Duke of Venice

Prince of Morocco (Morocho-Q1, Morochus-Q1)

Prince of Arragon (Aragon)

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

Saliano-Q1 (Solano-Q1)

Salerio, a messenger from Venice

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)

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

Punctuation Key

Punctuation Key:
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

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 (or 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 instruments of fell deceit,

7. / Wretched means to fetch another’s ruin. / They would have men sign bonds to borrow money, / And if the sums are not repaid on time

8. / Then, as forfeit, they would take everything; All that the man has earned in his lifetime / Would come to naught and end in tearful ruin. / ‘Tis an obscene, despisèd greed they show—

9. / These heartless usurers. / There is a place in hell made just for them.

10. / It is a foul

11. / reserved

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

Those damnèd Jews.

— Antonio

No, ‘tis no Jewish thing this usury—
‘Tis but a godless thing, a cursèd thing.
An aberration felling Jew and gentile—
A wretched thing. Enough of my complaints,
You know them well.

— Salarino

And so do we, Antonio,
But here this face so grave, ‘tis not a sight
We know so well. Why look ye so, my friend?

— Antonio

In sooth, I know not why I am so somber.
[It wearies me, I know it wearies you;]
Yet how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
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?
 / We know not well. Why look ye so, my friend?
 / 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]


19. **And why it lingers on**, I’ve yet to learn.°
[And such a want-wit graveness° makes of me ]
[That I have much ado to know myself.] 20

—Salarino

Your mind is tossing on the ocean. 21

There [pointing] are your argosies° with portly sails—
Stream° upon the wave° like proud maestros°22
Or like the grand displays of a sea pageant. 23
See your ships rise above° the smaller boats°24
That curtsey° to them in awe and reverence 25
As they fly by with their grand, woven wings. 26

&Bell me, sir,  
Were I involved in ventures of such risk° 27
The better part of my concerns would rest°
Upon° my hopes° abroad. And everyday°
I’d toss the grass° to know where blows the wind,° 29
And peer° in maps for ports and piers and roads—

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° upon° the wave,°

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

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

25. *That curtsey 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 curtsey low in reverence / Impelling them to bow in awe reverence

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

29. *Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind*
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my enterprise,° no doubt,
Would bring concern.°

—Salarino

My breath,° cooling my broth,

Would blow me to a shiver° 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,° docked in sand,
With her top-sail a-hung° below her ribs—°
Kissing her grave just like° 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°
Which, by a mere touch° of my vessel’s side,
Would spread her cache° of spice upon the wave,°
And robe the roaring waters with her silk.
And thus, in sum, reduce my worth° to naught.
Had I the mind° 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 .° 36
So tell me not: I know Antonio
Is grave° to think upon° his parlous ventures.°

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]

30. {Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt | Would 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,}
33. / And how my ship, the Andrew, rife with wealth, | Might fall a-ground and die a woeful° death / piteous
34. {Vailing he r high-top lower  than  her ribs | To kiss he r burial}
35. / vail: 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]
36. / I, too, would have a mind that’s fraught with sadness°
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\(^a\) trusted,
Nor in one place, nor does my wealth depend\(^a\)
Upon the fortune of this present year.
Therefore, my ventures do not make me somber.\(^a\)

—Salanio
Why then, you are in love.

—Antonio  
Nay, nay! {Fie, fie} / No, no

—Salanio  
Not in love neither? Then you must be somber  
Because you are not destined\(^a\) to be merry;
For ‘twere\(^a\) as easy now for you to laugh,
And leap,\(^a\) and say that you are merry, only
Because you are not sad. By the two faces
Of Janus—one which laughs and one which cries—

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:°

Some that will smile so much their eyes have shut,°
And laugh like parrots ° when all else are crying.°
And others so acerbic° in their mode

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 Gratiano) 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}

\textit{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.

43. \textit{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.  

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

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

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

—Antonio  
(Nay Salarino—and my friend Salanio—)  
Your worth is very dear in my regard.° / esteem  
I take it your own business calls you,  
And you embrace th’occasion° to depart. / the moment

—Salarino [to those approaching]  
Good morrow, my good lords.° / 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?  

—Salanio  
We’ll make our leisure time° fit in with° yours.  
{leisures} / free time {to attend on}

—Lorenzo  
My friend° Bassanio, here° you have found Antonio.  
{lord} {since}
[aside, to Salarino]

We, too, will leave soon, but at dinner time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.  

— Salarino

We will not fail you.

— Salanio  

(We’ll be there as planned.)

Exeunt Salarino and Salanio

— Gratiano

You look not well, Signior Antonio;  
You care too much for the things of this world.  
The ones who buy this world with too much care
Are apt to lose it for want of enjoyment.  
Believe me friend, you don’t look like yourself.

— Antonio

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

— Gratiano

Let me play the fool:  
With mirth and laughter let old smiles come,  
And let my liver rather heat with joy
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like a marble statue of his grandsire,

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, 1.1.73]

53. Some commentators suggest that the play may have initially opened here, at line 73. Gratiano’s opening statement resembles that of Antonio’s, 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}

56. {Believe me, you are marvellously changed}

57. {Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster}
Sleep when he wakes, and become ill with jaundice° 58 / bring about the jaundice
By being peevish° from morning till night? / cranky / sad-faced
I say Antonio—I speak out of love— 59 / reveal no emotion
There are some men who show no expression,
Their face is held in a willful stillness
Just like the muck cov’ring° a stagnant pond, 60 / stop
They hope that others will look well upon them 61
As men of wisdom, gravity, and depth,° 62 {and profound conceit}
As who should say,° ‘I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!’
O my Antonio, I do know of those°
Who are reputed° wise for saying naught,
When I am sure, if they should move to speak,
‘Twould almost° 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° opinion of others,
Which one can catch° as eas’ly as fool gudgeon— 64 / For the ill-gained / unvalued
(A fish inclined will bite° at any° bait.) / Which can be caught
Come good Lorenzo. Fare thee well for now;°
I’ll finish with my preaching° after dinner.

—Lorenzo

Well, we will leave you then, till dinner-time.°
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} / well-known to bite / ev’ry
   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 Gratziiano never lets me speak.

—Gratziiano
Well, keep my company for two more years
And you’ll forget the sound of your own tongue.°

—Antonio
Farewell. I’ll grow in talk next time. 66

—Gratziiano
Please do—
Silence is virtue° in dried tongue of ox
And in craggy old maids who’ve got the pox. 67

Exeunt Gratziiano and Lorenzo

—Antonio
He speaks a great deal yet says° not a thing. 68

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 onl only commendable | In a neat’s tongue dried and a maid not vendible.} / Please do—

| preferred / better/ prais’ble
Silence is virtue° in dried tongue of ox
And in craggy old maids who’ve got the pox. 67

68. {It is that an ything 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 Gratziiano, 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 iambcs 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 Gratziiano 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 Gratziiano 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'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: {Gratiano speaks and infinite deal of nothing more than any man in all of Venice, his reasons are as two grains of wheath in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you finde them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.}. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.118]

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: {Gratiano speaks and infinite deal of nothing more than any man in all of Venice, his reasons are as two grains of wheath in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek 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 wheath 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 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}
—Bassanio

‘Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have depleted my savings
By sometimes showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means could rightfully support;
Nor do I moan about being deprived
Of such a noble style. Now my chief care
Is to come fully clear of all my debts
Wherein my years of prodigal spending
Hath left me gagged. To you, Antonio
I owe the most in money, and in love,
And by your love, I am granted permission
To unburden all my plans and purposes
On how to clear myself of every debt.

—Antonio

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,
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 spending / lordly
/ Has been abridged. But now my chief concern / cut short
78. {Wherein my time something too prodigal}
79. {Hath left me gagged}
80. a) Is to come clear of all the debts amassed / pay off / accrued
   During my time of prodigal spending,
   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 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 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 assured 83
My purse, my person,° my extremest means°
Lie all unlocked to whate’er you may need.° 84

—Bassanio

In my school days, when I had lost an arrow°
I shot another one in the same way,
And in the same direction yet,° this time, 85
With a more careful° and advised watch;
Then, in my vent’ring° for the second arrow,
I oft found both.° 86

Because what follows is pure innocence:° 87
I owe you much and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but, if you’d please°
To shoot another shaft the self-same way°
As you did shoot the first, (and loan to me
Again, one more amount,)° I do not doubt—
Watching the aim with care—that I’ll find both: 88
I will return° the sums that now you risk,°

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 to clear my former debts.° 

And all I need is rest

—Antonio

You know me well, yet herein spend but time,
To try my love with needless circumstanceº:  
And certainly,º you offer me more wrong,º
In doubtingº my utmost desire to helpº,º
Than if you had made waste ofº all I have.º
Then do but say to meº what I should do,
The most you know thatº may be done by me,
And I am pressed unto it.º Therefore speak.  

—Bassanio

Alas, there is in Belmont, a lady
Who has since come upon a countless fortune;º
And she is fair and, fairer than all words,º
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes,º from her eyes,

89. / And fundsº to clearº my former debts.° 
89 90 / And all I need is rest

91. You know me well, yet herein spendº but time,
To try my love with needless circumstanceº: 
And certainly,º you offer meº more wrong,º
In doubtingº my utmost desire to helpº,º
Than if you had made waste ofº all I have.º
Then do but say to meº what I should do,
The most you know thatº may be done by me,
And I am pressed unto it.º Therefore speak.  

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 complianceº / abidance
And try my loveº with circuitous pleasº / 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°
Than Cato’s daughter, Brutus’ Portia.°
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned° suitors; and her sunny° locks
Adorn° her temples like a golden fleece
Which turns her country° estate° at Belmont
Into the promising° shores of Colchis. 101
Where many Jasons come in quest of her.102
O my Antonio,° had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them° 104
My mind portends° me of certain success,°
That I, without doubt, should° be fortunate.°

—Antonio
You knows’t that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money, nor sufficient store° 107
To raise a present sum.° Therefore, go forth,

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° loving messages
   / I did receive the most adoring glances° / 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 comes 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;° 108
Let it be stretched° even to the utmost° 109
To furnish° thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go and make inquiries°—and so will I—
Secure the funds from wherever° you must,
Based on my name, my credit, or my trust. 110

Exeunt

108. {Try what my credit can in Venice do.}
109. {That shall be racked, even to the utmost}
     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.
ACT ONE - Scene Two  1.2

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, sweet⁴ madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as are⁴ your good fortunes. And yet, for all⁵ I see, those who indulge⁶ 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 gray⁰ hairs, while moderation⁰ brings longer life.⁰ 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 be⁰ churches¹¹ (to

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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: {sought} / 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). It is a good preacher who follows his own sermon. 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 laws to control one’s passion, but hot desire leaps o’er a cold decree. Such a hare is folly—the youth—that skips o’er the traps of good counsel—the cripple. But such insight is not going to find me a husband of my choosing. O me, the word, choose: I may neither chose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike. So is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that there is none I can chose, nor none I can refuse?

—Nerissa

Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men nearing death have good inspirations. Therefore, the lott’ry that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, wherein the one who chooses the right chest, by its inscription, chooses you, will no doubt, never be chosen rightly by one whom you shall not rightly love. 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. [But all this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband]

15. {such a hare is folly, 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.

16. {But all this thinking is not in the fashion} / I may neither choose whom I want, nor refuse whom I don’t want

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

18. I cannot choose: Portia is powerless; she cannot choose; she is bound by her father’s conditions and yet—unlike the submissive fair-tale princess—she is complaining about these fair-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]

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—and, yet, it appears, that neither Portia nor Nerissa have real faith in this method.
towards any of these princely suitors that have already come?° 21

—Portia
I pray thee, name them once again;° 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.° 23

/prince from Naples.

—Portia
Ay, there’s a colt° indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he counts it a great appropriation to° his own good parts° 24 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

—Nerissa
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)° the weeping philosopher° 29 when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly° sadness in his youth.° 30 I would rather be married to a skull with a bone in its mouth
than to either of these. God protect me from these two!  

—Nerissa
What say you of the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

—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 Palantine. As he is no one, he tries to be everyone. At the song of a sparrow, he dances straight-away like a puppet. Afraid of his own shadow, he draws a sword to fence with it. If I should marry him, I’d have to marry twenty of him to have one husband. If he would reject me I would return the favor; but should he fall madly in love with me, that I shall never requite.

—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 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? And how oddly he is suited! I think he got his jacket in Italy, his stockings in France, his round hat in

31. {I’d rather be married to a death’s-head with a bone in his mouth} > I’d rather be dead
32. unmannery: unfortunate / unbecoming / misappropriated / unbridled / unseemly > not fit for a youth
prove (h)imself to be: {prove} / prove (h)imself: / 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 trassel sing, he falls straight a cap’ring}
   trassel: / thrrostle / 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 thrassel 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.
   > 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.
38. {He will fence with his own shadow}
   fence: / duel / battle / do battle
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 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 vile in the morning when he is sober; and with great vile 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 do to live without him.

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

—Nerissa
If he should decide to choose, and should he choose the right casket—you would refuse to perform 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 glass of white wine on the contrary casket; for if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will chose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

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 / affectation

Compare Greene, Farewell to Folly (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 Nerissa 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.  

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

—Portia
If I live to be as old as the Prophetess of Cumae, 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, (in deciding to depart) for there is not one among them, whose very absence I do not dote upon—and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

—Nerissa
Do you not remember, lady, in your father’s time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in the company of Marquis of Montferrat?
—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° deserving of a fair° lady.  

most: {best}  

fair: beautiful

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

Enter a Servant

—Servant
The four foreigners 64 seek for you, madam, to take their leave—and there is a messenger° come from° 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° a heart 65 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
Come Nerissa, ‘tis° just like before: 68
While we shut the gate upon one° 69
Another now comes to knock at the° door. 70 71

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. {While 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.
/ While one suitor leaves, and chances° no more, / While 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.
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}

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 steadfast 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° to the contrary?

—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° are in question.° He hath an argosy° bound for Tripolis,° another to the Indies. I understand, moreover, from word on° the Rialto,° he hath a third at Mexico, a forth for England, and other ventures he hath scattered about.°° Yet ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, land thieves and water thieves—I mean pirates.°°° And then there is the peril of the water, wind, and rocks. The man is nonetheless sufficient.°°° Three thousand ducats—I think I may take his bond.°°°

—Bassanio
Be assured you may.°°° With assurance you may

—Shylock
I will be assured I may; and that I may be assured, I will think it over.°°°° May I speak with Antonio?°°°°

—Bassanio
If it please you to°°°° dine with us.

—Shylock
Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the swine°°°° which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil

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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 lead’s 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.
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.

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).

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.)

Enter Antonio

—Bassanio
It is 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° / closer / keener
Does he resemble° a fawning innkeeper,° 19 / look like / an obsequious servant 〈So eager° in serving the needs of others.〉20 21 / Seeking / Ready
How I despise his Christian haughtiness° 22 / charity

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

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° / lowly servant, (as he tries to
Accommodate the wantings of his friend.)

22. 〈I hate him for he is a Christian〉
/ I hate his Christian kind° of charity / breed / acts / show
/ I hate his Christian meddling, but more so
But more, for that in low simplicity,\textsuperscript{23} / for in his simple ignorance / simple-mindedness

He lends out money gratis and brings down

The rate of interest here with us in Venice. \textsuperscript{24} / usance

If I can catch him once upon the hip\textsuperscript{25} / at a disadvantage / at my advantage

I will feed fat\textsuperscript{26} the ancient grudge I bear him. \textsuperscript{26} / exploit / I’ll gratify

He hates our sacred nation; and even

Where merchants most do congregate,\textsuperscript{27} / meet to do business

On me, my contracts,\textsuperscript{28} and my well-earned profit, \textsuperscript{27} / business / well-won thrift

Which he calls, usury.\textsuperscript{28} Cursed be my tribe \textsuperscript{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]

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

\textsuperscript{24} / I hate his Christian pretenses, but more / For that in low simplicity he lends

\textsuperscript{25} / 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.’

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{feed fat}: indulge in, exploit, gratify, delight in; take full advantage of

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{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.’

\textsuperscript{28} / If I can once, and gain an advantage / If I can catch him once when he’s off-guard

\textsuperscript{29} / at a disadvantage / at my advantage

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{feed fat}: indulge in, exploit, gratify, delight in; take full advantage of

\textsuperscript{27} / meet to do business

\textsuperscript{28} / business

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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 bringing 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.
If I forgive him.

—Bassanio    Shylock, do you hear?

—Shylock
I am considering my present store, And by the rough guess of my memory, I cannot instantly raise up the gross Of full three thousand ducats. What of that? Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe, Will furnish me. But wait! How many months Do you desire? [To Antonio]  Rest you fair, good signior, Your worship was the last man in our mouths.  

—Antonio
Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow By taking nor by giving with interest Yet to supply the ripe needs of my friend I’ll break a custom. [to Bassanio] Does he know the amount, How much you want?

—Shylock    Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

—Antonio
And for three months.

—Shylock

29. a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe: Both the terms Hebrew and tribe are somewhat misplaced. Tribe may refer to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, but Jews did not generally refer to themselves as tribe members. In a more indigenous language, Shylock may have said, ‘Tubal, a rich man of my congregation.’

30. Shylock knows full well that the bond is for three months, as he has already stated it twice. Here is again stalling for time or, most likely, mindlessly repeating idle words (small talk) to Bassanio as he waits for Antonio to arrive.

31. Shylock’s words are most gracious, generously welcoming of Antonio, and what appear to be Shylock’s true offer of friendship—which Antonio might now be inclined (or obligated) to accept, as Antonio is in need of Shylock’s help. Yet, Antonio may see this overtly warm welcome as a usurer’s ruse, a pretense of friendship only offered to gain advantage. Hence, Antonio neither accepts the welcome nor returns it. Antonio refuses to befriend a usurer. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.57]

32. / I’ll break a custom to supply the ripe / ready / pressing Wants of my friend.

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.
I had forgot—three months. [to Bassanio] You told me so.  
Well then, your bond. And let me see. . . . But hear you:
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
On sums that bear interest.

—Antonio
I never do.

—Shylock
When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban’s sheep
He then was third in line from Abraham—
This, his wise mother, had deftly arranged;
The third possessor—ay, he was the third.

—Antonio
And what of it? Did he take interest?

—Shylock
No, not directly—hear what Jacob did:
He first agreed with Laban, that for earnings,
He could have all the sheep born marked or spotted.
‘Tis known, whatever a ewe sees when mating
That’s what her newborn will come to resemble.
Autumn had come; it was the time for breeding.
So Jacob peeled off the bark from some sticks
And when the work of generations was
Between these wooly breeders in the act
He put the branches in front of the ewes.
In spring they conceived lambs that were spotted

34. Shylock definitely did not forget that the term of the bond was for three months. He is playing a game of positioning, perhaps wanting to appear rather nonchalant and not entirely focused on the details of the bond; or he may want to appear somewhat playful and chummy with Bassanio to gain positioning on Antonio. (How Bassanio comes to find Shylock in the first place is not known. What is clear is that Antonio, even out of love for Bassanio, would never have ‘stooped so low’ as to approach Shylock on his own accord.)

35. Abram: Abraham. The Author uses the original name, Abram, which means ‘exalted father’ rather than Abraham which means, ‘father of many nations,’ because the biblical account he refers to uses the name Abram, not Abraham. Abram received the name Abraham from God when he was 99 years old.

36. [This Jacob from our holy Abram was, | As his wise mother wrought in his behalf, | The third possessor—ay, he was the third.]

37. / He first agreed with Laban that all sheep
Found pied or spotted,° Jacob, for his earnings,
Could keep. What e’er a ewe sees when she mates
And all the offspring rightly went to Jacob. This was the way he thrived, and he was blessed; And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.

—Antonio

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for, A thing not in his power to bring to pass But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven

〈Which naturally allows all creatures to breed— The same of which does not apply to money.〉

Was this inserted to justify usury? Or is your gold and wealth like Jacob’s sheep?

—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.}

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

43. Was this inserted to justify usury?

〈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. {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.
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 usurer?’)

   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:

   (And thus befoils the honor of his own people. ) / And fouls the righteousness of his own people
For sufferance is the badge of all my people. 52
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, it now appears you need my help—
To hell with that! 55 You come to me and say:
‘Shylock, we wish for monies.’ 56 You say so—
You that did void your spit upon my beard
And kick me as you’d spurn a worthless dog
Out from your doorway. 57 Now you ask for money:
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
‘Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?’ Or
Shall I bend low, and in a servant’s voice,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this: ‘Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last—
You spurned me such a day. Another time
You called me ‘dog’—and for these courtesies
I’ll lend you thus much monies’?

—Antonio
I am as like to call thee so again,

52. {For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe}
sufferance: 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—wheras ‘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°
As to thy friend—for when did friendship make°
Profit° on barren metal,61 (breeding it°
As if° the offspring of a living creature?) 62
Nay,° lend it rather to thine enemy
Who, if he breaks, thou may’st with better° face
Exact° the penalty.

—Shylock
Look how you storm! 63
I would be friends with you and have your love,°
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no drop°
Of interest° for my monies 64 —and you’ll not hear me. 65

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°
And cozen men of their rightful possessions
Leaving them hapless° and in total ruin.
You call this ‘thrif’t, though it be none but theft.°
(Your baneful° practice of usury affronts
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 iamb (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 iamb (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
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’ volessa (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 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.

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

—Antonio
Why, fear not, man, I will not forfeit it.  
Within these two months—that’s a month before  
This bond expires—I do expect return°  
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

—Shylock
O father Abram, how these Christians are:  
Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect°  
The thoughts of others! [to Bassanio] Pray you, tell me this:  
If he should break his day° what should I gain  
By the exaction of° the forfeiture?  
A pound of man’s flesh, taken from a man,  
Has neither worth nor can afford° a profit  
As° flesh of mutton, cow, or goat.° I say,  
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship.°  
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.  

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
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 pursue 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 ruse.

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

The implication here is that Shylock’s inept servant (Launcelot) 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 a villain’s mind. {I like not fair terms from a villain’s mind} 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:
   Ans: 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° me not for my complexion;°
This darkened raiment° of the burnished° sun°
Is worn by all who breed° so near° its fire.°
Bring me a man whose skin is light and fair,
Born° from the coldest regions of the north,
Where the sun’s° heat° can scarce thaw an icicle,°
And let us make a cut,° at love’s behest,°
To prove whose blood is reddest—his or mine.
I tell thee, lady,° this aspect° of mine
Has brought much fear to brave and valiant men.
And by my love, I swear, it too was loved
By the most-honored° virgins of our clime.°
I would not change this dark and noble hue,
Except to steal° your thoughts, my gentle queen.

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

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 (by 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: comPLEXion

3. . . . bestowed by the sun

4. [To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.]

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

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}

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
In terms of choice, I am not solely led

By that which gratifies a maiden's eye.

Besides the contest rendered by my father

Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.

But if my father had not scanted me,

And hedged me by his wit to yield myself,

As wife, to he who chooses the right casket

Then you great prince, would stand as fair a chance.

—Portia

In terms of choice, I am not solely led.

By that which gratifies a maiden's eye.

Besides the contest rendered by my father

Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.

But if my father had not scanted me,

And hedged me by his wit to yield myself,

As wife, to he who chooses the right casket

Then you great prince, would stand as fair a chance.

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. Aragon, 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, these 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. solely: 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 wins 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 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, renownèd prince, then stood as fair} / Then you, renownèd 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 Neopolitan, 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 comers° I have looked on yet°
For my affection.°

—Morocco            Even for that I thank you.
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar 22
That slew a Sultan° and a Persian Prince,
That thrice defeated the great Suleiman,° 23
I would o’er-stare the sternest° eyes that look,
Outbrave the boldest heart that e’er did beat; 24
Pluck° the young suckling cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock° the lion when it° roars for prey, 25
To win thee, lady. But alas the while,
If Hercules and his servant play dice, 26
The hand of chance° determines the victor / winner
Which may grant victory° to the weaker hand:
So is the hero beaten° by his page. 28
And so may I, blind fortune° leading me, 29 30
Miss that which one of lesser worth° attains— 31
And die with° grieving.

—Portia              You must take your chance,°
And either not attempt to choose at all, 32
Or swear before you choose,° if you choose wrong,
To ne’er thereafter° take a lady’s hand / propose to a lady
By° way of marriage. Therefore, be advised.°

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

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

—Portia
First forward to° the altar,° (there to take / go ye to / go unto
The solemn oath required.) After dinner°
Your hazard shall be made.

—Morocco
Good fortune then,
To make me° blest or cursed’st among men.

Flourish of cornets. Exeunt
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.° 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
ACT TWO - Scene Two 2.2.0

Venice. Enter Launcelot Gobbo, the clown, alone. ¹

—Launcelot

Certainly my conscience will not permit me to run from this Jew, my master.² The fiend at mine elbow³ tempts me, saying, ‘Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,’ or ‘good Gobbo,’ or ‘good Launcelot Gobbo’—‘use your legs, take the start,⁴ run away.’ My conscience says, ‘No, take heed, honorable⁵ Launcelot; take heed honest Gobbo,’—or as aforesaid, ‘honorable Launcelot Gobbo’—‘do not run; scorn running⁶ with thy heels.’ Well the most courageous fiend bids me pack⁷ my things. ‘Get going!’⁸ says the fiend. ‘Away!’ says the fiend. ‘For the sake of heaven,’⁹ says the fiend, ‘rouse up a brave mind—and run.’ Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,⁷ says very wisely to me, ‘My honest friend Launcelot’—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. Launcelot’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 Launcelot give into their fiendish side.

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: Launcelot 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 Launcelot’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 chocked 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 gross 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),
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 Gratiziano 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,\(^\text{17}\)—knows me not. I will try confusing him.\(^\text{18}\)

—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!—\(^\text{19}\)\(\text{pay careful attention}\)—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 God\(^\text{20}\)‘twill be a hard place\(^\text{a}\) to hit.\(^\text{°}\) Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, still lives with him or no? \(^\text{21}\)

—Launcelet
Talk you of young Master Launcelet? \(\text{aside}\) Watch me now—I will raise a few tears!\(^\text{10}\) Talk you of young Master Launcelet?

—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.\(^\text{°}\) \(\text{well to live}\)

—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? \(^\text{22}\)

\(^\text{17}\) 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.

\(^\text{18}\) \{I will try confusions with him.\}  
\textbf{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.

\(^\text{19}\) \{marry\}: The term marry has the force of ‘verily,’ ‘indeed’ and by extension, ‘now listen carefully’ or ‘pay attention,’ etc.

\(^\text{20}\) \{By God’s sotties\}/ \{By God’s little saints\}/ \{Even with God’s favor\}/ \{Even with God’s help\}/ \{Even with the blessings of God\}  
\textbf{sotties}: a) little saints, b) sanctity, blessedness.

\(^\text{21}\) \{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?\}  
\textbf{place}: \{way\}/ \textbf{hit}: / \textbf{find}

\(^\text{22}\) \{Your worship’s friend and Launcelet, sir.\}/ \{My worship, do you know my boy Launcelet, sir?\}  
\textbf{your worship}: honorific title for someone of high standing  
\textbf{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 it⁰ 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.⁰ 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.⁰ / be known

—Old Gobbo

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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, 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.

All praise the Lord, 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, primera, 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. My master’s a very Jew. Give him a present?—rather give him a noose! I am famished in his service, you may count every rib I have with your fingers.

(Launcelet guides Old Gobbo’s fingers to the side of his chest; 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, to one Master Bassanio, who indeed fashions his servants with fine new uniforms. If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has made ground.

Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers

O rare fortune! Here comes the man—to him, father, (give your gift to him.)

—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.

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 consummated service and for this get but the lowest wages.) Consummated, 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. Would’st thou want° 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,° 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 terms 48—

—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° man—shall fructify 49 unto you— [pulls his father in front]

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

—Launcelet [pulls his father away]
In very brief, the suit is impertinent 50 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, my father—

—Bassanio
Let one but speak for both. [to Launcelet] What do you want? 

—Launcelet
To serve you, sir.

—Old Gobbo
That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

—Bassanio [to Launcelet]
I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit.

Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day,

And recommended thee. But why prefer

To leave a rich Jew’s service to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman?

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

—Bassanio
Thou speakest 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 is servant—and certainly would not prompt Bassanio to say, ‘he hath preferred (recommended) thee.’

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

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 Launcelot] Take leave of thy old master; then make way Unto my house. [To one of his men] Give him a uniform° {livery} More fancy° than his fellows.° See it done. 59 / braided / trimmed // the others

—Launcelot

Father, let’s go.° I cannot get a service job (on my own)?—I have ne’er a tongue in my head!°

[Looking at his palm] Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer palm, which he may° offer to swear upon the Book, I shall have good fortune. [Looking more closely at the lines] What°—here’s a simple life—and it tells of° a small trifle of wives—alas, fifteen in the least.° A dozen° widows and nine maids is a simple income—or coming-in—for one man.° 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.° 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 Launcelot gets a uniform ‘more guarded than his fellows’° is not clear. Launcelot’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 Launcelot’s fool-heartedness.

60. / I cannot speak for myself?

This line is delivered with sarcasm. Launcelot 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 Launcelot 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 Launcelot’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, to hell. Launcelot, 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 life-line—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 ‘e leven’ 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 Launcelot intends to take leave of the Jew without delay.

In this rendering, the term tinkle is used only because is sounds like twinkle. The absurd image used in this rendering echoes (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 Launcelot is claiming that he will not urinate until his task is accomplished. As part of a comic staging, Launcelot 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 tinking / 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 board 69
Return in haste, for I do feast tonight 70
With all my dearest friends. 71 Now hurry, go.

— Leonardo
My best endeavors shall be done herein.°

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.°

—Bassanio You have obtained 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 Gratiano:
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice—
Parts that become thee happily 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°
Somewhat too overbearing. Thus, take pains 78 / {Something} / A tad / A bit
To allay, with some drops of self-control, 79 / {modesty}
Thy bounding° spirit, lest through thy wild behavior 80 / {skipping} / leaping
I be disfavored° in the place I go° / {I be misconstrued} // in the eyes of others
And lose° my hopes (of success). 82 / ruin / dash

—Gratiano
Now° hear me:

73. {You must not deny me. I must go with you to Belmont.}
This line is likely corrupt for the following reasons: a) the iamb is misplaced (with no emphasis on the fourth syllable) and b) the line contains seven iambics (instead of five). In addition, Gratiano is amiss in making a demand [you must not deny me] after his request has already been granted. More likely, Gratiano 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 Gratiano's request once, not twice:
Grat: I have a suit—and you must not say 'no°— / deny me
Signor, I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass: Why then you must. But hear thee Gratiano,

74. It is likely that Bassanio knew of Gratiano's request before he even asked it—and that is why he granted Gratiano'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 Gratiano (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 choose 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 Gratiano 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° behavior / unruly / froward
81. {I be misconstrued}: / 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 Gratiano'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 Gratiano'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 Gratiano 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, sober manner
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Hold a prayer-book in my hand, look demurely—
Nay, more—while saying grace, cover mine eyes
Thus, with my hat, and sigh, and say, ‘Amen,’
And follow every count of good behavior—
Like one well-studied in a sad expression
To please his grandma—never trust me more.

—Bassanio
Well, we shall see the way you hold yourself.

—Gratiziano
Nay, but I drink tonight: you shall not judge me
By what we do tonight.

—Bassanio
No, t’were a pity.
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth; for we have friends
That want some merriment. But fare you well
I have some business.

—Gratiziano
And I must meet Lorenzo and the rest.
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}
90. {That purpose merriment. But fare you well} / Who’re set on merriment
   / That want a rousing party. But farewell
ACT TWO - Scene Three

Shylock’s house. Enter Jessica and Launcelet.

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

—Launcelet

Exit Launcelet

—Jessica
Farewell, good Launcelet.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To shun my father and bring him dishonor.
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

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 fro every ducat and where Jessica, the moment she comes upon some money, frivolously spends it.). Manner could also refers 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
ACT TWO – Scene Four

Venice. Enter Gratziano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio

—Lorenzo
Nay, we will slip° away at supper-time,°
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° of torchbearers.

—Salanio
This plan will go afoul if not well-made; 5
And best, I think,° abandoned altogether. 6

—Lorenzo
’Tis now but four o’clock: we have two hours
To get things ready.°

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 Gratiano 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 Gratiano, who is, well, Gratiano.

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 sup per 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.  

—Lorenzo
I know the handwriting° ‘tis a fair hand, I know the hand, in faith
And whiter than the paper ‘tis writ on
Is the fair hand that writ

—is the fair hand

—Gratiano
Love-news, I think. °°

—Launcelet
By your leave, sir.°

—Lorenzo
Where° goest thou?  Whither

—Launcelet
Well sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup tonight with my new master the Christian.  

—Lorenzo
Hold here, take this [gives him a coin].  Tell gentle Jessica, I will not fail her.°°  Speak it° privately. / Tell her

Exit Launcelet

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°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 Jewes 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,° beneath her balcony—)
   I will not fail her.
   The discrepancy is slight and need not be rectified; whereas Lorenzo telling the loose-lipped Launcelet 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?° / 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.° / We’ll surely do so

—Salarino
‘Tis good we do so.° {some hour hence} / one hour hence

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,° / she will bring with her
What page’s suit she’ll wear for her disguise.° 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_

[See Additional Notes, 2.4.37]

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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 see—thy eyes shall be thy judge—

The difference ‘tween old Shylock and Bassanio.

[calling] Hey Jessica! Thou shalt not stuff thyself\(^1\)

As thou hast done with me. [calling] Hey Jessica!

Nor sleep, and snore, and wear out all your pants
From sitting round all day.\(^2\) [calling louder] Hey Jessica!

—Launcelet
Hey Jessica!

—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? What is your will?

—Shylock
I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
Here are my keys. But why then should I go?

1. {Thou shalt not gormandize} / Thou shalt not gluttonize.
   A curious combination of a Jewish type commandment, ‘thou shalt not’ and a Christian admonition against glutony.
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 term 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!
   Launce: Your worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding.}
I am not bid for love. They flatter me.  
But yet I’ll go in spite, to feed upon  
The wasteful Christian. Jessica, my girl,  
Care for my house. I am right loathe to go;  
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest  
For I did dream of money-bags last night—
(A sign which tells of an upcoming loss.)  

—Launcelet
I beseech you, sir, go. My young master doth expect your reproach.

—Shylock
As I expect his.  

—Launcelet
And they are planning something. I will not say you shall see a masquerade party but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday last, at six o’clock i’th’morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday, the fourth year in the afternoon.  

—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 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, {What, are there masques?} / A masquerade?
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;° / painted // colored masks
But plug° my house’s ears—I mean my casements;° / stop // windows
Let not the sound of mindless° fopp’ry° enter / shallow // folly
My somber house. . . . By Jacob’s staff 15 I swear
I have no mind° of feasting forth° tonight, / I’ve no desire // going out
But I will go. 16 [To Launcelet] Go you before me, then, 17
Say I will come.

—Launcelet I will go before, sir.
[aside to Jessica] Mistress, look out the window for all this:
There will come a Christian by / There a Christian will come by,
Will be worth a Jewess eye / 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 patch° 19 is kind enough, but a huge feeder.°  Snail-slow in working,° 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—°  
Now to the Christian so he can help waste° 21
His borrowed purse.°  Well Jessica, go in,
Perhaps I will return immediately.° 22
Do as I bid and° shut doors° after you:
                 Fast bind, fast find—
                        A proverb never stale in a thrifty mind.° 23

Exit

—Jessica
Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed,
I have° a husband,° you a daughter lost.° 24

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 terms 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 Launcelot’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 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.
ACT TWO – Scene Six

Venice. Enter the maskers, Gratiano, Salarino, and Salanio.¹

—Gratiano
This is the window under° which Lorenzo
Desired us to wait.°

—Salarino
His hour is past.°

—Gratiano
It is° a marvel he out-dwells his hour,°
For lovers ever-run before the clock.

—Salarino
O, ten times faster fly the doves of Venus°
To seal love’s bond new made° than they are wont
To keep their well-intentioned vows° intact.°

1. The stage heading in Q1 reads: ‘Enter the maskers, Gratiano and Salarino.’ This stage heading is somewhat confusing, both in its reference to Salario (which seems to indicate Salarino and not Salario) 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 Gratiano, Salarino, and Salanio. Thus, it is likely that a diligent typesetter, wanting to ‘clarify’ the text, later added the names of Gratiano and Salario 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 Salario 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 till 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 outdwell 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 Gratiano replies that he ‘outdwell 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.°
Gra: It is a marvel he prolongs° his hour.

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 younkers run ten times as fast / A wayward lover runs tens times as fast

4. {To keep obligèd faith unforfeited.}
oblìged: 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
That ever holds:° Who riseth from a feast
With the keen° hunger of one sitting down? 5
Where is the horse that doth retread° again
Another lap° with the unbated fire°
That he did pace the first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chasèd° than enjoyed.
How like a young man° or a prodigal
The bannered° ship° leaves from her native bay, 7
Hugged and escorted° by the forceful wind; 8
How like the prodigal doth she return
With over-weathered° ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggared by the forceful° wind!

Enter Lorenzo

—Salanio
Here comes Lorenzo—more of this hereafter.

—Lorenzo
Sweet friends, your patience for° my long delay.° 9
Not I, but my affairs have made you wait:10
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives°
Then I will watch as long for you. Come here.°
Here dwells my father° Jew. [calling] Hey!° Who’s within?

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 streamers 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, Gratzianno 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.
Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty, / so I am assured / can be sure
Although° I’ll swear that I do know your voice.° {Albeit} > “all be it” / {tongue}

—Lorenzo
Lorenzo—and thy° love. / your

—Jessica
Lorenzo, surely, and my love indeed—° 
{certain}
The one I love so much!° And now who knows
{For who love I so much}
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

—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.°
{exchange}° / new look
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty° follies that themselves commit;°
For if they could, Cupid° himself° would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy. 17

—Lorenzo
Come down,° for you must be my torchbearer. 18 {Descend}

—Jessica
What, must I hold a candle° to my shames?
{The pretty} / artful / petty > comedic, ridiculous
They are, good sooth, already too° too light.° 19

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. ‘They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light’ / They are, good heavens, already too light.
19. (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,°
And I° should be concealed.°
—Lorenzo

So are you, sweet,
E’en° in the lovely° garnish° of a boy.
But come at once (and tarry you no further):°
For the cov’ring of night soon runs away°
And we are stayed for° at Bassanio’s feast.°
—Jesssica

I will make fast the doors, and guild myself°
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit above

—Gratziano

Now, by my word,° she’s more gentile than Jew.

—Lorenzo

You can berate me if I do not love her°
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 lovely, which is an old spelling of lovely 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 is 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).

26. guild 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)]

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.  

Enter Jessica

What, beauty art thou!  Gentlemen, away,
Let us make ground° awhile the maskers play.

Exeunt Lorenzo, Jessica, Salarino, and Salanio

Enter Antonio

—Antonio
Who's there?

—Gratiano
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 Salario, 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 Salerino 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 in 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 a ncy and go out looking for them, which might draw notice and suspicion. As it turns out, everyone at the masque became acutely aware that Gratiano (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 Gratiano near Shylock’s house, is amiss. Antonio would not be going out in search of Gratiano 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?  

{Tis nine o’clock; our friends all stay° for you.

No masque tonight, the wind has come about,  

And now Bassanio is° aboard his ship.  

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.°  

—I’m glad of it:° I seek° no more delight,  

Than to be under sail and gone tonight.  

Exeunt°

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.
ACT TWO - Scene Seven

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° the triple° caskets for this noble prince.

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° this inscription bears: ² ‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.’
The second, silver, which this promise carries: ³ ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
The third, dull lead, with warning all° as blunt: / just
‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
[to Portia] How shall I know if I do chose the right?° ⁴

—Portia
The one of them contains my picture, Prince; If you choose that, then all of mine is yours.° ⁵

—Morocco
Some god direct my judgement. Let me see—
I will inspect° the° inscriptions once° again.°
What says this leaden casket?
‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
Must give, for what? For lead? Hazard° for lead?
This casket threatens: Men that° hazard all

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° 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.°
A golden mind stoops not to petty schemes.  
I’ll neither give nor hazard all for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
As much as he deserves. Pause there Morocco
And weigh thy value with an even hand.
If thou be valued by thine worthiness,
Thou dost deserve enough— and yet ‘enough’
May not extend so far as to the lady.
And yet to be afraid of my deserving°
Would be a weak disabling of myself.  
‘As much as I deserve’—why, that’s the lady!
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces,° and in qualities of breeding—
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no further,° but chose here?
Let’s see, once more, this saying ‘graved° 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.
The Persian deserts° and the vasty wilds°
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For every prince to come and view fair Portia.
The wat’ry kingdom° whose high-reaching wave°
Spits° in the face of heaven, is no bar°

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
   °{a feared} // fear what I truly deserve
   °{Were but} // debasing / discredit

10. / Would be° a weak disabling° of myself.
    °‘As much as I deserve’—why, that’s the lady!
    I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
    In graces,° and in qualities of breeding°—
    But more than these, in love I do deserve.
    What if I strayed no further,° but chose here?
    Let’s see, once more, this saying ‘graved° 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.
    The Persian deserts° and the vasty wilds°
    Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
    For every prince to come and view fair Portia.
    The wat’ry kingdom° whose high-reaching wave°
    Spits° in the face of heaven, is no bar°

11. °{estimation} / reputation / own repute

12. °{a feared} // fear what I truly deserve
    °{Were but} // debasing / discredit

13. °“As much as I deserve”—why, that’s the lady!
    °I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
    °In graces,° and in qualities of breeding°—
    °But more than these, in love I do deserve.
    °What if I strayed no further,° but chose here?
    °Let’s see, once more, this saying ‘graved° 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.
    °The Persian deserts° and the vasty wilds°
    °Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
    °For every prince to come and view fair Portia.
    °The wat’ry kingdom° whose high-reaching wave°
    °Spits° in the face of heaven, is no bar°

14. °“As much as I deserve”—why, that’s the lady!
    °I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
    °In graces,° and in qualities of breeding°—
    °But more than these, in love I do deserve.

15. °A golden mind stoops not to petty° schemes.
    °Do so in hope of quick and feeble gain

16. °A golden mind stoops not to petty° schemes.
    °Do so in hope of quick and feeble gain

Q1 = ‘vastic’; 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,\(^\circ\) who but leap\(^\circ\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n(Across her vast expanse,) as o’er\(^\circ\) a brook,\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nTo catch one sight\(^\circ\) of the fair Portia.\(^{18}\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nOne of these three contains her heavenly picture.\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nIs’t like\(^\circ\) that lead contains her? ‘Twere damnation\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nTo think so base a thought. It is\(^\circ\) too grosse\(^\circ\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nThat she be wrapped in common cerecloth\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nLike one who’s buried in the obscure grave.\(^{20}\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nOr shall I think in silver she’s immured,\(^\circ\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nWhich holds one-tenth the value\(^\circ\) of tried\(^\circ\) gold?\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nO sinful thought! Never so rich a gem\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nWas set in worse\(^\circ\) than gold. They have in England\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nA coin that bears the figure of an angel\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nStamped in gold; but that’s insculpted upon\(^\circ\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nThe surface—here an angel lies within!\(^{23}\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nDeliver me the key, and straight away\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nHere do I choose, and prosper as I may.\(^{24}\)\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n
—Portia
\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nThere, take it, prince. And if my form lie there,\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\n\{foreign spirits\}\(^{17}\) \{but they come\}/\nThen I am yours.

Morocco unlocks the golden casket

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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
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 possey: *Who so chooseth me, shall find what God has disposed for him.*’ [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]
22. / Could e’er be set\(^\circ\) in something worse than gold. / Was ever set
   There is\(^\circ\) a coin in England, stamped in gold,
   / They have
   That bears the figure of a rad’ant angel
   But that’s insculpted on\(^\circ\) the outer surface,\(^\circ\) / 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 insculpted 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.*
26. Q1 reads: Gilded timber do worms enfold. 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. ‘Tis cold indeed, and labor lost.
Now farewell heat and welcome frost. Portia I have too grieved a heart
For tedious leave, and so I part.

28. {Cold indeed} {Cold indeed and labour lost | Then farewell heat, and welcome frost}

29. {Portia, adieu, I have too grieved a heart: | To take a tedious leave, thus losers 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 cornets. 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]).
Exeunt
ACT TWO - Scene Eight

Venice. Enter Salarino and Salanio.  

—Salarino
Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail, And Gratiano's gone along with him. I'm sure Lorenzo is not on their ship.°  

—Salanio
The villain Jew with outcries roused° the Duke, Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.  

—Salarino
He came too late; the ship was under sail.° But there the Duke was giv'n° to understand That seen together, in a gondola, Were young Lorenzo and his amorous love.° Besides, Antonio assured° the Duke They were not with Bassanio in his ship.  

—Salanio
I never heard an outburst° so confused, So strange, outlandish,° and so oddly spoke° 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! 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, Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!

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° his day.°
Or he shall pay for this.

—Salarino
Ay,° well remembered°—
I conversed° with a Frenchman yesterday
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part°
The French and English,° there did overturn°
A vessel of our country, fraught with riches.°
I thought about° Antonio when he told me,°
And wished in silence that it were not his.

—Salanio
You’re° best to tell Antonio what you hear;°
Yet do it gently, else it° may grieve him.

—Salarino
A kinder gentleman treads not° this earth:
I saw Bassanio° and Antonio part.°
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return.° Antonio said, ‘Do not;°
Rush not your heart° for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay until the time has fully ripened.°
As for the Jew’s bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind or heart:°
Be joyous° and employ° your chiefest° thoughts°

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’
12. / No, no
13. / ripening of time
14. / foremost
To courtship and\textsuperscript{15} such fair ostents\textsuperscript{16} of love,
As shall most fittingly\textsuperscript{17} become\textsuperscript{18} you there.’
And then, right there,\textsuperscript{19} his eyes aflow with tears,
He turned his face and put his arms around him,
And with affection, so fully displayed,\textsuperscript{20}
He kissed Bassanio’s cheek, and so\textsuperscript{21} they parted.

—Salanio

His only love in this world is for him.\textsuperscript{22}
I pray thee, let us go and find Antonio\textsuperscript{23}
To quicken\textsuperscript{24} his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.\textsuperscript{25}

—Salarino

So we shall.\textsuperscript{26}

Exeunt

\textsuperscript{15}\{To courtship and such fair ostents of love\}
\text{fair ostents of love: / fair displays of love / fair showings of love}
\text{osten: 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.}

\textsuperscript{16}\{As shall most fittingly become you 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: \textit{The Lottery}]

\textsuperscript{17}\{And then, right there\}
And even there, his eyes aflow with tears / afresh / adorned / aflow // filled / bursting

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{19}\{And with affection wondrous sensible\} / And with his love so fully evident

\textsuperscript{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 hand shake, 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.

\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{23}\{And steal the sorrow he doth now embrace\}
ACT TWO - Scene Nine 2.9.0

Belmont. Enter Nerissa and a Servant

—Nerissa
Quickly, I pray thee—draw the curtain straight.\(^1\) / 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,\(^3\) {I am contained}
Straightaway shall we take\(^4\) our nuptial vows. / Then straightaway we’ll take
But should you fail, without another word,\(^5\) / more speech, my lord
My lord, you must depart\(^6\) from hence at once. / be gone

—Arragon
I am enjoined\(^7\) by oath to observe three things: / obliged > obligated, bound
First, never to disclose\(^8\) to anyone
Which casket ‘twas I chose. Next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To join\(^9\) a maid by way of marriage. Lastly,
If I do fail\(^9\) in fortune of my choice,
To leave at once\(^9\) and forever be gone. / forthwith

—Portia
To these injunctions\(^9\) everyone doth swear / conditions
Who comes to hazard for my worthless\(^9\) self. / lowly

—Arragon

---

1. / Quick, quick, draw back the curtain straight away / Quick, I pray, draw the curtain straight away
   \textbf{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
   \textbf{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.° Fortune now
To my heart’s hope! Gold, silver, and base lead:
‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
You must have greater beauty than mere lead 11 12
Ere I should° give or hazard all on you. 13 14
What says the golden chest? Ah,° let me see:
‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.’
What ‘many men desire’ may indicate° 15 16
The foolish multitudes° that choose by show.
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach° 17
Which prêes° not inwardly° but like the martlet 18
Doth build its nest upon the outer wall
Therein exposing it to harsh conditions,°
E’en at the risk° of hazard and disaster. 20
I will not chose what many men desire
Because I will not jump° 21 with common sorts,° 22
And rank° me with° the barbarous multitudes. 23
Now then, to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
Tell me once more what title° thou dost bear;° ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
And well said too! For who shall go about°
To cozen° fortune by a show of honor 24

And so I have addres sed me° 10 / And I’ve attended to them / And thus I’ve taken the vows
addres sed me: I have addressed (and fulfilled) these injunctions by taking the required vows.
You must have greater beauty than mere lead
Ere I should° give or hazard all on you.
What says the golden chest? Ah,° let me see:
‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.’
What ‘many men desire’ may indicate° 15 16
The foolish multitudes° that choose by show.
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach° 17
Which prêes° not inwardly° but like the martlet 18
Doth build its nest upon the outer wall
Therein exposing it to harsh conditions,
E’en at the risk° of hazard and disaster.
I will not chose what many men desire
Because I will not jump° 21 with common sorts,° 22
And rank° me with° the barbarous multitudes. 23
Now then, to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
Tell me once more what title° thou dost bear;° ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
And well said too! For who shall go about°
To cozen° fortune by a show of honor 24

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.’

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)

Exposing it to hazardous conditions

And well said too! For who shall go about°
To cozen° fortune by a show of honor 24

Because I won’t commune
Because I shalln’t conspire

jump with: run the same course as, be in agreement with, be associated with, be allied with, etc.
Without the seal of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.°
O that one’s status, wealth, and high position
Were not derived corruptly;° and that true° honor
Were rightly earned by those who deem to wear it. 26 27
How many then should be without their crowns!°
How many that command would be commanded!
How much low peasantry° would then be gleaned°
From those of noble birth;° and how much honor
Amply bestowed° upon° 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

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° by the merit of the wearer} / procured
   / Were found upon the worth of those who wear it.
27. / Were not obtained through some corrupted° 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!} / 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 amiably: 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 claim⁰ my prize and my fortune to be. ³⁴ ³⁵

He opens the silver casket and pauses

—Portia
Too long a pause for that which you find there.⁰ ³⁶

—Arragon
What’s here? The portrait of a blinking⁰ idiot.
Presenting me a schedule.⁰ I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
‘Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.’ ³⁷
Did I deserve no more than a fool’s head!
Is that my prize? Are my deserts⁰ no better?

—Portia
By your own hand, O Prince, your choice is made;⁰ ³⁸
Can⁰ I be judge of that?⁰ ³⁹ ⁴⁰

—Arragon
And what is here?

He reads

Five times fire did burn⁰ this;⁴¹ ⁴² {try} > purify

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34. {I will assume desert. Give me a key for this, | And instantly unlock my fortunes here}  
   / And here’s

35. {I will assume desert—give me the key | To instantly unlock my fortune here}  
   / you see / would agree

36. 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 inscriptions 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 opposed 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 shadow’s 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 bed 46
I will ever be your head° 47
So be gone, for you are sped.°

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

That did never choose amiss,
Some there be that shadow’s kiss,
Such have° but a shadow’s bliss.
There be fools we all dismiss,
Silvered° o’er, and so was this.
Take what thought° you will to bed
I will ever be your head
So be gone, for 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, | Patience to bear my wraith.] Por: {Thus hath the candle singed the moath} wraith: wroth > a variant of wretch (sorrow, grief). Due to the spelling, it is likely that oath and wroth were meant to form a triplex rhyme with moath. In modern pronunciation, the rhyme between oath and wroth is lost, whereas the rhyme between wroth and moth is preserved. Thus, in modern pronunciation Aragon’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).
—Portia
One more° moth into the flame. 50
O, these high-minded° fools when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wits to lose.

—Nerissa
The ancient saying is still true of late:
Hanging and wiving are compelled by fate.° 52

—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°
To indicate° the approach° of his lord,
From whom he bringeth bounteous° off'rings,
That is to say° (besides his courteous words) 56

Exit Arragon and his attendants
Gifts of rich value. ‘Til now, I’ve not seen\(^57\)\> \>= As of yet / Up to this time
So hopeful an ambassador of love. \(^58\)\{likely\} > promising
A day in spring has never come so sweet
To show the bounty of summer’s approach \(^59\)\{in April never came\}
As this forerunner comes before his lord.

—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. \(^61\)\{your finest wit / such high-blown wit\}
Come, come, Nerissa, this I long to see,
One from Cupid’s post, come so gracefully.\(^60\)

—Nerissa \[aside\]
Bassanio! \[wishfully\] Lord Love—if thy will it be! \(^62\) \(^63\) / Lord of Love, O let it be!

Exeunt

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words and praise
57. \{Yet, I have not seen\} / I have not seen / As of yet, I’ve not seen
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
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]
ACT THREE — Scene One

_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 wrecked³ on the narrow seas—the Goodwin Shoals⁴ I think they call the place—a very dangerous flat⁵ and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall⁶ ship lie buried. This be the news⁷ if my gossip report be a woman of her word.⁸

—Salanio

I wish she were as lying a gossip as an old maid who ever knapped⁹ ginger,⁹ (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 good⁸ enough to keep his name company—⁸

—Salarino

Come the full stop anon⁹—what sayest thou?⁹

—Salanio

Why the end is, he hath lost a ship.¹⁰

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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**: {wreckt}: wrecked / 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.
    
    _Salarino_. 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° 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

—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 witha l}
16. {fled ge} 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.

—Salario

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 prodigal 26 who dare scarce show his head on
the Rialto; a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart. 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?

—Shylock

To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million times. 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, senses, affections, desires? (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: ‘Salarino and Salario,’ rather than ‘Enter Salarino and Salanio.’ (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 a 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 Salis and Shylock [21-49], none of which moves the plot, most of which is askew (especially the part where the Salis 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.’)
like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrongs a Christian, what kindness does he return? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will return unto you; yet it shall go harder to you than it has come to me.

—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.°

—Salarino
Methinks old Shylock peddles his Jewish sufferance 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.

—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
against the Jew or his nation.  

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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.  

Exeunt Salarino, Salanio, and Man

Enter Tubal

—Shylock
How now, Tubal.  What news from Genoa?  Hast thou found my daughter?

—Tubal
I often came where I did hear of her, but could not find her.  

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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 ‘appending.’) (Also note, that in this short interaction, a Jew is likened to a devil three times [19, 31, 73] : thus is seems that someone, lacking in all respects, repeated this same reference here, yet again.) Here, again, we find a likely case of ‘unauthorized appending’ 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 is was added to the text: for instance, there a mistaken speech heading in the preceding line (attributing the line to Saleri not Salaro); the stage direction, Enter Tuball, is listed twice; and the stage direction reads Exeunt Gentlemen, as opposed to Exeunt.

Saleri. We have been up and down to seek him.

Solanio. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be match, unless the devil himself turn Jew.  

Exeunt Gentlemen.

The original entry (before ‘corrections’ and additions were made) may have been thus:

Sali. We have been up and down to seek him out.

Enter Tuball.

Exeunt.

[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
Why there, there, there, there!  

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.  

Two thousand ducats in that and other precious, precious jewels. I wish my daughter were dead at my feet and the jewels in her ear! That she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin! 

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) to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill-luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders, no sighs but of my breathing, no tears but of my shedding.

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?  

—Tubal
He hath an argosy, cast away, coming from Tripolis.

—Shylock
I have heard the same.° 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? 

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:

|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|

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 loses 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 venegfully 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’)

b) Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. It is true, it is true. Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. (or ‘Hear in Genoa’)

c) Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. It is true, it is true. Ha, ha. Tell me what kind of ill luck? Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. It is true, it is true. Ha, ha, hear in Genoa. (or ‘Hear in Genoa’)

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—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 company\(^{58}\) to Venice, there came several\(^{59}\) of Antonio’s creditors who swear he cannot chose but break.

—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. Thou torturest me, Tubal. \(^{62}\) It was my turquoise. I had it of Leah \(^{63}\) when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a jungle full\(^9\) of monkeys.

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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 \textit{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. \textit{in my company}: / traveling with me / along with me

59. \textit{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. \textit{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) \textit{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 Lea

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—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.

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:
   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 out 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.° Pause a day or two
Before you choose, for if your choice is wrong
I lose your company. Thus, forbear° awhile.
There’s° something tells me—and I dare not° say
It’s love—that I could not endure° to lose you
And you know that indifference° counsels not
In such a way° —(so hear° what goes° unsaid. 4)
But lest you should not understand me well°—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought—°
I would detain° you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I break my oath,°
And that will° never be—so° you may miss me.
But if you do,° you’ll make me wish a sin,
That I did break my oath.° So blame your eyes;
They° have bewitched me and divided° me:°

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 unsaid / 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° times
Put bars° between the owners and their rights. 10
And so, though yours, still not yours. Make your choice 11
And prove (that I am yours. In this, I’ve sworn
To give no help.° And so, should you choose wrong )12 13
Let fortune go° to hell for it, not I.14
I speak too long; but ‘tis to slow° the time, 15
To eke° it and to draw it out in length, 16
To stay you° from your choice.°

—Bassanio

For as I am, I live° upon the rack. 17 18

—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.
16. / To eck (ake) it and to draw it out in length,
   ech (etk): 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.)
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 your 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 sure 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.’

—Bassanio

‘Confess’ and ‘love’

Is but the very sum of my confession.

O happy torment when my torturer

Doth teach me answers where I am set free—

Now to my choice and my fortune to be.

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]

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. Now to my choice° and my fortune to be.

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—not 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 ‘torment.’)

35. But let me to my fortune and the caskets

my fortune: a) my fate, what befall 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

b) / Is but the sum of all I have to say | Now to my fortune and the chests, I pray.

b) / 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

/ Now to the caskets and my happiness, away!

c) / ‘Tis but the sum of all I do confess | Now to the caskets and my happiness

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.

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—Portia
Away then! I am locked in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.  
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aback.  
Let music sound° while he doth make his choice.  
Then if he lose he’ll make a swan-like end, (Which sings° a song upon its final breath,°)  
And fades in music. That the metaphor°  
May stand more proper,° my eye shall be the stream°  
And wat’ry death-bed for him. He may win—°  
And what is music then? Then music is  
The teeming flourish° of joyous° cornets  
That play to honor a new-crownèd monarch;  
Or like the dulcet° sounds at break of day  
That creep into° the dreaming bridegroom’s ear  
And summon° him to marriage. Now he goes,  
  / Let music sound . . .  
  / Then if he loses, he’ll die just 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, Euripides, 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 schwänengesang. 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.  
  / Whose lullaby attends its sad demise / Which sings while sinking to a watery grave / Which sings a song to mark its tragic end  
  / That the comparison may stand more proper, / Mine eyes shall offer a river of tears / To thus provide for his watery death-bed.  
  / A joyous flourish of the bright cornets  
  / And call him sweetly to wed  
  / And call him church-wise for his wedding day.  
  / And call him toward church on his wedding day

  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 fate d 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.  
  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 just like a swan / Then if he lose he’ll play a dying swan  
  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—but with much more love—\textsuperscript{46} Than youthful Hercules when he did rescue\textsuperscript{47} The virgin princess,\textsuperscript{48} paid in sacrifice\textsuperscript{9} By suff'ring\textsuperscript{8} Troy to placate Poseidon's Sea monster. I am now the sacrifice.\textsuperscript{50} The rest around me are the Trojan wives,\textsuperscript{52,53} Who now\textsuperscript{54} approach\textsuperscript{5} with blearèd visages\textsuperscript{54} To view the outcome\textsuperscript{5} of this grand exploit.\textsuperscript{55} Go Hercules!\textsuperscript{56} If thou live, I will live:\textsuperscript{57} But here I view with much, much more dismay\textsuperscript{59} Then thou, the hero,\textsuperscript{5} who doth mak'st the fray.\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Nerissa instructs the musicians to play a song.} \textit{A song is played while Bassanio mulls over the caskets} \textsuperscript{59,60}

\textsuperscript{46} With no less dignity, but much more love—
\textsuperscript{47} Than young Alcides when he did redeem
\textsuperscript{48} Refers to Hercules's rescue of the virgin princess Hesione.
\textsuperscript{49} 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.
\textsuperscript{49} The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
\textsuperscript{50} 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.
\textsuperscript{51} I stand for: I am, I represent
\textsuperscript{52} The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives
\textsuperscript{53} The rest aback are the women of Troy
\textsuperscript{54} 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, are the Trojan wives / horror / marvel
\textsuperscript{55} with blearèd visages: with teary visages / with tears faces all / tears upon their cheeks
\textsuperscript{56} Who now come forth with tears upon their cheeks
\textsuperscript{57} With blearèd visages come forth to view | The issue of th'exploit. Go Hercules.
\textsuperscript{58} Live thou, I live
\textsuperscript{59} Yet I do view this battle more with fright, | Than you who be in it—he who doth fight.
\textsuperscript{60} Nerissa instructs the musicians to play a song. A song is played while Bassanio mulls over the caskets
—Singer

Tell me where is fancy bred,
In° the heart or in the head?
How 'tis born and how 'tis fed?

—Chorus

Tell me, tell me.°

—Singer

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed all fancy dies
In the cradle, where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell.

[spoken] I will begin: [sung] Ding, dong, bell.

—Chorus

Ding, dong, bell, ⁶¹(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 'tis born and how 'tis fed?} / 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,} / Dull and heavy in the eyes
    {With gazing fed, all fancy dies,} / With more gazing, come more lies
    {In the cradle, where it lies.} / is where it lies / 'tis there it dies.

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]
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 show most without are least within.}

68. The world is e’er deceived° by ornament.°

69. Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.

70. And these assume but valour’s outer show°.°

---

—Bassanio [to the gold casket]

So may the outward shows be least themselves.° / Those who show most without are least within. / ever duped / grand display / outer show

The world is e’er deceived° by ornament.°
In law, a plea that’s tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show° of evil. In religion,
What damned° act° does not become a blessing,
When some dry scholar° approve it with text,"°
Hiding° gross error° with fair ornament?
There is no vice too simple° to° assume°
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts would crumble°
Like walls° of sand, do wear upon their chin
The beards of Hercules and frowning° Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk?
And they assume but valour’s outer show°.
To render themselves fearful.° Look on beauty
And you shall see ‘tis purchased by the weight,
This cream,° when plied upon the face works wonders
Making them fairest who wear most of it.
So are those crispèd, flowing,° golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind;
But such pretense of beauty, as we know,
Is wig-made hair, ta’en from another’s head,°
The skull of which now lies in some lost grave.
Thus, outer show is but the guiled° shore
To a most dangerous° sea; the beauteous scarf
That veils a queen’s wretched face;° in a word:
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To trap the wise. Therefore, thou gaudy gold
You’re as worthless to me as hardened° food
Which greedy Midas could not hope to eat—
I will have none of thee. [to the silver casket] Nor of thee, silver;
Thou art the pale drudge° of common coin,
Passed in exchange between the hands° of men.°
But thou, thou meager° lead, which rather° threatens,
And gives no° promise of profit or gain:
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence.°
〈Thus, I seek not to gain, as shown° by gold,〉
〈Nor then to get, as offered° by silver,〉
〈But e’er° to give, as demanded° by lead.〉

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’ore 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 be tokened / as warranted
Here, here I choose: when all is done and said,°
A heart that giveth all is ne’er misled. 76 77

—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

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

—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 finished
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° of me. / pansy / milksop
   O heart be sparing, temper this delight,
   O ration joy, don’t give it such a might.

81. rain: 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 opposites, 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 swel’t° 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 / muted / dreamy
Parted with sugar breath. So sweet an air
Should sunder such sweet friends. And in her hair
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh t’entrapp the hearts of men
Faster than 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. 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. Here’s the scroll,
The continent and summ’ry of my fortune:  

Thou who choose not by the view, / You that
Chance as fair and choose as true. / Take fair chance and chose quite true
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content, and seek no new.

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 demi-god
What artist, possessing / wielding
The spectral powers of a demi-god
Hath come so near creation? What is this?

What demi-god 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: {unfinished} / 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|
/ 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.  

A gentle scroll! Fair lady, by your leave,
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Just like a fighter who obtains the prize,
Who seems triumphant in the people's eyes,
Hearing applause and the echoing shout,
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.

—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 you

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 uns sureness, 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).

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 thund'rous 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, 3.2.138]

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 trebled\(^{103}\) twenty times myself;\(^{103}\) A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich, that I, in beauty, dignity,
Comfort,\(^{6}\) and virtue might exceed account.\(^{104}\) \(^{105}\) \(^{106}\)

But the full sum of me is some\(^{6}\) of something

\(\text{That’s yet to be complete.}\) To term more fully:\(^{107}\)\(^{108}\)\(^{109}\)

I’m\(^6\) an unlessoned girl,\(^6\) unschooled, unpracticed\(^6\);\(^{110}\)

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;\(^6\)

Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours, to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.\(^6\)

Myself and what is mine, to you and yours,\(^6\)
I now impart.\(^6\) But now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion,\(^6\) master of my servants,
Queen o’er myself; and even now, yet now,
This house, these servants, and my very self,\(^6\)
Are yours, my lord.\(^6\) \(\text{I give them with this ring}\)

\(\text{She holds up ring}\)

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 iambics 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:

\(\text{More rich—to stand but high in your account}\)
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 some of something: which, to term in gross\}

\textit{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:

\textit{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)

\textit{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, / \(\text{Has not yet ripened.}\) Thus, to state it fully / Hence, to put it bluntly / (That’s yet to be completed.) \textit{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. \textit{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, 

‘Twill mark° the ruin of your love, I say,°
And give me reason to regret° the day. 

She places ring on Bassanio’s finger

—Bassanio 

Madam, you have bereft me of all words.°
All that can speak° is the blood in my veins;
As there is such confusion in my powers°
Much like° the buzzing cheers that issue from
The rousèd° masses after they have heard
Some fine oration by their sovereign° prince,
Where every sounding, fully blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy;
〈And now in me, each voice is lost,° each cry〉
Expressed yet not expressed.°

Expressed yet not expressed: . . .

---

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. {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.)

113. / but stolen all my words

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. / but speaks / speaks now

117. / speech / words / breath

118. [As]

119. / honored / beloved

120. {As} / nothing but joy

121. / one

122. / nothing but joy

123. / but stolen all my words

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[See Additional Notes, 3.2.183]
My finger, know that life does part my stead° 124 125
O, then be bold° to say, ‘Bassanio’s dead.’° 126 127

—Nerissa
My lord and lady, it is now our time;
We have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
Now we cry, ‘Joy°, good joy, my lord and lady!’

—Gratiano
My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that one° can wish,
And° I am sure, whate’er you’d wish for me° 1
〈Would fall quite short of what I now possess. 〉2
And when your honours mean to seal with vows°
The pledging° of your faith, I do beseech you 3
Still° at that time,4 I may be wed as well.5

—Bassanio
With all my heart—if thou canst get a wife.

—Gratiano
I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
Taking Nerissa’s hand

My° eyes, my lord, can look° as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved—and lengthy° postponements

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° with sweat,
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°
To win° her mistress. 10 11

—Portia Is this true, Nerissa?

— Nerissa
Madam, it is, if you stand pleased with it.°

—Bassanio
And do you, Gratziano, speak in truth?°

—Gratziano
In truth,° my lord.

—Bassanio
Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

—Gratziano [to Nerissa]
We'll place a wager° for a thousand ducats 12 {play with them}
That the first boy be ours.

—Nerissa

What, and stake down? 13

—Gratziano

We will not win that wager with stake down!° 14
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio? 15

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica, with Salerio, a messenger from Venice 16

—Bassanio

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither; If that the youth of my new int’rest here Doth grant me power to bid you welcome. [Portia nods] [to Portia] Sweet Portia, by your leave I bid, my friends 17 And fellows, welcome. 18

—Portia

So do I, my lord. You° are entirely welcome. {They}

— Lorenzo [to Bassanio]

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord, My purpose° was not to have seen you here, 19 / intent But having met° Salerio on the way° 20 {But meeting with} // road He did entreat me past all saying ‘nay’

12. / We’ll play with them a thousand ducat wager
13. stake down: to lay down money (on a table) to cover a bet. The term is similarly used in ‘staking one’s claim.’
14. {No, we shall ne’er win at that sport and stake down} / No, we shall ne’er win that bet with my stake down!
15. Salerio needs to be introduced here by name and by reference (Venetian) because this is the first time the audience sees the character. Some editors, for the sake of economy (though in error) combine the two minor characters of Salerio and Salarino, into a single character (Salerio). However, nothing in the text—nor anywhere else—supports this kind of compaction. Had Gratiano’s good friend, Salarino, arrived here (as opposed to Salerio, a messenger) Gratiano would have greeted him more personally, with something like, ‘my good friend Salarino,’ as opposed to the rather reserved and distant, ‘my old Venetian friend Salerio.’ Neither would Gratiano have ‘located’ Salarino as being ‘from Venice,’ since the audience already knows that Salarino is from Venice, having seen him several times before. [See Essays: The Sallies: Salarino, Salanio, and Salerio]
16. Salerio, who makes his entrance for the first time, needs an introduction—and so he is identified as a ‘messenger from Venice’ in the stage direction.
17. / With your permission, my sweet and fair Portia, | I bid my friends welcome. / dulcet / cherubic
18. { . . . By your leave, | I bid my very friends and countrymen, | Sweet Portia, welcome.}
19. / My intention was not to see you here
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.
To come along with him. 21

—Salerio I did, my lord,
And with good reason:22 Antonio sends° / good cause: Signor Antonio sends
An urgent message. 23

He gives Bassanio a letter

—Bassanio Ere I ope his letter / But before I read it
I pray you, tell me, how fairs my good friend?° 24 {how my good friend doth?}

— Salerio Not sick, my lord, but neither is he well. 25 26
His letter there will show you his condition.° 27 {show you his estate}

21. At this point, Bassanio is unaware that Lorenzo (and Jessica) stole away with Shylock’s money (and have since been on the run). Portia knows nothing about Lorenzo, Jessica, nor anything of the events that have taken place in Venice. For the sake of drama, we must compress the inevitable time gap: Jessica and Lorenzo stole Shylock’s money on the night that Bassanio left for Belmont; Bassanio forgoing the offer to tarry ‘a day or two’ immediately proceeded to his choice. This indicates that Bassanio left Venice no more than about two days ago, while several weeks of action have passed since Lorenzo and Jessica left Venice. For instance, Tubal went out in search of them in Genoa (which is some 200 miles from Venice). [See: Essays: Time Warp]

22. {And I have reason for it} Salerio does not offer any reason for it (for bringing along Lorenzo) since he could have delivered the message without any help; in addition, we know why he entreated Lorenzo to come with him to Belmont ‘past all saying nay.’ But what reasons might he have? It could be that Lorenzo was Bassanio’s good and that Salerio—who was not such a friend, but only a messenger—was about to deliver some devastating news. Hence, Salerio thought it would be helpful if Lorenzo, Bassanio’s good friend, were there to help comfort him. Understanding the gravity of the matter, Salerio may have insisted that Lorenzo come because of Jessica, and because he thought that she might be able to provide some help or shed some light on the situation (but this might be crediting Salerio with deep insight into the matter). As it turns out, Jessica’s presence (not Lorenzo’s) proves crucially important to the situation (and in Portia’s decision to intervene).

23. {And I have reason for it: Signor Antonio | Commends him to you} / Sends you a message.

commends him to you: A familiar greeting, akin to ‘Sends his regards’ or ‘Asks that you remember him.’
The passage would support Salerio’s previous claim to having a ‘reason,’ if it had more import, such as:
‘Signor Antonio | Sends you an urgent message.’ This import could be imparted by adding the word ‘urgent.’
These extra syllables could be accommodated by deleting the two previous—somewhat superfluous—syllables, ‘for it,’ or truncating Bassanio’s response (from five syllables to three).
/ And I have cause for it: Antonio sends | And urgent message.
/ And I have reason: for an urgent message | Comes from Antonio.

24. For dramatic purposes (and perhaps blinded by love) Bassanio is completely forgetful of the date that the bond expires: he is asking about how Antonio is doing {how my good friend doth} rather than the fate of the bond. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.231]

25. {Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind; } Nor well, unless in mind.

Salerio’s response is vague and elusive at best; Antonio is clearly in a desperate state and Salerio does not want to be the one to report such bad news. His vague answer means something like: he is not sick in terms of body, but sick if we are speaking about the state of his mind (i.e., he is worried, distraught, fearful, etc.); he is not well unless in mind (unless he imagines it to be so; or, unless he is deranged enough to imagine himself to be well). Clearly he is not well. The wordplay is on the word mind, which in the first instance refers to his mental condition or state of mind and in the second refers to his imagination or use of mind. Some commentators, unable to make real sense out of this passage, interpret ‘unless in mind’ to mean: ‘unless his fortitude allows him to suffer his misfortune’ (Kittredge); ‘unless he is comforted by fortitude’ (Brown)

26. Due to the vagueness of this unimportant passage it has herein been condensed into one line. If one desired to bring clarity to this response, the lines could be expanded:
/ Not sick, unless we speak about his mind; / Not sick, my lord, in terms of his body;
/ Nor well, unless he imagine it so. / Nor well, if speaking of his mental state.

27. / His note will show the state of his affairs.
Bassanio opens the letter and reads it.

—Gratziano
Nerissa cheer our guest, [Jessica] entreat her welcome. Your note, Salerio. What news from Venice?
How is that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success:
Like Jason, we have won the golden fleece.

—Salerio
I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost. [I loathe to say, but all his ships are gone.]

—Portia [seeing Bassanio]
Yon paper must display some cursèd content. To steal the color from Bassanio’s cheek. Some dear friend dead?—else nothing in the world Could turn to such extent the disposition
Of so constant a man.

Bassanio looks worse than before
What, worse and worse?
With leave Bassanio, I am half yourself, And I must freely have the half of all

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.
Sai: O had you won the fleece That he hath lost: [for all his ships are gone.]

34. {There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper}
/ It seems yon paper holds some cursèd content
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, the nature / dreadfulness
/ Could so fully reverse 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 an 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° words,
That ever blotted° paper. Gentle lady, 39

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.° And yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing,° you shall see,
How much I was a braggart.° When I said°
My state was nothing, I should then have said°
That I was less° than nothing, for indeed
I have indebted myself to a dear friend° 42
(And out of love for me, he was enforced°
To debt° himself to a dear enemy. 43 44
What have I done? Here is the letter, lady,
The paper is the body of my friend 45
And every word in it a gaping wound
Issuing life-blood.46 But it is true, Salerio,
Hath all his ventures failed? What,° not one hit?° 47
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° | 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 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:

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,° and India—
And not one vessel scape° the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marrying rocks?

—Salerio Not one, my lord.
Besides, it doth° appear that if he had°
The present money° to discharge° 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° a man.
He plies° the Duke at morning and at night
And calls in doubt° 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° him° 49
But none can drive him from the savage° plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

—Jessica 50
Before I heard from friends,° 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° poor Antonio.

—Portia [to Bassanio]
Is it your dear friend who is thus in trouble?

—Bassanio
The dearest friend to me; the kindest man,

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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 Gratiano’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}
The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit
In serving others; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any man who draws breath in Italia.

—Portia
What sum owes he the Jew?

—Bassanio
For me, three thousand ducats.

—Portia
What—no more? Pay him six thousand and deface the bond.
Double six thousand and then triple that
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio’s fault.
First go with me to church, and call me ‘wife,’
And then away to Venice, to your friend.
For never shall you lie by Portia’s side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your friend home with you.
Meantime, my good Nerissa and myself
Shall live as maids and widows. Come, away,

52. {The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit} / tireless / giving
53. / Embody more of ancient Roman honor
54. / Than any who draws breath in Italy.
55. To preserve the meter, the verse could be rectified as follows:
Portia: What sum owes he the Jew?
Bass: Three thousand ducats.
Portia: A mere three thousand ducats—and no more?
56. / I would double the six and triple that | Before . . .
Portia is offering to resolve the issue with a generous show of more and more money. At this point she is still unaware of, or unconvinced of, Shylock’s resolve to take Antonio’s flesh even after hearing from Salerio [3.2.270-2] and Jessica [3.2.284-85] that no amount of money would cause ‘the Jew’ to ‘deface’ the bond.
57. / of such kindness and worth / so endearing and true
58. This directive is to prompt the distracted Bassanio (who is, in his heart, already in Venice) to the temple to take his wedding vows, before he rushes off. Clearly Bassanio’s concern for Antonio has eclipsed all the joy found in his newly won love and wealth. (There is no indication that rings were ever exchanged as part of this wedding ceremony.)
59. Portia is saying: I will not let you lay by my side with an unquiet soul (a restless and disturbed mind); I will only let you lay by my side when you can give yourself to me fully, when you can be with me whole-heartedly—without such concerns, or thoughts, distracting you. She could also be implying thus: You will never be able to lay by my side with a quiet soul until you settle this matter—so go off to Venice and take care of this.
60. Again, Portia is not fully convinced or aware of Shylock’s true intention, nor aware that the bond cannot be cured with wealth, even 20 times the wealth, as this is the specific number that Jessica previously mentions, saying, That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh | Than twenty time the value of the sum | That he did owe him. [3.2.284-86]
For you shall hence^ upon your wedding day. 61 62
Since you were bought at O so dear a price
I’ll bear the wait for love^ not once but twice. 63 64

—Gratiano
But let us hear° the letter° from Antonio. 65

—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!* 68 / 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 an 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° at such a heavy° price,
   {were bought} / were found // tearful / dearly
   / a heavy price
   / I’ll long await your love not once but twice
   / I’ll dearly wait for you, not once but twice
   / I’ll thus a wait your love not once but twice
   / You’re worth the suff’ring wait 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 Gratiano—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
All beds that beckon,° I’ll solemnly spurn, / E’er bed that beckons
And slumber ne’er° a wink, til I° return. 

Exeunt

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 still 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.
ACT THREE - Scene Three 3.3

_A street outside Shylock’s house._

Enter Shylock, Antonio, [Salarino, Salanio, and a Jailer. ]

—Shylock

Jailor, keep your watch. Tell not me of mercy.
This is the fool who lends out money gratis.
Jailor, keep your watch.

—Antonio

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

—Shylock

〈Now I am good? I say, my bond is good!〉
I’ll have my bond. Speak not against my bond.
I’ve sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
You call’dst me ‘dog’ before thou hadst a cause,
But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou wicked jailor, why art thou so foolish
To let him walk about at his request.

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 Antonio, and the laylor.
   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, Antonio, and others’—where the ‘others’ was meant to indicate Salarino and Salanio and the Jailor, but not Salerio. (Another anomaly in this stage direction is that the name of a minor character, Salerio, appears before Antonio.) 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 ‘Salarino’ (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 jailer, 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 / so meekly, // moan
To shake my head, relent, and° sigh,° and yield
To Christian meddlers.° Stay there, follow not.°
I'll have no speaking—I will have my bond. 10

Exit Shylock

—Salanio
It is the most impenetrable dog°
That ever kept° with men.12

—Antonio
Let him alone.
I'll follow him no more with feckless° prayers.13
He seeks my life; his reason well I know;°
Many a time he would make loans of money
To those who could not pay the sums on time;
And thus, as forfeit, would lose all their goods.
Such men would come to me and moan their fate,
And I, compelled, would loan them money, gratis,°
Which freed them from his brutal° forfeitures. 16 17 18

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 character; 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.}
19. Antonio is telling of the many times that men would borrow money from Shylock, under a contract (which they likely did not understand—and which served as a kind of entrapment) which contained the condition that if they could not pay off the debt on such and such a day, then they were required to pay a stiff penalty or forfeiture—which oft times was more costly than the loan itself, and a penalty which amounted to the loss of their goods and property.

Thus, when men were caught in this predicament they would come and moan their fate to Antonio—who, out of Christian charity, would loan them money, gratis, so that they could pay off the loan and avoid the ruinous forfeiture.

Thus Antonio’s practice of loaning out money in this way ‘robbed’ Shylock of all the extra profit he was eager to extract from his victims. [See Additional Note, 3.3.24]

20. / Will cast fair doubt on our good claim to justice / Will strip the state of all its claim to justice

21. A singularly weak argument in defense of Venetian law (which is also used by Portia). Venetian law was unlikely to be so rigid and edicts could be bent (in specific instances) without endangering the fair trade of Venice nor setting some kind of precedence which would cause irreparable harm—especially in regards to an ‘alien.’ As stated in the court scene, the word of the Duke, in this instance, was sufficient to dismiss could this case and spare Antonio’s life (and the Duke was under no edict to follow the letter of the law in such a bizarre case.) Such adherence to the strict code of Venetian law, however, must be made in order to support the dramatic tension of the play.

22. bated: abated, reduced, diminished, enfeebled; implying a lose of weight.

23. {These griefs and losses have so bated me | That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh | Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.}

24. / Yet one more time before I pay his debt.

25. These two lines found in the original—which contain a death-defying plea to see Bassanio one more time—seem misplaced and over-the-top but consistent with Antonio’s obsession with Bassanio. Here, his desire to see Bassanio surpasses even his concern for life. This sentiment, being overweening, tends to weaken Antonio’s character and even suggests some kind of compulsive pathology.

This act of giving of one’s life for one’s friend—herein demonstrated by Antonio—reflects the greatest love and highest Christian ideal, for as Jesus said: ‘No one has greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ (John 15:13)
Belmont. Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar, Portia’s servant

—Lorenzo
Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
〈And hesitate° to volunteer° such praise,〉
You have a true and noble understanding
Of godlike friendship,° which appears most strongly°
In bearing, thus, the absence of your lord.
But if you knew the one to whom you honor,°
How true a gentleman you deem to help,°
How dear he’s held within° thine husband’s heart
I know you would be prouder of this work.
Than from the customary° acts° of kindness
That your good° nature moves° you to perform.

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 the 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 placed in your husband’s heart
6. / You’d be more honored by this virtuous work° / 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.
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 feel’ (Pelican); ‘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° for doing good} / regret / seek praise
   / Nor / for in companions
   / / put forth / tendered

11. / Whose souls unite by the same yoke of love—
   / are joined by the same

12. {There must be needs a like proportion}
   / 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
   / / from the state of hellish cruelty.

15. / How little is the price I pay to save | One, so like one, with whom I share a soul
   / / put forth / tendered

16. {This comes too near the praising of myself}
   / This near approaches
   / / This near approaches

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° you,  
Not to deny this sudden° imposition,  
The which my love and some necessity° 
Now lays upon you.

—Lorenzo       Madam, with all my heart
I shall obey you in all fair commands.°

—Portia
My people do already know my wish°
And will acknowledge° you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
So fare you well till we shall meet again.

—Lorenzo
Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you! °

—Jessica [turning back toward Portia]
I wish your ladyship all° heart’s content.

—Portia
I thank you for your wish, and am well-pleased
To wish the same for you.° Fare you well, Jessica.  

Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo

Now, Balthazar,°
As I have ever found thee plain and true,°
So let me find thee still: Take this same letter,
And use thou all thy acumen and skill°
In speed° to Padua. See thou render° this
Into the hands of my cousin, Bellario,

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 thy endeavours of a man} / And use the fulness 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
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 be furnished 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 what notes and garments he doth give thee, / take Bring them, I pray, with all imagined speed Unto the traject, to the° common ferry / Unto the landing where the Which trades to Venice,° Waste no time in words / Departs to Venice But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

27. before they think of us: a) before they think about us (being so busy with their own affairs), b) before the 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,° / bolder sway
And speak a vocal pitch° that comes between / reed-like voice / piping voice
The change from boy to man;° and I will turn
Two mincing° steps into a manly stride,
And speak of brawls° like a fine, bragging youth;
And tell concocted° lies, how noble ladies
Did seek my love which, upon my denial,°
Led them to grave illness and death by heartbreak— I could not do them all.° Then I’ll repent
And wish for all that my charm had not killed them.°
And I’ll tell twenty of these puny° lies,°
That men shall swear I had dropped out of° school
Aft’ but one year,° I have within my mind
A thousand raw° tricks of these bragging Jacks°
Which I will use.°

—Nerissa

Why, shall we turn to men?°

—Portia

Fie, what a question that is!° 〈Shall we turn

—Portia

Fie, what a question that is!° 〈Shall we turn

 thirty-first

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} X
   / 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° / 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° 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} / 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 ina lewd way) she might think Nerissa is suggesting that they turn to, or approach, men for sexual satisfaction.
To men for carnal pleasures?—I think not!  
But come, I’ll tell thee all of my good plan.

When we are in my coach, which stays for us
At the main gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must journey twenty miles today.

Exeunt
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. 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.

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 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 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
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.⁹¹⁰

_Exeunt_
ACT FOUR — Scene One

Venice. A court of justice. Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and others.

—Duke
What,  is Antonio here? / Well

—Antonio
Ready, so please your grace. / I am

—Duke
I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer / You’ve come against
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Incapable of pity—void, and empty / and lacking / without
From any hint of mercy.

—Antonio
I have heard
Your grace hath ta’en great pains to modify / borne / qualify / mollify
His savage course, but since he stands unshaken / rigorous / obdurate / unmoved
And, as no lawful means can carry me / that / since / render / deliver
Beyond his envy’s reach, I do oppose / now / doth / pit against
My patience to his fury, and am armed / braced / ready
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his. / he portions / he levies

—Duke
Go one, and call the Jew into the court. > Someone go,

—Salerio
He’s ready at the door. He comes, my lord. / standing by

Enter Shylock.

1. The first three lines of the original play have six iambic pentameter (ten syllables) as opposed to the standard iambic pentameter (ten syllables).
2. void: a) heartless, b) without Christian grace
3. / taken great measures 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 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 Jew): [34— I have possessed your grace, 64, 66, 68, 84, 88, 121, 126, 138, 173]
Iew: [247—’Tis very true, O wise and upright judge 249, 253, 256, 259, 292, 298, 301]
Shy: [311— Is that the law?]
Iew: [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 / Thou’lt 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
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
17. {From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained} / Trained in demeanor that were soft or tender
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

—Shylock

I have informed⁰ your grace of my intention,⁰
And by our holy God of Hosts⁰ I’ve sworn¹⁸ ¹⁹
To have the due⁰ and forfeit of my bond.²⁰
If you deny it, let disaster fall⁰
Upon your charter and your city’s freedom,²¹
You’ll ask me why I rather choose to have
A pound⁰ of carrion⁰ flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats? I’ll not answer that
But say it is my bent—²² (The way my nature
Has come to fashion me.) Now is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with⁰ a rat
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it banned?²⁰ Well,⁰ are you answered yet?

¹⁸ / And by God’s holy army have I sworn
/ And by our trust in God’s holy 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 shalt not kill.” Hence, Shylock has sworn himself into a predicament. What this shows, moreover, is Shylock’s imperfect brand of Judaism and his foul misunderstanding 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 an 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 | Befall⁰ your charter and your city’s freedom
/ defame / debase / debauch / besmirch / destroy

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
Even when served a feast of gaping pig.\(^{23} 24\)
Some men\(^o\) go mad if they behold a cat;\(^{25}\)
And others, when the bagpipe sings a note,\(^o\)
Do wet their pants in fright.\(^{26}\) And thus one’s nature\(^o\)\(^{27}\)
Rules over feeling\(^o\) and sways it\(^o\) t’ the mood\(^o\)\(^{29}\)
Of what it\(^o\) likes or loathes.\(^{30}\)
Now, for your answer:
As there is no\(^o\) firm reason to be rendered\(^o\)

\(^{23}\) / 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 to see a pig, \(\{\text{It’s mouth agape and served upon a platter.}\}\)
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 \(\{\text{i.e., loves not}\}\) 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’t h’nose | Cannot contain their urine;]
\(\text{sings i’th’nose:}\) 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 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]
\(\text{affection:}\) a) one’s affect; one’s disposition, inherent temperament, or inborn nature; b) affections, such as likes and desires. \(\{\text{See 3.1.55: ‘Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions;’}\}\)

\(^{28}\) 29

\(^{30}\) It’s mouth agape and served upon a platter.
Some men there are dislike to see a pig, \(\{\text{It’s mouth agape and served upon a platter.}\}\)
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 \(\{\text{i.e., loves not}\}\) the feast of the pork which Christians find so desirable

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Why one cannot endure a gaping pig
Why one is crazed to see a harmless cat,
Why one who hears the playing of a bagpipe
Must yield to shame by wetting his own pants,
So can I give no reason, more than to say,
There is a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

—Bassanio
This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

—Shylock
I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

—Bassanio
Do all men kill the things they do not love?

—Shylock
Do men not want to kill the things they hate?

—Bassanio
A first offense cannot bestow such hatred.

—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 is 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,° you argue with a stone.°  
You may as well go stand upon the beach  
And bid the high tide° bate its usual height;  
You may as well use question° with the wolf°  
Why he hath killed the lamb and made the ewe cry.  
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;°  
As seek to soften° that which none is harder—  
His godless° heart.  
Make no more offers, use no further means,  
But with all brief° and plain efficiency°  
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.  

—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° them. I would have my bond.  

—Duke  
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend’ring° none?

—Shylock

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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 beat (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 conveniency / 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?  
You have acquired\(^{50}\) many a purchased slave \(^{51}\)
Which, like your donkeys\(^{50}\) and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject\(^{52}\) and in slavish roles\(^{52}\)
Because you bought them.  Shall I say to you:
‘Let them be free.  Marry them to your heirs.
Why sweat them under burdens?  
Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates\(^{9}\)
Be seasoned with your spices.’  
You will answer:
The slaves are ours.  So do I answer you:
The pound of flesh which I demand of him
Is dearly bought, ‘tis mine, and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand\(^{9}\) for judgement.  Answer—shall I have it?

—Duke

Upon my power I may dismiss this court,\(^{55}\)
Unless Bellario, a learned judge,\(^{9}\)
Whom I have sent for to determine this,\(^{56}\)

Come here today.  

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,\(^{51}\)
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 waits° without 58
A messenger with letters from the judge,°
New° come from Padua.

—Duke
Bring us° the letters! Call the messenger!

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° of the flock,
Meetest° for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground—and so let me.
Now then, Bassanio, you are best employed
To live, that you may write° my epitaph. 61

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° thy knife so earnestly?

—Shylock
To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt° there.

—Gratiziano
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. But no metal can—
No, not the hoodman’s axe—even—bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

—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 Greeks
That souls of animals infect themselves
Into the trunks of men. Thy beastly spirit
Lived in a wolf who hanged for killing humans;
And whilst thou lay in thy unhallowed womb,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolvish, blood-thirsty and ravenous.

—Shylock
Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond
Thou but offend’st thy lungs to speak so loud.
Repair thy wit, young man, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

—Duke
This letter from Ballario doth commend

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?’
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. (is) to / who’s
68. fell: deadly, cruel, savage
fleet: pass on, leave (flee) the body
69. [See Additional Notes: 4.1.137]
70. repair: use to good end, put to good use, rectify, set in order
A young and learnèd scholar° to our court.
Where is he?

—Nerissa
He is waiting here, nearby° 71
To know your answer, whether you’ll admit° him.

—Duke
With all my heart. Some three or four of you,
Go give him courteous escort° to this place. 72

Exeunt three or four

Meanwhile,° the court shall hear Bellario’s letter:

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,° but at the instant
that your messenger arrived, a young doctor of law from Rome, named Balthazar, was paying me
a kindly visit.° I acquainted him with the case° 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° shall,
better than my words, disclose° his worthiness.° 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.°

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} / evidence of his judgement / your test of him
    worthiness: {commendation}
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

—Portia
I did, my lord. / I do / I have

—Duke You’re welcome. Take your place.
Are you acquainted with the grave dispute That holds this present question in the court? 79

—Portia
I am informed thoroughly of the case. 80
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew? 81

—Duke
Antonio and old Shylock, both step forward. 82

—Portia
Is your name Shylock?

—Shylock Shylock is my name.

—Portia
Of a strange nature is the suit you follow
Yet in such ruling, the Venetian law 83
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed. 84
[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, 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°  / forced
It dropeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the earth below.°  / the place beneath
It blesseth him° who gives and him who gets.°
‘Tis mightiest when rendered° by the mighty°
   / given
   / one  {takes}
   / To those who’re  // For a king
Upon the° weak and hopeless.°  Thus, a monarch°
It makes more worthy of a kingdom’s rule
Than all the power vested by his crown.°
His scepter shows the force of temporal° 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.
87. {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.
88. / forced
89. / given
90. / To those who’re  // For a king
91. / to rule a kingdom
92. temporal: worldly, material, assigned; temporary and passing
   / To those found helpless and weak. A monarch / (To those who’re powerless and weak.) A king
93. / the throned monarch better than his crown.
   / That 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.
94. / above this sceptered sway
95. / adopted from the Tao Te Ching
That which commands both awe and majesty,\(^93\) / evokes
And brings about the dread and fear of kings;\(^94\) {Wherein doth sit}
But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute of God himself.
And earthly power shares kinship with God\(^95\) / is akin to God
When mercy tempers justice.\(^96\) Therefore, Jew,\(^97\) {seasons} placates
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
That in the course of justice none of us
Would seek salvation.\(^98\) We do pray for mercy,\(^99\) {Should} / see / find
And that same prayer\(^100\) doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.\(^101\)\(^102\) I have spoken thus
To mitigate thy rig'rous plea for justice.\(^104\) / froward / steadfast / headstrong / wilful
Which, if thou follow, this strict\(^105\) court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there. / rule against

93. {The attribute to awe and majesty}
   \textit{attribute to:} a) the claim or entitlement to; b) having the attributes, quality, or character of
   / The given claim 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. \textit{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, \textit{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. \textit{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 Eccles. 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 \textit{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 \textit{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. \textbf{strict:} bound, inflexible, rigid (in that it is bound to follow the letter of the law)
—Shylock
My deeds upon my head! I crave° the law,°
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.°

(conditional dialogue)°

—Portia
Is he not able to discharge the money?

—Bassanio
Yes, here I tender° it for him in the court;
Yea, thrice° the sum. If that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times over,°
And put as bond° my hands, my head, my heart.
If this will not suffice, it must appear°
That malice outweighs° truth.° And I beseech you,°
Bend° once the law to your authority.
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?

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° truth. I beseech you / vanquishes / overwhelms / overturns
And curb this cruel devil of his will. / thwart / bar

—Portia
It must not be. There is no power in Venice
That can reverse an established decree.
'Twill then be counted as a precedent,
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

—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, there's thrice the money offered thee.

—Shylock
An oath, an oath. I have an oath in heaven!
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

—Portia [looking over the bond]
Yes, this bond is forfeit,
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 straightforward 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.°
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your most learned opinion°
Has been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof° you are a well-deserving° pillar,
Proceed to judgement. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on° my bond.

—Antonio
Most heartily, 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.)°

—Portia°
For the intent and purpose of the law
Gives° full enforcement of° the penalty
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 is not 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° judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

—Portia [to Antonio]
Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

—Shylock Ah, his breast.
So says the bond; doth it not, noble judge?
‘Nearest his heart’—those are the very words.

—Portia
‘Tis so. Are scales° here to weigh the flesh?

—Shylock [opening a bag to reveal them]
I have them ready. (They are in my bag.)

—Portia
Have you° a surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,°
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death?

—Shylock [looks at the bond]
Is it so nominated in° the bond? 126

—Portia
It is not so expressed, but what of that°?
‘Twere good you do so much out of compassion° 127 128

—Shylock [handing back the bond]
I cannot find it; ‘tis not in the bond. 129

—Portia

124. The calling of Shylock by his name, as opposed to ‘Jew,’ at this stage in the game is somewhat telling. Portia is still appealing to him on a personal level, giving him yet another opportunity to veer from his intended course and show mercy—though at this point, by all accounts, she is now disgusted with Shylock’s intransigent and unmerciful position.

125. {Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge;}°

    have by: have you come by; have you hired
    / And have you, Shylock, paid for a surgeon / And have you, Shylock, here employed a surgeon?
    / Have you employed a surgeon, on your charge / Have you a surgeon, hired at your expense?

126. / Is that condition listed in° the bond? / Is that mentioned in the terms of the bond? / Is that specified in the written bond?

127. / It is an act of charity and goodness. / It is a righteous action of compassion.

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.

129. Here there is a shift in Portia’s attitude towards Shylock; rather than continuing to address him (and continuing to argue with him) she shifts her attention and focus away from him. Perhaps her sensitivity now gives in to disgust at what appears to a singular lack of charity and humanity—a sentiment rather alien and abhorrent to Portia. See previous note.
You, merchant, have you anything to say?

—Antonio

But little. I am braced and well-prepared. Give me your hand Bassanio, fare you well. Grieve not that I am fall’n to this for you, For herein Fortune shows herself more kind Than is her custom: it is e’er her way To let the wretched man outlive his wealth, To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow His final years of pain and poverty— But from the misery of this lingering penance Doth she, (with bitter kindness,) now release me, Speak well of me unto your honored wife. Tell her the story of Antonio’s end. Say how I loved you, even at my death. And when the tale is told, bid her be judge Whether Bassanio had not once been loved. Regret but you that you shall lose your friend; And he regrets not that he pays your debt: For if the Jew do cut but deep enough, I’ll pay it instantly with all my heart. 136

—Bassanio

Antonio, I am married to a wife Who is as dear to me as life itself; But life itself, my wife, and all the world Are not with me more dear than is thy life. 137
I would give all, I’d sacrifice them all,
Here, to this devil, to deliver you.

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

Gratziano
I have a wife whom, I declare, I love.
I wish she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this dogged Jew.

Nerissa [aside]
‘Tis well you offer it behind her back,
For such a wish would make a troubled house.

Shylock
These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter—
I’d prefer any kin of Barrabas
Had been her husband, rather than a Christian.
We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

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

Shylock
Most rightful judge!

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

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. 6149
This bond doth give thee here no drop° of blood:
The words expressly are,° ‘a pound of flesh.’
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°
Unto the state of Venice.

—Gratiano
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 learnéd judge. Come, Antonio, prepare.’
145. No stage direction follows this line in Q1. It reads:

Jew. Most learned judge, a sentence, come prepare.
Por. Tarry a little, there is some thing else,
this bond doth give thee here no iote of blood,
the words expressly 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 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 learnéd 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
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]
Hear° Jew. O learnèd judge! 150 151

—Shylock
Is that the law°? 152

—Portia  Thyself shall see the act.
{Tis your own deeds that fall° upon your head.} / Now your own deeds but fall
For as thou urg est justice, be assured,
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir st°. 153 / demanded / requested

— Gratziano
O learnèd judge! Hear,° Jew—‘a learnèd judge!’

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

—Bassanio  Here is the money. 154

150. {O upright Judge | Mark Jew, O learned Judge.}
This is the first of Gratziano’s mocking repetitions of Shylock and his praise of the judge. Gratziano repeats his counter-attack on the ‘Jew’ in a mantra-like fashion: O upright judge! Mark, Jew. O learned judge! [310]; O learned judge! Mark, Jew—a learned judge! [314]; O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge! [319]; A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew! [329]; A Daniel, still I say, a second Daniel! I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word. [336]

151. In the original two iambics are missing—which could suggest a pause. Some editions place the ‘pause’ after Portia’s last line [Unto the state of Venice]—which is clearly not indicated in Q1. Other editions place the pause after Portia’s line [Thyself shall see the act], which is possible, but unlikely.

Por: Unto the State of Venice [pause]
Por: Unto the State of Venice.
Gra: O upright judge!
Shy: Is that the law
Por: Thyself shall see the act. [pause]

There is unlikely to be a pause after Portia renders her judgement, because Gratziano, in jubilation, would call out at once. Nor would there be a pause after Portia’s words, Thyself shall see the act, because it comes in the middle of a thought. Most likely the place for a pause would come after Gratziano’s line, Mark Jew. O learnèd judge!, where a stunned Shylock must collect his thoughts—in the span of two iambics—before giving a reply.

152. This line is fitting, and would be said with surprise, in the case where Shylock’s intention (to kill Antonio) is thwarted by Portia. In the case where Shylock intentionally spares Antonio (and stops on his own accord), this line might appear astray. A more likely line would be: ‘Here, I take the offer.’

153. thou shalt have justice: This refers to the same kind of justice previously demanded by Shylock—justice without mercy, justice according to the strict letter of the law. Herein Portia turns Shylock’s own merciless literalism against him and out-literalizing him. She repeats this same charge for justice a few lines later, saying: ‘The Jew shall have all justice’ [317]; ‘He shall have merely justice and the bond.’ [335]. Ironically, Portia is now embodying the exact position (justice without mercy) that she had previously argued against. Her position now reflects a decidedly partial position: since Shylock did not grant mercy he does not deserve to receive it. Such a stance, again, is contrary to God’s all-embracing (non judgmental) mercy which is dispensed without consideration of a person’s deservedness, earned worthiness, or past actions.

154. Bassanio is freely offering his (and Portia’s) money, even though the case has already turned against Shylock. Either Bassanio is ignorant and naive (unaware that he can save himself 3000 ducats), impatient and aloof (having no concern about the 3000 ducats, only that Antonio be delivered without another moment’s delay), or equitable (feeling that Shylock deserves, at least, the return of his principle; after all, Shylock’s money did help Bassanio a great deal).

Is Portia being cruel or prudent? Is she seeking to harm Shylock in retribution for his inhumane actions against Antonio? Or is she refusing to have Bassanio pay the bond (even though he is eager and willing to pay it) as
part of her own financial motivation? Her purpose to save Antonio has already been accomplished; her destruction of Shylock is so meaningful to 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;}
   / But a just
   / But a just
   {but}
   {in the substance}
   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
   / gram / ounce158 // tip / move
   / Upon // distance / burden
   {but}
   {in the substance}
   / You’ll die {are confiscate} / are forfeited
   Or the division of a twentieth part
   Of one poor scruple—nay, if the scales do turn
   But in the measure of a single hair,
   Thou diest, and all thy goods will be taken.

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
   —Gratziano
   —Portia [raising her hand]
   Soft,° 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 learnèd judge!

—Portia
Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh:
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a° pound of flesh. If thou tak’st more
Or less than a just pound, be it by° so much
As makes it light or heavy by the weight° 157
Or the division of a twentieth part
Of one poor scruple°—nay, if the scales do turn°
But in° the measure° of a single hair,° 159
Thou diest,° and all thy goods will be taken.° 160

—Gratziano
A second Daniel. Here, O Jew, a Daniel!161
Now, infidel, I have thee in my grip.°

—Portia
Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

—Shylock
Give me my principle, 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. > publicly
He shall have only 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 my principle? 166

{have barely}

—Portia
Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, To be so taken at thy peril, Jew. 167

—Shylock 168
Well then, the devil has made good of it! 169 / 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 to argue no more.°  

—Portia  
Tarry, Jew,  
The law hath yet another hold on you.  

It is enacted° in the laws of Venice,  
If it be proved against a foreigner,°  
That by direct, or indirect, attempts,  
He seek the life of any citizen,  
The party ‘gainst which he doth conspire  
Shall seize° one half° his goods; the other half  
Comes° to the private° coffer° of the state,  
And the offender’s life lies in the mercy  
So granted by the Duke, whose word is final.°  
And now you stand in this predicament.°  

question: to argue, to debate the case.

Here Shylock gives up, accepts defeat, and accepts the lost 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 be secured through a university library), and d) that he could not read Italian—as many of his play’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 Pericon) 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 opinion—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,\(^\text{176}\)\(^\text{177}\) / occurred / that’s taken place
That indirectly, and directly, too,\(^\text{178}\)
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant,\(^\text{179}\) and thou hast incurred
The penalty, by me, formerly stated.
\(^\text{178}\)
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.\(^\text{179}\)

—Gratiano\(^\text{180}\)
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.\(^\text{179}\)
Therefore, thou must be hanged at the state’s charge.\(^\text{181}\)

—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\(^\text{182}\) to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto\(^\text{182}\) a fine.\(^\text{182}\)

—Portia
Ay, for the state, and for what it is owed,\(^\text{183}\)\(^\text{184}\) / Ay, for the state, not for Antonio\(^\text{183}\)\(^\text{184}\)
(Still half the Jew’s wealth goes unto Antonio.\(^\text{183}\))// the merchant

—Shylock\(^\text{185}\)

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\(^{176}\) / 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\(^\text{178}\) / 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
\(^{179}\) / The penalty that I have erstwhile stated / The punishment of which I have just stated
\(^{180}\) / 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.
\(^{181}\) / As part of the staging, Gratiano could run over to ‘help’ Shylock get down on his knees.
\(^{182}\) / For some dialogue which could be included here, see Additional Notes: 4.1.363
\(^{183}\) / Lest humbleness reduce it to a fine.
\(^{184}\) / Ay, only the portion\(^\text{185}\) the state is owed / that for which
\(^{185}\) / 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 ?

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
When you do take the means whereby I live.
You take my wealth, the labor of my life,
The comfort of mine age, my children’s hope—
Nay, rather show your Christian charity,
And kill me now.

—Portia
What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

—Gratiano
A noose, for free—and nothing else, for God’s sake!

—Antonio
So please my lord, the Duke, to hear the state
Forgive the fine for one half of his goods.
I am content with that 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 echoes 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 Christian
Who, as of late, did steal away his daughter.
And two conditions more: that for this favour
He presently forswear all acts of usury,
(That he may garner a more Christian kindness.)
The other, that he do record a gift,
Which leaves, upon his death, all his possession.

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} / recently
   / 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 iambics 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 Per conto). 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 the reveal the vengeful and self-defeating psyche of Shylock’s character—which has nothing whatsoever to do with his Jewishness.

In this rectification I make 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 pronounced here.

—Portia
Art thou contented Jew? What dost thou say?

—Shylock
I am content.

—Portia [to Nerissa] Clerk, write a deed of gift.

—Shylock
I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

—Duke
Get thee gone, but do it.

—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 unto the gallows.

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 feeble 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 christening 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 shalt thou have two godfathers.
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).}

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—Duke [to Portia]
Sir, I entreat you with me home for dinner.

—Portia
I humbly do request° your grace of° pardon. I must away this night toward Padua, And it is best° I presently set forth.°

—Duke
I am sorry that your leisure serves you not. Antonio, fully thank° this gentleman° For, in my mind, you are much in his debt.°

Exit Shylock

—Bassanio [to Portia]
Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend Have, by your wisdom, been this day delivered° From grievous penalties, in lieu whereof, Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew, We freely give° for all your courteous° pains.°

—Antonio
Yet, over and above, in love and service, We stand forevermore within your debt.°

—Portia [refusing]
He is well-paid who° is well-satisfied, And I, in helping you,° am satisfied, And therein do account myself well-paid.

Exeunt Duke and his attendants

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, Gratzianno 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.
206. / O’er and above,° 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.}

cope: match, give in exchange for
It ne’er did cross° my mind to ask for payment. [to Bassanio] I pray you ‘know’ me when we meet again. 

I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

—Bassanio

Dear sir, perforce° I must beseech° you further—

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° offer

And here to pardon me for such insistence.°  

—Portia

You press me far,° and therefore I will yield:

Give me your gloves, I’ll wear them for your sake.°

And for your love, I’ll take this ring from you.°

[he draws back his hand]

Do not draw back your hand—I’ll take no more.°

And you, in love, shall not deny me this!°

—Bassanio

This ring, good sir, alas it is° a trifle.°

I will not shame myself to give you this.

—Portia

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, pleas e wai t, I must insist agai n—

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.°

—Bassanio
There’s more depends on this than on the value.°
The dearest° ring in Venice will I give you;
And find it out by searching through the city.°
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

—Portia
You are liberal° in what you offer but not in what you actually give (once the offer is accepted).

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

—Portia
That ‘scuse° serves° many men to save their gifts.°
And if your wife be not a madwoman,
And know how well I have deserved this ring.
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

—Antonio
My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.

Exeunt Portia and Nerissa

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. / You taught° me first to beg and now methinks
224. / urged
225. / must
226. {She would not hold out ene my}/ hold her an griness
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° and my love for you°
Be valued ‘gainst° the vow made to° your wife.  

—Bassanio [gives the ring to Gratiano]
Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him.
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,°
Unto Antonio’s house. Away! Make haste!

Exit Gratiano

Come now dear friend,° it seems the world is right,
‘Tis time we° cheer and laugh into night;°
When morning comes,° to Belmont we will go,
In bliss and freedom°—come Antonio.  

Exeunt

228. {Be valued ‘gainst your wife’s commandment}  
Be weighed against the vow 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° to Belmont. Come, Antonio.  
/ 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
Flying to Belmont, bereft of all woe.
/ Come, you and I have finishèd° this plight,
Now let us cheer with friends into° the night.
Unto your house, let’s go, without delay
And fly to Belmont ‘pon the break of day.
ACT FOUR - Scene 2

A street in Venice. Enter Portia and Nerissa, still in disguise

—Portia
Inquire the way unto the Jew’s abode,
And have him sign the deed. We’ll then away
And be at home a day before our husbands.
This deed will be a blessing to Lorenzo.

Enter Gratiano

—Gratziano
Fair sir, at last, I have ov’rtaken you.
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

—Portia

That cannot be...

(For we must leave for Padua tonight.)

But I accept his ring most thankfully,
And so I pray you tell him. Furthermore,
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 Gratiano, 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 / We’ll leave tonight / And be at home a day before our husbands. / This deed will be a blessing to Lorenzo.}

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 Gratiano 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?
[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°
That they did give the rings away to men.
But we’ll outstare° them and outswear them too.
Away! Make haste! Thou know’st where I will tarry.°

Exit

—Nerissa [to Gratziano]
Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

Exeunt
ACT FIVE - Scene One

Portia’s house in Belmont. A garden. Moonlight.

—Lorenzo
The moon shines bright. On such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees—
And they did make no noise. On such a night
Did young prince Troilus mount the Trojan walls
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.  

—Jessica
On such a night,
Did Thisbe go to meet with Pyramus;
But saw the lion’s shadow ere his frame
And ran away in fright.

—Lorenzo
On such a night,
Queen Dido stood upon the wild shore

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.’
With a willow in hand,\(^4\) wafting her love\(^4\) / Holding a willow, and
To come again to Carthage.\(^5\)

—Jessica

On such a night, Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That renewed\(^6\) life to Jason’s dying father.\(^6\, 7\)

—Lorenzo

On such a night, Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with a poor lover,\(^6\) did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

—Jessica

Yes, on such a night, Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And not a one was true.\(^6\)

—Lorenzo

On such a night, Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love—and he forgave her for it.\(^9\)

—Jessica

I would outplay\(^8\) you did nobody come,
But hark, I hear the stepping\(^9\) of a man.\(^11\)

Enter Stephano, a messenger

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4.  {Stood Dido with a willow in her hand | Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love | To come again to Carthage}
   / Holding a willow, and
   / 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
   / Stood the forsaken queen Dido, wafting | Her beloved to return.

5. An additional line, concerning the legend, could be added: {But alas, | Aeneus 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?\textsuperscript{12}

—Stephano
A friend.

—Lorenzo  What friend?  Your name, I pray you, friend? \textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{o} 
The holy crosses where\textsuperscript{o} she kneels and prays \textsuperscript{14} 
For happy wedlock hours.

—Lorenzo  Who comes with her?

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

—Lorenzo
He is not, and we have not heard from him.
But go we in,\textsuperscript{o} I pray thee, Jessica 
And, with respect and love,\textsuperscript{o} let us prepare 
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

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! \textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{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?
\textsuperscript{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?
\textsuperscript{14} {She doth stray about} / stop beside 
Each holy cross, and there
\textsuperscript{15} {stray about} / stop beside 
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° hollering° man: I am here! 17 /Stop {halloaing}

—Launcelet Where? Where? 18 19

—Lorenzo Here!

—Launcelet Tell him there’s a messenger° come from my master, with his mouth° full of good news. My master will be here before the morning. 20 messenger: {post} mouth: {horn}

Exit

—Lorenzo

Sweet soul, let’s in° and there await° their coming. 21 /Signify {expect}

And yet no matter—why should we go in?

My friend Stephano, please announce,° I pray you, {signify} / please tell them

Within the house, their mistress is at hand,° / 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 see 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 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); holloing (Bevington)

leave hollowing: a) leave hollering—stop hollering, b) leave holloaing—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.  

Exit Stephano

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank.
Here we will sit and let the sounds° of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor° of heaven°
Is thick inlaid with patterns° of bright gold.
In but° the smallest orb° which thou behold’st
There sounds° the heavenly voice of an angel
In the e’erlasting° choir of cherubim.

Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this earthly body° of decay
Doth grossly close it in,° we cannot hear it.

Enter musicians

[to the musicians]
Come ho, and wake Diana° with a hymn;

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}
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 sweetest touches reach your mistress’ ear,
And draw her home with music.

Music plays

—Jessica

I’m never merry when I hear sweet music.

—Lorenzo

The reason is your mind is too engrossed

With all your thoughts and it cannot enjoy

The peace and beauty that embraces you.

(All you need do is listen with your heart.)

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 / every / involved with / engrossed in
    Thought and emotion. Sweet, just let them be;
    
spirits: mind stuff, 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° world.

—Nerissa
When the moon shone, we did° not see the candle.

—Portia
So doth the greater glory dim the lesser.°
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until the king arrives° and then his status°
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
Into the vaster ocean.° Music. Listen!°

*Music plays.*

—Nerissa
It is your music, madam, from the house.

—Portia
Nothing is good without a proper context:°
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.°

—Nerissa
Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

—Portia
The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither one is heard;° and yet, I think,
The nightingale, if she should sing by day—
When every goose is cackling—° would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things, by proper setting, rise°

---

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° / inspired / uplifted
Unto their rightful praise and true perfection. / To their right place and true perfection!
Peace—how the moon sleeps with her secret love / Peace—how the moon sleeps with her secret love
And would not be awakened.

Light fades as the moon passes behind a cloud
Music stops

—Lorenzo
That is the voice
Of Portia, else I am much deceived. / mistake

—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.

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° they returned?  

—Lorenzo  
Madam, they are not yet.  
But there has come a messenger, before,  
To tell of their arrival.°  

{Are}  

—to signify their coming

—Portia  
Go, Nerissa,  
Give order to my servants to say nothing,  
To take no note° of our being absent hence,°  
Nor you Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.

A tucket sounds  

—Lorenzo  
Your husband is at hand, I hear his trumpet.  
Fear not, madam, we will not say a thing.°  

—to speak no word  
// our recent absence

The cloud passes and the moon shines again  

—Portia  
This night methinks is but the daylight sick.°  
It looks a little paler, like a day
Wherein the sun is hidden° by a cloud.  

—a sickly day  
/darkened

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers  

—Bassanio [overhearing Portia]  
Our night would share the day with all who tread°  
Upon the other side of the planet  

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° by our words.  / bettered / helped  
48. {Give order to my servants that they take} / No note at all of our being absent hence  
{to our recent absence

49. A tucket sounds 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.  

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]

50. {We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not}  
51. {’Tis a day / Such as the day is when the sun is hid}.
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).  

53. {We should hold day with the Antipodes}  
Antipodes: (lit. ‘opposite feet’); those who walk on the opposite side of the globe.
Should you walk 'round in lieu o' th shining sun.°

—Portia
Let me give light but let me not be light.°
For when a wife is light° in keeping vows
It makes for° a heavy-hearted husband—°
And never shall Bassanio be for me.°
But God wills° all!° You are welcome home, my lord.°

—Bassanio
I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Gratiano and Nerissa converse on their own

—Portia
You should, in all sense,° be much bound to him°

/ If you’d walk ‘round in absence of the sun.

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)

/W e 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: Because a wife who’s light... Doth brings about a husband’s heavy-heart my lord be so for me

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 is burdened or weighed down with grief.

59. {But God sort all}°

be light: Light in this context is in contrast to heavy. 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 Gratiano)—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.  

—Antonio
The bounds of which I’m well-acquainted of.  

—Portia
We are most honored, sir, to have you here.  
Yet it must show in other ways than words;  
Thus I’ll make short of this long-winded welcome.  

—Gratzião [to Nerissa]
By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong.  
In faith, I gave it to the judge’s clerk—  
And I would have his manly parts cut off  
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.  

—Portia
A quarrel, ho, already! What about?  

—Gratzião
About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring  
That she did give me, whose lett’ring was,  
For all to see, like cutler’s poetry,  
(The kind of words that one would find scribbled)  
Upon a knife: ‘Love me and leave me not.’  

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’ll scant this breathing courtesy} / Thus, I need not waste breath on courtesies  
   {Therefore I’ll make short of} / Therefore I’ll spare you / Therefore I’ll shorten
66. Gratzião 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: gelled 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 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 accounts, 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 words, as: ‘Love me, don’t leave me.’  
   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). Gratzião 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 or the value?—{poesy} / motto
You swore to me when I gave it to you / I presented it
That you would wear it till the hour of death, / thy
And that it should lie with you in your grave. / would
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths, > on my account
You should have been more careful and have keep it. {been respective} / had more reverence
You gave it to a judge’s clerk? A man?
But well I know—that ‘clerk’ is yet a woman / No, God’s my judge
And she will ne’er grow hair upon her face.72

—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, / scrub-brushed little boy
No higher than thyself, the judge’s clerk, / taller
A prating boy, who begged it as a fee.
I could not, for my heart, deny it him. / hold him from it / stay his request

—Portia
I must be plain with you: you are to blame,73 / frank
To part so slightly with your wife’s first gift— / eas’ly / lightly
A thing placed on with oaths upon your finger, {stuck}
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,74 / could give. Now Gratziano
You give your wife too unkind a cause for grief.75
An ‘twere to me, I would be fuming mad.76 / 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 my left hand, And swear I lost the ring defending it.

—Gratiano

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away Unto the judge who begged it, and indeed Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk Who took some pains in writing, he begged mine—

But the two rings.

—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 truth By heaven, I will ne’er come to your bed Until I see the ring!

—Nerissa

Nor I in yours Till I again see mine.

—Bassanio

Sweet Portia,

---

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

Yet your man, too, did give away his ring Unto the judge who begged it, and indeed Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk Who took some pains in writing, he begged mine—

And neither man nor master would take aught But the two rings.

Not that, I hope, which you received from me.

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.

Even so void is your false heart of truth By heaven, I will ne’er come to your bed Until I see the ring!

Nor I in yours Till I again see mine.

Sweet Portia,

---

77. / Yet your man, too, did give away his ring
78. / And ever gone is the truth from your heart / And c’er so void of all truth is your false heart / And so your heart, too, is bereft of truth
80. / By heaven, I swear, I’ll ne’er lay with you / bed / sleep
81. / 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!

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 our without a pause in the dialogue, whereas the F1 setting demands two pauses:

Q1

F1

Until I see the ring!

Ner. Nor I in yours

Till I again see mine!

Bass. Sweet Portia

If you did know . . .

Ner. 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° 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° the strength of your displeasure.

—Portia
If you had known the virtue° of the ring,
Or half her worthiness who gave the ring,
Or your own honor to keep safe° the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring—
And it appears, you were not even pleased°
To defend it with any kind° of zeal.
What man is there so lacking in all reason,°
So wont of modesty, as to demand°
A thing made sacred by a ceremony? 85 86
〈I hear the praises° of this worthy judge 87
But now methinks° there is no judge at all!〉
Nerissa, teaches me the right idea°: 88
I’ll bet my life, some woman has° the ring. 89

—Bassanio
No, by mine honor, madam, by my soul,
No woman has° it, but a civil lawyer°
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° the very life
Of my dear friend. 90 What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him.

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° held as a ceremony?
{conceive} // And think upon

86. / So much unreasonable
Had you been pleased in so defending it°
With any kind of zeal—would so insist
On the thing with such sentimental value?
{so much unreasonable} / so as to urge

87. / Much praise
88. / What to believe
89. / Had > was given
90. /LATED NOTES, 5.1.206]
I was beset\(^91\) by shame, and felt moreover\(^91\)
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\(^95\)
Had you been there I think you would have begged
The ring of\(^95\) me to give the worthy doctor.\(^96\)

--- Portia

Let not that doctor e’er come near my house.
Since he\(^97\) hath got the jewel that I do love,\(^9\)
And that\(^9\) which you did swear to keep for me.
I will become as generous\(^9\) as you.\(^9\)
I’ll not deny him anything I have—\(^9\)
No, not my body, nor my husband’s\(^9\) bed.
‘Know’\(^98\) him I shall, I am well\(^9\) sure of it.\(^9\)
Lie not a night from\(^9\) home. Watch me like Argus,\(^99\)
〈Who guarded Io with a hundred eyes.〉\(^100\)
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honour, which is still\(^9\) mine own,\(^101\)

---

91. / I was o’ertaken by shame, feeling that
92. [I was beset with shame and courtesy]
93. / I was o’ertaken 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.
94. / And I could not let such ingratitude | Besmear my honor. Pardon me, good lady,
95. / 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?
96. / 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 Gratziano’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.
97. / That I give the ring to the worthy doctor.
98. 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.
99. 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.’
100. 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.
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° for my bedfellow.  

—Nerissa
And I his clerk. Therefore, be well-advised
If° you do leave me to mine own protection.

—Gratiano
Do as you will.° Let not me catch him, then,
For if I do, I’ll break° the young clerk’s pen.

—Antonio
I am th’unhappy subject° of these quarrels.

—Portia
Sir, grieve not—none of this is caused by° you.

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

—Portia
Hear you but that°
In both my° eyes he doubly sees himself °
In each eye one version of self is seen
And then he swears upon his double self—
Now° there’s an oath to count 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}
105. / And with these many friend as faithful° witness,
106. {Mark you but that!}
107. {In both my eyes he doubly sees himself}
108. / Each eye reflects but one of two pretenses
109. / And so his swearing be but two-faced
110. / Each eye reflects but one of two positions / Each eye reflects his double-facedness
111. {And} / bank on
—Bassanio
Nay, but hear me.°
Pardon this fault and, by my soul I swear,
I never more will break an oath with thee.

—Antonio
I once did lend° my body for his welfare°
Which, but for him who won° your husband’s ring,
My life withal, would have been lost.° I dare
Be bound again, my soul upon the forfeit,
That he will never knowingly° breath faith. 113 114

—Portia
Then you shall be his bondsman.°
She takes the ring from her finger
Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.° 115

—Antonio [giving the ring to Bassanio]
Here, Lord Bassanio—swear to keep this ring.

—Bassanio
By heaven it is° the same I gave the doctor!

—Portia

112. Portia does not hear Bassanio. Later, she does not even answer his direct questions [280]. This ‘not hearing’ is a clear sign of having power over that person, who you are not required to hear, listen to, nor even respond to. Shylock expressed this same kind of power (which he had over Antonio) by not hearing him, by not responding to him. Antonio says, Hear me yet, good Shylock [3.3.3] and I pray thee, hear me speak [3.3.11], yet Shylock’s only reply is: I will not hear thee speak [3.3.12], I’ll have no speaking. [3.3.17]. Portia, of course, cannot say ‘I will not hear you speak’—all she can do to express her power is not respond.

113. { . . . that your lord | Will never more break faith advisedly}
/ That he will ne’er wittingly break his vow / That, with intention, he will ne’er break his vow / That wittingly he will ne’er break his vow / That he will never wittingly break faith

114. / And were it not for he who has the ring,
My life withal, would have been lost. And now
I dare be bound again, my soul upon
The forfeit, that your good husband, Bassanio,
Will never wittingly break faith with you.
/ Will ne’er wittingly break the vow he’s made

115. Here Portia is testing Bassanio—and ‘playing him like a fiddle.’ As with Shylock, she plays from the position of advantage, of being ‘one up,’ i.e., knowing the outcome before she even begins. Here (as in the trial scene) she escalates the confrontation: First she accuses Bassanio of giving the ring to a woman; then she accepts that he gave the ring to a man (the doctor); then she says that she will be as liberal (and giving of herself) to the doctor as was Bassanio (for no other reason other than that he hath got the jewel that I loved); and finally (in the next passage) she says that she already gave herself to the doctor—a tormenting lie that must have made Bassanio’s heart sink. The significant outcome of her orchestration is in securing Antonio as surety for Bassanio’s vow to her. (Remember that he broke his vow to her in favor of Antonio’s request). Now, with Antonio as his bondsman, Bassanio cannot break his vow to Portia over anything involving Antonio. Further, this could be seen as a kind of second wedding, where Antonio is symbolically giving away Bassanio, as a father might give away a dear son to his new bride. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.255]
I had it of him.° Pardon me, Bassanio,116 / I got it from him
But for this ring, the doctor lay with me.° 117 / I lay with the young doctor.

—Nerissa
And pardon me, my gentle Gratziano,
For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor’s clerk,
In lieu of° 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° for use.〉119 120 / spoiled
You have cheated us,° ere we have deserved it!121 {What, we are cuckolds}

—Portia
Speak not so grossly° —there is much confusion: 122 / crudely
〈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,

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 now returned. I have not yet
Entered my house. (And here is a letter [takes out a letter]
Explaining it all.) 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 hulls amassed with riches. /with/replete/abound with
You’d not believe the circumstance by which I chanced upon this letter

—Antonio [reading the letter] I am speechless!

—Bassanio [to Portia]
Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?  

—Gratiziano [to Nerissa]
Were you the clerk who came and cheated on me?

—Nerissa
Ay, but the clerk who never means to do it
Unless, through life, he turns into a man.

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

—Antonio
Sweet lady, you have given me life and living,

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 / you’d never guess
How strange it was I chanced upon this letter.

129. Portia never answers this question. When Gratiziano 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, Gratiziano asks Nerissa a direct question; in 282-283, Nerissa responds to Gratiziano’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.
For here I read for certain that my ships
Have safely come to port.  

—Portia And now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts, too, for you.

—Nerissa
Ay, and I’ll give them him without a fee. [she hands him the will]

Here do I give to you and Jessica
A special deed of gift, from the good Jew,
Who wills you all he owns upon his death.

—Lorenzo
Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starving people.

—Portia [looking at the sky] It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
With an account so brief. Let us go in
And charge us there with cross-examination,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

—Gratiano
Let it be so. The first line of questioning

131. {Are safely come to road} come to road: found a safe harbor, come to dry land
132. One might expect that an address made in front of Jessica would be: ‘from Jessica’s father’ or ‘from old Shylock’ rather than ‘from the rich Jew.’ (Shylock has converted to Christianity but is still considered—as is Jessica—a Jew.)
133. {After his death, of all he dies possessed of} Who grants you all his possessions ‘pon death
 / Whom, upon death, bequeath’s you all he owns. / doth leaves
134. manna: heavenly food which was dropped upon the Israelites in the desert and which sustained them. The notion of a sudden and unexpected ‘gift from heaven’ is implied in the term.
   “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)
135. / You drop a heav’nly manna in the way / You drop gifts from heaven in the way of | Starvèd people / You drop heavenly manna to people | Starving below.
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.)
137. It is almost morning The fairy tale is about to end. No sunset—none but a gloomy sunrise. Here also the roles of prince and princess are reversed: the prince is now shown to be anything but a prince; and the princes, showing her strong, independent spirit, and superiority over her lord, is hardly a princess in need of rescue. The couples do not ride off into the sunset, to a future of everlasting peace and bliss; they enter into the morning, with the pairs somewhat distant and estranged.
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?\footnote{Whether till the next night she had rather stay
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day} \footnote{But were the day come, I should wish it night
Till I were laying\textsuperscript{6} in my clerk\text{'}s delight.}
But were the day come, I should wish it night
Till I were laying\textsuperscript{6} in my clerk\text{'}s delight. \footnote{But were the day come, I should wish it night
Till I were couching with the doctor\text{'}s clerk}
And while I live, I\text{'}ll fear no other thing—
So sore as keeping safe\textsuperscript{6} Nerissa\text{'}s ring. \footnote{This bawdy punning is commonly found at the end of a romantic comedies. Herein the term ring is usually taken as a reference to \textquotesingle vulva\textquotesingle and Gratziano\text{'}s \textquotesingle sore keeping\textquotesingle of it—well we need not comment on that!}  

\textit{Exeunt. Couples first, then Antonio}
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,°
I’ve gained some comfort, at too high a price.°
And now my friend, I must bid you good-bye,
‘Tis not a sight° to see ‘ol Shylock° cry.

_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.’