the night, it would be day with us, as it now is on the other side of the globe.’ (Malone)

55. / We should hold day with those who live upon | The other side of the planet, if you | Would walk around in placement of the sun // Our day would be the same with those who live | Upon the globe’s other side, should you walk | Around in placement of the brilliant sun. // Our night would share the day with all who tread | Upon the other side of the globe, should | You walk around like the luminous sun

56. **be light:** be unchaste; be unfaithful in the keeping of one’s vows. *Light* in this context is in contrast to *heavy*. In terms of weight, *light* implies free, whereas *heavy* implies a physical weight, or a heavy chain, which keeps a women in place. *Light* (meaning a happy and carefree disposition) is in contrast to *heavy* (meaning sad and depressed). Here, *be light* refers to Portia being unfaithful which would cause Bassanio to be *heavy* (sad). The implication is that Bassanio should not do anything to make Portia light, unchaste.

57. / For when a wife is light in keeping vows | She makes herself a heavy-hearted husband.

58. {For a light wife doth make a heavy husband} This terse line—which contains both opposing words—is more poetic than the two-line rendering above, yet may not sufficiently convey the intended contrast between *light* and *heavy*, which in normal instance refers to opposite measures of weight but herein refers to human states—a *light* wife (unfaithful) and a *heavy* (husband) one’s whose is burdened or weighed down with grief.

59. {But God sort all}

God works everything out according to His plan; God will work it all out, put everything in order, make things right. Portia is adding this *ex post facto* caveat—an escape clause—which commands the power to contradict her previous statement about her never making Bassanio a heavy husband—a husband who is sad over her being unfaithful to him. She is saying: ‘I will never be unfaithful *but* . . .’ Herein she is setting the stage for the next confrontation, where she claims to have slept with the doctor in order to get back the ring which Bassanio gave away.

60. This is an impersonal and distant welcome. We notice that Portia never truly welcomes Bassanio, nor does she even address him, except when she is ‘exclaiming on him’ for having given away her ring. Her last words spoken to Bassanio are: *I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio, | For this ring the doctor lay with me.* [258-259]. Even when there is a perfect cue for her to speak—and respond to Bassanio’s question [280] to confirm her loyalty (just as Nerissa responds to Gratziano)—she says nothing.

61. {You should, in all sense, be much bound to him} / You should, in every sense, be bound to him

in all sense: in every sense, in every way, in all respects, with good reason

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you. ⁶²

—Antonio

The bounds of which I'm well-acquitted of. ⁶³

—Portia

We are most honored, sir, to have you here. ⁶⁴

Yet it must show^o in other ways than words;

Thus I'll make short of^o this long-winded welcome.^o ⁶⁵

{It must appear}

{Therefore I'll scant} {breathing courtesy}

—Gratziano [*to Nerissa*]

By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong. ⁶⁶

In faith,^o I gave it to the judge's clerk—

/ In truth

And I would have his manly parts cut off

Since you do take it, love, so much at heart. ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸

—Portia

A quarrel, ho, already! What about?^o

{What's the matter?}

—Gratziano

About a hoop^o of gold, a paltry^o ring

/ band // petty

That she did give me, whose lett'ring was,^o ⁶⁹

{posey} / motto

For all to see,^o like cutler's poetry,

{for all the world} / by all accounts

⟨The kind of words that one would find scribbled⟩

Upon a knife: 'Love me and leave me not.' ⁷⁰

62. In Bassanio's previous line, *bound* is used to mean indebted. *Bound*, as used here can mean: a) bound in debt, b) bound in word or pledge, c) physically bound or imprisoned, or d) bound in friendship.

63. {No more than I am well acquitted of} / And from such bounds I have been fully freed

64. {Sir, you are very welcome to our house.}

65. {Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy} / Thus, I need not waste breath on courtesies

/ Thus I'll skip over^o this long-winded welcome

/ Thus I'll make short of / Therefore I'll spare you / Therefore I'll shorten

66. Gratziano swears by yonder moon, which is fickle and inconsistent, and which, at this point in the play, has been obscured by clouds.

67. / Since you, my love, take it so much to heart

68. {Would he were gelt that had it, for my part | Since you do take it love, so much to heart}

gelt: gelded or castrated; also a play on *gelt*, money.

/ Would he who has the ring have his endowment | Cut off, for all I care—since you, my love, | Are so upset over this little thing. // Would he who has the ring have but his manly | Portions lopped off, for all I care, since you, | My love, are taking this so much to heart. // Would he who has the ring be castrated | ⟨For all I care—and that is what I say,⟩ | Since you do take it, love, so much to heart.

69. / That she gave me, whose trite inscription was,

70. {For all the world like cutler's poetry | Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'}

/ By all account, like a butcher's attempt | At poetry, with dull words that be scribbled | Upon a knife—'Love me and leave me not.'

/ By all accounts, like a knife-maker's poem— | Some posy scribbled upon a cheap knife | With the fine words: 'Love me, and leave me not.'

/ Naught but a cutler's try at poetry, | With fetching^o words, as: 'Love me, don't leave me.' / sapless / tired

It was common for a trite motto to be inscribed on knife blades, and such a motto, or posy, was put on the blade by the cutler or knife-maker (not a poet). Gratziano is here trying to lessen the value of Nerissa's ring by saying its inscription was trite and written with the same skill as that of an knife-maker—like the kind of cliché

—Nerissa

Why talk you of the wording^o or the value?—
You swore to me when I gave it to you^o
That you would wear it till the^o hour of death,
And that it should^o lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me,^o yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been more careful^o and have keep it.
You gave it to a judge's clerk? A man?
But well I know⁷¹—that 'clerk' is yet a woman
And *she* will ne'er grow hair upon her face.⁷²

{poesy} / motto
/ I presented it
/ thy
/ would
> on my account
{been respective} / had more reverence

/ No, God's my judge

—Gratziano

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

—Nerissa

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

—Gratziano

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbèd boy,^o
No higher^o than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, who begged it as a fee.
I could not, for my heart, deny it him.

/ scrub-brushed little boy
/ taller

/ hold him from it / stay his request

—Portia

I must be plain^o with you: you are to blame,⁷³
To part so slightly^o with your wife's first gift—
A thing placed^o on with oaths upon your finger,
And so riveted, 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 all the world could muster. Gratziano,^{o 74}
You give your wife too unkind a cause for grief.⁷⁵
An 'twere to me,^o I would be fuming mad.⁷⁶

/ frank
/ eas'ly / lightly
{stuck}

/ could give. Now Gratziano

/ If it were me

inscriptions he would on his knife. The irony is that Gratziano's words, which are often crude and unpoetic, is now placing some kind of value on poetry.

71. Q1: No, God's my judge F: But well I know

72. {Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge, | The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it}

73. {You were to blame, I must be plain with you}

74. {That the world masters. Now in faith, Gratziano}

75. / Your callous act does bring your wife much grief / Your blund'ring act is cause for all her grief.

76. {And 'twere to me I should be mad at it}

'**twere to me**: if it were up to me (to react in the same situation); if this were done to me

—Bassanio [*aside*]

Why, I were best to sunder^o my left hand,^o
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

/ cut off {cut my left hand off}

—Gratziano

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away⁷⁷
Unto the judge who begged it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk⁷⁸
Who^o took some pains in writing, he begged mine—
And neither man nor master would take aught^{o79}
But the two rings.

{That}

—Portia What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received from 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 truth⁸⁰
By heaven, I will ne'er come to^o your bed⁸¹
Until I see the ring!⁸²

{in}

—Nerissa Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

—Bassanio Sweet Portia,⁸³

/ Had you done this to me, I'd be fuming / And were it me, I would be fuming mad. / If this were done to me I'd be incensed (/indignant / outraged) / If you did this to me, I'd be incensed

77./ Yet your man, too, did give away his ring

78. / Who was deserving of it; then his clerk,

79. / And man nor master would take nothing else

80. / And ever gone is the truth from your heart / And e'er so void of all truth is your false heart / And so your heart, too, is bereft of truth

81. / By heaven, I swear, I'll ne'er lay^o with you / bed / sleep

82. / And gone from your false heart, is all semblance
Of truth! I swear, I'll ne'er come to your bed
Until I see the ring!

83. Most modern editions set the previous two lines in the standard iambic pentameter, which suggests no significant pause in the dialogue. Q1 sets the verse as four half lines (6-4-6-4 syllables) whereas F1 sets it with two half lines and one full line. (6-10-4 syllables). Q1 could be read with or without a pause in the dialogue, whereas the F1 setting demands two pauses:

Q1 Until I see the ring!
 Ner. Nor I in yours
 Till I again see mine!
 Bass. Sweet *Portia*
 If you did know . . .

F1

Ner. Until I see the Ring.
Bas. Nor I in yours, til I again see mine.
 Sweet Portia,
 If you did know . . .

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
 If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
 And would realize^o for what I gave the ring,
 And how unwillingly I left the ring,
 When naught would be accepted but the ring,⁸⁴
 You would abate^o the strength of your displeasure.

{conceive} // And think upon

/ appease // brunt

—Portia

If you had known the virtue^o of the ring,
 Or half her worthiness who gave the ring,
 Or your own honor to keep safe^o the ring,
 You would not then have parted with the ring—
 And it appears, you were not even pleased^o
 To defend it with any kind^o of zeal.
 What man is there so lacking in all reason,^o
 So wont of modesty, as to demand^o
 A thing made sacred by a ceremony?^{85 86}
 (I hear the praises^o of this worthy judge⁸⁷
 But now methinks^o there is no judge at all!)
 Nerissa, teaches me the right idea^o:⁸⁸
 I'll bet my life, some woman has^o the ring.⁸⁹

/ value

{contain}

/ willing / bent / 'clined / prompted

{terms} / show

{so much unreasonable}

/ so as to urge

/ much praise

/ But seems the case

{what to believe}

{had} > was given

—Bassanio

No, by mine honor, madam, by my soul,
 No woman has^o it, but a civil lawyer^o
 Who did refuse three thousand ducats from me,
 And begged the ring, the which I did deny him,
 And suffered him to go away displeased—
 Even he who had saved^o the very life
 Of my dear friend.⁹⁰ What should I say, sweet lady?
 I was enforced to send it after him.

{had} > was given {doctor}

{held up} / upheld

84. / When nothing would be had except the ring

85. {What man is there so unreasonable—
 If you had pleased to have defended it
 With any terms of zeal—wanted the modesty
 To urge the thing^o held as a ceremony?}

if you had any desire to defend it (hold onto it)
 lacked the modesty
 insist on having something
 > with but ceremonial value

86. What man is there so lacking in reason^o—
 Had you been pleased in so defending it^o
 With any kind of zeal—would so insist
 On the thing with such sentimental value?

/ bereft of all reason
 / If you had only desired (/wished) to defend it

[See Additional Notes, 5.1.206]

87. /I keep on hearing praise of this good judge

88. {Nerissa teaches me what to believe;} / Nerissa, teaches me the right lesson:

89. {I'll die for't, but some woman had the ring!}

90. In a production where Shylock willingly puts down the knife (and it is made clear to the audience that he never intended to kill Antonio) one might say that the civil doctor did not actually save Antonio's life—but this is not what Bassanio believes: he believes that the doctor's intervention, and his long words used to try and dissuade Shylock, is what convinced Shylock to forgive Antonio in the end. Thus, by this account, the doctor did save his friend's life.

I was beset^o by shame, and felt moreover⁹¹ / besieged
 To give the ring was the right thing to do.⁹²
 My honour would not let ingratitude
 So much besmear it.⁹³ Pardon me, good lady,⁹⁴
 For by these blessed candles of the night^o ⁹⁵ / stars that stud the night
 Had you been there I think you would have begged
 The ring of^o me to give the worthy doctor.⁹⁶ / from

 —Portia
 Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.
 Since he ⁹⁷ hath got the jewel that I do love,^o {that I loved}
 And that^o which you did swear to keep for me. / The one
 I will become as generous^o as you.^o {liberal} / giving, as were you
 I'll not deny him anything I have—^o / hold back anything he desires
 No, not my body, nor my husband's^o bed. / marital
 'Know'⁹⁸ him I shall, I am well^o sure of it.^o / quite // I shall in every way
 Lie not a night from^o home. Watch me like Argus,⁹⁹ > away from
 〈Who guarded Io with a hundred eyes.〉¹⁰⁰
 If you do not, if I be left alone,
 Now, by mine honour, which is still^o mine own,^o ¹⁰¹ {yet} // intact / unbroken

91. / I was overtaken by shame, feeling that

92. {I was beset with shame and courtesy}

/ I was overtaken by a deepened shame / I was beset with guilt and obligation / I was beset with disgrace and decorum / I was beset with feelings of disgrace | 〈And a deep sense that I should give the ring〉

shame: a sense of dishonor, disgrace

courtesy: a sense of moral obligation, feeling that giving the ring was the right thing to do.

93. / And I could not let such ingratitude | Besmear my honor. Pardon me, good lady,

94. Giving away Portia's ring, at the request of Antonio, shows Bassanio's loyalty to Antonio above Portia. Moreover, it reveals Bassanio's weakness of character, and his inability to keep his own word nor honor his own vows (which is consistent with his irresponsible and care-free character) He says he broke the vow to Portia to uphold his honor and show his gratitude (and because he was enforced)—thus showing that he holds these self-concerned promptings greater than Portia and the vow he made to her. How is Portia to feel about such an act? What does it tell her about her new lord and master?

95. {For by these blessed candles of the night} / For by these stars, whose light doth bless the heavens

This oath—to the stars of the night sky—carries with it the same irony as Gratiano's swearing by yonder moon: both the light of the moon, and the stars (on this night) are inconsistent, being regularly covered up by the clouds. The stars, as well, are soon to fade as morning is swift approaching.

96. / That I give the ring to the worthy doctor.

97. **he:** Portia now accepts Bassanio's statement that he gave the ring to a man, but here she shifts her game, saying that she, too, will give herself to this man.

98. **know him:** have sexual relations with him. Compare Portia's parting words to Bassanio in the previous scene [4.1.415]: 'I pray you, know me when we meet again.'

99. **Argus:** Argus Panoptes, the all-seeing, hundred-eyed giant who was set to guard Io, daughter of the river god, Inachus. (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.622-77). Also compare the India myth of Malini, whose beauty was so great that Lord Shiva sprouted eyes on every side of his head so he could look at her even when she walked around him.

100. Lie not a night away from home. Like Argus, | 〈With all his hundred eyes, you watch o'er me.〉

101. **by mine honor, which is yet mine own:**

a) by my chastity (virginity) which is still intact, still unbroken, still mine own (having not been taken by anyone as of yet). b) by my vows, which have not been broken. This is in contrast to Bassanio's honor which is not his own, as he has given it away when he broke his vow to keep the ring.

Portia's reference to honour, is a continuation of Bassanio's previous claim: *No, by my honour, madam, by my soul, | No woman had it, but a civil doctor.* [209])

I'll have the doctor^o for my bedfellow. ¹⁰²

/ lawyer

—Nerissa

And I his clerk. Therefore, be well-advised
If^o you do leave me to mine own protection.

/ So take this as fair warning
{How}

—Gratziano

Do as you will.^o Let not me catch him, then,
For if I do, I'll break^o the young clerk's pen.

{Well, do you so}
{mar} / ruin

—Antonio

I am th'unhappy subject^o of these quarrels.

/ the bitter // cause of this contention

—Portia

Sir, grieve not—none of this is caused by^o you. ^{103 104}

/ brought by / over

—Bassanio

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And in the witness^o of these many friends ¹⁰⁵
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

{hearing}

—Portia Hear you but that?^{o106}

/ Take heed of that! / Amen to that!

In both my^o eyes he doubly sees himself!^{o107}

/ In mine two

In each eye one version of self is seen ¹⁰⁸

/ Each eye reflects but one of two pretenses

And then he swears upon his double self— ^{109 110}

/ And so his swearing be but two-faced

Now^o there's an oath to count on!^{o 111}

{And} // bank on

102. / I'll share a bed with that worthy doctor.

103. / Sir, grieve not—you are not the cause of this.

104. {Sir, grieve not you, you are welcome notwithstanding}

/ Sir, grieve not you^o—you're welcome nonetheless.

/ Grieve not dear sir

105. / And with these many friend as faithful^o witness,

106. {Mark you but that!}

107. {In both my eyes he doubly sees himself}

/ In mine two eyes he sees himself as double / He sees himself but doubly (/as two-faced), one in each eye

108. / Each eye reflects but one of two positions / Each eye reflects his double-facedness

109. / In one eye, swears he, by his first of self; | In the second eye, swears he, by the second— // In each one eye a self he swears upon | He breaks the first and now he makes a second—

110. {In each eye one. Swear by your double self}

swear: and now you swear (upon the reliability of your two-faced self)

111. {And there's an oath of credit}

This line is spoken with sarcasm. Portia is saying that Bassanio oath is not something she can rely on.

of credit: a) that which can be believed; something credible, something of value, something which has backing, something that can be relied upon—said with sarcasm to imply the opposite. b) something which lacks value, which is not there, such as credit on a loan. Thus: 'Now there's an oath of credit, not an oath that has actual value'—and oath that appears credible but which has no real backing. This may also refer to Bassanio's previous show (when he came to Belmont) as a rich man—which was due to his having borrowing money on credit rather than having the actual wealth he was outwardly showing. (Such previous actions suggests the two-faced nature of Bassanio, where he presented himself with one face yet had another.)

I had it of him.^o Pardon me, Bassanio,¹¹⁶
But for this ring, the doctor lay with me.^o ¹¹⁷

/ I got it from him
/ I lay with the young doctor.

—Nerissa
And pardon me, my gentle Gratziano,
For that same scrubbèd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of^o this [*showing the ring*] last night did lie with me.

/ In 'change for / In hock for

—Gratziano
Why this is like the mending of highways
In summer, when no such repair is needed —¹¹⁸
<Which makes the road all rough and ruined^o for use.> ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰
You have cheated us,^o ere we have deserved it!¹²¹

/ spoiled
{What, we are cuckolds}

—Portia
Speak not so grossly^o —there is much confusion: ¹²²
<We were with you in Venice the whole time;
There never was a doctor nor his clerk.> ¹²³
Thus you shall find that I was the doctor,

/ crudely

116. {I had it of him. Pardon Bassanio}

Portia is echoing Bassanio and using his words against him. In 247-48 Bassanio asks for Portia's pardon in regards to his giving away the ring, saying: *Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear | I never more will break an oath with thee.* Here she uses the same plea and asks him to *pardon* her for laying with the doctor (in order to get back the ring that he gave away). It seems that Portia assigns a similar value to Bassanio's vow (to keep the ring) as she does to her own vow of chastity.

117. / But for this ring, I made love with the doctor

Portia telling Bassanio that she 'lay' with the doctor is a somewhat brutal claim—and perhaps, in her mind, deservedly so. (This is mitigated by the fact that she only lets him squirm for a few seconds.) However, the affront of this line could be assuaged by bringing in less certain image (which would then be dispelled before it was realized). Hence, Portia could say: 'Yes, that same doctor was with me last night,' or 'Yes, that same doctor visited me last night.' Nerissa's echo reply (instead of, 'In lieu of this last night did lie with me') could be: 'Was here last night and visited with me.'

118. {Why this is like the mending of highways | In summer where the ways are fair enough}
/ In summer, when the roads need no such fixing

The insinuation with this metaphor—comparing Nerissa to a road—is that the road is being (or has been) dug up and is therefore ruined in the sense that it cannot be traveled upon. Nerissa has been ruined by her sleeping with the clerk and now Gratziano cannot travel upon that road (because it is unfit for use).

119./ And thus, the highway is not fit for use / Which makes the highway ruined for good use / And it but the highway for use / And, in the meantime, are ruined for use / And they're then ruined for fair travel and use

120. The following two lines, which could be added, help clarify Gratziano's previous metaphor:
<Why the best fruit has been given away | Before we even had the chance to eat it!>

121. {What, we are cuckolds ere we have deserved it?} / We are betrayed before our wedding night! / Why we got shafted 'fore our wedding night!

// The fruit's gone rancid ere it could be eaten / The fruit's gone rancid before we could eat it! / The fruit's been plucked and no longer worth eating.

122. {Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed}

123. These two lines replace the following lines found in the original [268-69]:

{Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure. | It comes from Padua, from Bellario.} The line, 'And here is a letter which explains it all' is emended to Portia's speech a few lines later. This would then indicate that Portia wrote the letter, not Bellario.

There seems to be no reason as to why (or when, or for whom, or for what purpose) Bellario would write such a letter—and no reason as to why Portia would need to produce it. Portia's simple telling of the story, and how she was the doctor, would clear up all doubt, and she needn't produce—nor go to the trouble of producing—any supportive documentation. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.267]

Nerissa there my clerk. Lorenzo here
 Shall witness, I set forth as soon as you,
 And have just^o now returned. I have not yet / even
 Entered my house. <And here is a letter [*takes out a letter*]
 Explaining it all.)¹²⁴ Antonio, for you
 I have much better news than you expect: [*takes out a letter*]
 Unseal this letter soon, there you shall find
 That suddenly, three of your argosies
 Have come to port, their^o hulls amassed with^o riches.^{125 126} / with / replete / abound with
 You'd not^o believe the circumstance by which¹²⁷ / You won't
 I chanced upon this letter^o¹²⁸ {I chancèd on}

—Antonio [*reading the letter*] I am speechless!^o {dumb}

—Bassanio [*to Portia*]
 Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?¹²⁹

—Gratziano [*to Nerissa*]
 Were you the clerk who came and cheated on me?^o {that is to make me cuckold}

—Nerissa
 Ay, but the clerk who never means to do it / who'd ne'er do such a thing
 Unless, through life, he turns into a man.^o {Unless he live until he be a man}

—Bassanio¹³⁰
 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,

124. As mentioned in the previous note, the production of any explanatory letter, by Portia, is not needed. To preserve the triplicate delivery of letters, however, this delivery could be included. If one prefers a more likely scenario—where Portia simply explains everything in person, rather than deliver a letter—then this line could be replaced with the following: <And soon I will explain | The whole thing to you>.

125. { . . . Unseal this letter soon. | There you shall find three of your argosies | Are richly come to harbor suddenly. }

126. Portia coming upon the news of Antonio's argosies coming to port before Antonio stands out as an anomaly. She must have come upon this news while on the road from Venice to Belmont. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.277]

127. {You shall not know by what strange accident} / You shall not know by what coincidence

you shall not know: you would not believe, you'd never guess

strange accident: coincidence, unlikely circumstance

128. Replace last three lines with two:

/ Have richly come to port. You shall not know^o / you'd never guess
 How strange it was I chanced upon this letter.

129. Portia never answers this question. When Gratziano asks the same question of Nerissa, she immediately reassures him with a positive response.

130. In 280, Bassanio asks Portia a direct question; in 281, Gratziano asks Nerissa a direct question; in 282-283, Nerissa responds to Gratziano's question; here Portia could answer, to complete the symmetry, but does not. It is Bassanio who offers his own reassuring reply. In all, Portia does not give one reassuring word to Bassanio upon his arrival in Belmont.

—Portia	And° now, Lorenzo!°	{How} {?}
My clerk hath some good comforts, too, for you.		
—Nerissa		
Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. [<i>she hands him the will</i>]		
Here° do I give to you and Jessica		{There}
A special deed of gift, from the good° Jew, ¹³²		{rich}
Who wills you all he owns upon his death. ¹³³		
—Lorenzo		
Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way ¹³⁴		
Of starving people. ^{135 136}		
—Portia [<i>looking at the sky</i>]	It is almost morning, ¹³⁷	
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied		
With an account so brief.° ¹³⁸ Let us go in		/ scarce
And charge° us there with cross-examination,° ¹³⁹		/ probe {upon inter'gatories}
And we will answer all things faithfully.°		/ truthfully
—Gratziano		
Let it be so. The first line of questioning°		{the first inter'gatories}

come to road: found a safe harbor, come to dry land

133. {After his death, of all he dies possessed of}

/ Whom, upon death, bequeaths^o you all he owns. / doth leaves

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.” (KJV, Exodus 16:14-15)

136. The reference to manna is not exact, since the deed of gift gives Lorenzo and Jessica nothing to sustain them. It is a deed of gift *when Shylock dies*, which could be 20+ years in the future. So, Lorenzo and Jessica receive but a promise for something which does not relieve their present now. (They are starved because they have wasted all the money that they stole from Shylock. Even now, there is no mention, nor one word of protest spoken from a Christian, regarding the wasteful and morally bankrupt actions of Jessica and Lorenzo.)

138. {With these events at full}

139. / So you can probe us with all your questions / And charge us there with your cross-examining

That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is:

Would you prefer on the next night to lay

Or go to bed now, with two hours till day?¹⁴⁰

But were the day come, I should wish it night

Till I were laying^o in my clerk's delight.¹⁴¹

{couching} / rolling

And while I live, I'll fear no other thing—

So sore as keeping safe^o Nerissa's ring.¹⁴²

/ But the sore keeping of

Exeunt. Couples first, then Antonio

140. {Whether till the next night she had rather stay
{Or go to bed now, being two hours to day

141. {But were the day come, I should wish it night
{Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk

142. This bawdy punning is commonly found at the end of a romantic comedies. Herein the term *ring* is usually taken as a reference to 'vulva' and Gratziano's 'sore keeping' of it—well we need not comment on that!

ACT SIX - Scene One

Venice, in front of Shylock's House.

Enter Shylock and Tubal, then Messenger from opposite direction

—Tubal

We still have time to make another trade.

—Shylock

Yes, one more trade. *[to Messenger]* How now, what be the news?

—Messenger

I bring a letter from your only daughter.

—Shylock

Jessica?

—Messenger

Yes, from Jessica your daughter.

—Shylock

She is my daughter but am I her father?

—Messenger

That is the name she called you by. She said:

‘Would you please give this letter to my father?’

—Shylock

Her father? That is what she said? What else?

—Messenger

I think you’ll find the answer in her letter.

Messenger hands Shylock the letter and exits

—Shylock

A ship come home to port. What does she say?

He tries to open the letter but his hands are too shaky. He hands it to Tubal, who opens the letter and glances over it.

—Tubal *[glancing at letter]*

She’s here in Venice and she wants to see you.

‘Tis but good news my friend, ‘tis all good news.

Surely, methinks, before ol’ Shylock dies,

He'll find a smile in his daughter's eyes.¹⁴³

Tubal lifts up Shylock's turquoise ring and returns it to him with the letter

—Shylock [*holding the ring, glancing off*]

When comes the end, our treasures are but dust

Fortunes do give but they take as they must;

My life, my deeds, and my ducats suffice,^o / are lost

I've gained some comfort, at too high a price.^o / cost

And now my friend, I must bid you good-bye,

'Tis not a sight^o to see 'ol Shylock^o cry. / a scene / so good // an old man

Tubal exits; Shylock exits to his house

END.

143. In a prior draft, Jessica's letter was read aloud by Tubal. The contemplated letter read as follows: 'Dear father, I hope it is in your heart to forgive me. I know my brash and uncaring actions have brought you countless tears and grief. You are the one who has given me life—how can I now ask for more? But ask I do. I ask that you forgive me—and forgive me you must. Accept me, you must. Love me as I am, you must. This is the vow a father makes to his daughter the first time he looks into her eyes. And this is a vow you have made, and have kept, and which I now ask you to keep again. When I am in Venice again, I hope to see you. I hope that you will accept me; that you have it in your heart to greet me as my father; as I hope, once again, to greet you as your daughter. The night is now upon me, the stars begin to shine, and I must go. Love Jessica.'