

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

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE OF VENICE

PRINCE OF MOROCCO (MOROCHO-Q1, MOROCHUS-Q1), *a suitor of Portia*

PRINCE OF ARAGON (ARAGON), *a suitor of Portia*

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

BASSANIO, *friend of Antonio, 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, *a friend of Antonio*

SALANIO-Q1 (SOLANIO-Q1), *a friend of Antonio*

SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice*

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

JESSICA, *daughter of Shylock, with Lorenzo*

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

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

OLD GOBBO (GOBBO), *father to Launcelet*

PORTIA, *heiress of Belmont*

NERISSA, *waiting-woman of Portia*

BALTHASAR-Q1 (BALTHAZAR), *servant of Portia*

STEPHANO (STEFANO), *servant of Portia*

MESSENGER, *for Portia*

SERVANT (SERVINGMAN), *for Portia*

MAN, *messenger for Antonio*

MESSENGER, *for Jessica*

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

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

Editions

Editions and Printing Dates:

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

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

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

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

Punctuation Key

Punctuation Key:

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

b) Text found within special brackets { } indicates the original text as found in Q1.

c) Text found on the right of the body of the play, and preceded by ‘ / ’ or ‘ // ’ indicates alternative wordings. When there are two entries per line ‘ / ’ indicates the first entry and ‘ // ’ the second.

d) Words found within single brackets < > indicate text that was not found in the original but indicated by the original.

Words found within double brackets << >> indicate text that was wholly added to the original and neither indicated or suggested by the original.

e) Text found within open square brackets [] indicates a stage direction that was not found in the original but could be indicated by the original.

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

g) Text marked in purple indicates original text that could or should be deleted.

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

Venice. Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio

[Additional text]

<<—Antonio¹

I know this hatred mocks all Christian virtue

But they I loathe; their very sight abhors me.

/ But the mere sight of usurers abhors

They're none but vile infractions of nature,

/ These usurers are vile infracts of nature

A plague on all that is righteous and good.²

And the contracts they use to loan out money,^o

/ they make to ply their loans

Made 'neath the guise of friendship and of trust,

Are none but instruments of fell deceit,

Used to ensnare those who are most desp'rate.

/ They pray on those who are the most despairing

Some men will sign a bond to borrow money;^o

/ take out loans

And if the sums are not repaid on time,

Then, as forfeit, they take and take some more.^o

/ and take / it all

All that a man has earned throughout his life,^o

/ All that a man has and all that he earned

Will come to naught and end in tearful ruin.

'Tis an obscene,^o despisèd greed they show,

/ They show a greed most obscene and befouled

These heartless usurers. There's a special place

In hell made just for them.

— Salanio

Those damnèd^o Jews.

/ cursèd

—Antonio

'Tis not a^o Jewish thing this usury,

/ No, 'tis no

'Tis but a godless thing, a cursèd thing,

An aberration felling Jew and gentile;^o

/ A plague befalling Jew and gent alike

A wretched thing. Enough of my complaints,

You know them well.

—Salarino

And so we do, Antonio,

But here this face so sad,^o 'tis not a sight

/ grave

1. These opening lines are not found in the original play; they were added to clarify the central conflict between Antonio and Shylock which is principally over usury not religion. In the opening of the original play we find Antonio lamenting about his sadness yet Antonio's sadness has no relevance to the rest of the play.

Thomas Wilson (1528-1581), a Protestant, Cambridge scholar, wrote this about usury: "Yea, usury is a manifest and voluntary known theft ... usurers destroy and devour up, not only whole families but also whole countries and bring all folk to beggary that have to do with them; and therefore are much worse than thieves or murderers. And that which is worst, under the color of friendship men's throats are cut and the doers counted for honest and wise men amongst others that have so ungodly gathered goods together. What is the matter that Jews are so universally hated wheresoever they come? Forsooth, usury is one of the chief causes, for they rob all men that deal with them and undo them in the end. And for this cause they were hated in England and so banished worthily, with whom I would wish all these Englishmen were sent that lend their money or their goods whatsoever for gain, for I take them to be no better than Jews. Nay, shall I say they are worse than Jews." [See Additional Note, 1.1.0]

2. After this line it will become clear that Antonio is talking about his hatred toward usurers; however, the audience is still likely to think he is talking about Jews (who happen to be usurers). At the risk of weakening things, a clarifying line could be added here to indicate the exact nature of Antonio's complaint: *These cursèd usurers all but disgust me.*

We know so well.° Why look ye so, my friend? >> / We often see

—Antonio ³

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad, / feel this way ⁴
It troubles° me, I know it troubles° you;° ⁵ {wearies} / bothers / baffles
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, / Yet
What stuff 'tis made of, I am yet to learn.° / I do not know
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me, ⁶
That I have much ado to know myself. ⁷

—Salarino

Your mind is tossing on the ocean.° / like a ship at sea
There where your argosies° with portly sail / grand vessels
Look like the proud signors upon the wave ⁸ / Do stream upon the wave like proud maestros
Or like the grand displays of a sea pageant. ⁹
See your ships overpeer° the smaller boats ¹⁰ / rise above
That curtsy° to them in awe and reverence ¹¹ / bow down / prostrate
As they fly by with grandly woven wings. ¹²

—Salanio

Believe me sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would ° / of my concerns would rest

3. The original play begins here, with Antonio talking about his sadness. The play opens *in media res*, in the middle of an ongoing conversation between Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio.

4. The term *sad* seems to mean worried or deeply concerned about something; this is suggested by the commiserating images supplied by Salarino and Salanio.

Why is Antonio sad? Is it his nature to be sad or is he worried about his business ventures or something to do with Bassanio? We never know. The issue, however, is moot since Antonio's sadness has no bearing on the play nor do we ever hear about it again. 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 by the Sals and Gratiano refutes this. [See Additional Note, 1.1.1]

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

/ In sooth I do not know why I feel this way | Some woeful sadness has o'rtaken me

This line, found in the original, is misplaced and may be an appendage from an earlier draft where the opening conversation was between Antonio and Gratiano. This line suggests that Antonio has talked about his sadness on numerous occasions, so much so that it wearies him (talking about it) and it wearies those who have had to hear about it, namely Gratiano. When this line is spoken to the Sals it is out of sorts since Antonio's sadness seems to be something newly experienced and not something they could have grown weary of. The Sals, who are unmitigated supporters of Antonio, would never have told Antonio that they were weary of hearing about his sadness (unlike Gratiano.) The Sals, however, are baffled and/or troubled by Antonio's sadness and so the line has been emended to reflect that notion. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.2]

6. {What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born, | I am to learn. | And such a want-wit sadness makes of me}

The second line contains only two iambs and is herein rectified. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.5]

7. These lines are unclear and should be deleted if the new opening is adopted. Otherwise, being harmless, they can remain.

8. {Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood} *burghers*: wealthy Venetians, rich citizens

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

pageants of the sea: floats and displays that were used on ships, as part of a festive pageantry. Modern day parades use floats, which are large displays (such as castles, ships, or popular figures) wheeled down a major street. Here Antonio's great ships are likened to pageants of the sea where people look on in wonder at the large displays floating on water.

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

overpeer: peer over, look down on, tower above *petty traffickers*: small trading ships

11. {That curtsy to them, do them reverence} / That always lower their topsails in reverence

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

12. *woven wing*: The large sails of Antonio's ships are likened to the wings of flying bird or to the 'billowing splendor' of the clothes worn by wealthy burghers.

Be with my hopes abroad. And every day ¹³
 I'd toss the grass to know where blows the wind,^o ¹⁴ / which way the winds blows
 Peering in^o maps for ports and piers and roads; / And search the
 And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my enterprise, no doubt,^{o15} {Misfortune to my venture, out of doubt}
 Would make me sad.^{o16}

—Salarino My breath,^o cooling my broth, {wind}
 Would blow me to a shiver^o when I thought {an ague} / a fever
 What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
 Each time I saw the sandy hour-glass run
 I'd think of shallow flats and sandy banks
 And see my ship, the *Andrew*,^o docked in sand, {And see my wealthy *Andrew*}
 Her upper sail draped below her ribs, / With her topsail a-hung below her ribs
 Cov'ring her hull^o just like^o a burial shroud.^{17 18} / Kissing her grave // as would
 And should I go to church, <instead of praying,>
 I'd see the holy edifice of stone
 And think me straightaway of the dang'rous rocks
 Which touching but my vessel's gentle side
 Would scatter all her spices on the wave^o ¹⁹ {stream} /sea
 Enrobe the roaring waters with her silk
 And, in a word, reduce my worth^o to nothing. / wealth
 Had I the mind^o to think on all of this, / were I inclined
 And should I think on all that could go wrong,
 I, too, would have a mind o'ercome with sadness.^o / dread / besieged by worry
 So tell me not, I know Antonio
 Is sad^o to think upon^o his parlous ventures.²⁰ / loath // Is much distressed about

—Antonio
 Believe me—no. I thank my fortune for it:
 My ventures are not in one vessel^o trusted, {bottom}
 Nor in one place, nor does my wealth depend^o {nor is my whole estate}
 Upon the fortune of this present year.
 Therefore, my ventures do not make me sad.^o / are of no concern

—Salanio
 Why then, Antonio is in love?

13. {I should be still} / Each day I'd be *still*: always

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

15 / Misfortune to my venture, without doubt

16 / Misfortune to my ventures would, no doubt | Be of concern

17. / Laid out upon her burial like a shroud

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

vailing: lowering, bringing down *ribs*: the hull of a ship, made up of wooden ribs or center beams

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

19 / Would spread her cache of spice upon the wave

20. {Is sad to think upon his merchandise}

—Antonio

Nay, nay!

{Fie, fie} / No, no

—Salanio

Not in love neither? <Then we are perplexed.^o> ^{21 22}

{Then let us say you are sad}

Because you are not destined^o to be merry;

/ fated / fashioned

For 'twere as easy now for you to laugh

And leap and say that you are merry only

Because you are not sad.^o By the two faces

Of Janus—one that laughs and one that cries— ²³

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:^o

/ day

Some that will smile so much their eyes have shut,^{o24}

/ and ever be happy

And laugh like parrots²⁵ when all else are crying.^o

/ at a mournful tune ²⁶

And other of such vinegar aspect^o ²⁷

/ And others so acerbic in their mode

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

Though stern-browed Nestor swear the jest be funny.²⁸

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratziano

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,^o

/ trusted friend

With Gratziano and Lorenzo. Thus,^o

{Fare ye well} / Farewell

We leave you now with better company.

—Salarino

We would have stayed until we made you merry,

If worthier friends had not prevented us.

—Antonio

<Nay Salarino—and my friend Salanio—> ²⁹

Your worth is very dear in my regard.^o

/ esteem

21 / Ay, we're at a loss / Then we stand confused

22. The lines that follow, marked in purple, are misplaced and should be deleted.

The Sals have no real idea why Antonio appears to be sad or overly concerned about something. They surmise that it has something to do with his perilous ventures abroad but Antonio refutes this. They take a stab at thinking he is in love but Antonio dismisses that as well. Here, quite anomalously, Salanio is now surmising that Antonio's sadness is due to his sad nature. This philosophical address of Antonio's sad nature is repeated later in the scene by Gratziano, where it belongs, as such speculation is fitting the irreverence of Gratziano not Salanio. Thus, the lines uttered here by Salanio are distinctly out of place. It's likely that, in an earlier draft, these words were mouthed by Gratziano and later, quite imperfectly, transposed to Salanio. Transposing these lines back to Gratziano, later in the scene, is possible but not necessary since it only repeats what Gratziano is already saying. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.47]

23. {Now, by two-headed Janus} *Janus*: the Roman god of exits and entrances. He has two faces that are opposite in nature: one face is smiling and the other is frowning.

24. {Some that will evermore peep through their eyes} This line refers to people who smile so much so that their cheek muscles have atrophied, which now keeps their eyes half-shut (such that they can only peep through them).

25. *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.

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

27. {And other of such vinegar aspect} / And others be of such a gloomy aspect / And others so acerbic in their mode

28. {Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable}

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

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

29. The name of these two characters, *Salarino* and *Salanio*, are never mentioned in the play even though it's customary to name a character upon his entrance or during the first scene in which he appears. The failure to mention the names of these minor but significant characters may be because they were not part of the original draft and added later on. Throughout the play, these characters remain nameless. To rectify this omission, a line could be added here.

I take it your own business calls you,
 And you embrace th'occasion^o to depart. / the moment

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

—Bassanio
 Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say when.
 You've become strangers.^o Must it be that way? {You grow exceedingly strange}

—Salanio
 We'll make our leisure time fit in with yours.^o ³⁰ {leisures to attend on yours}

—Lorenzo
 My lord Bassanio, here,^o you have found Antonio. {since}
 [*aside, to Salarino*]
 We, too, will leave soon but at dinner time,
 I pray you, have^o in mind where we must meet.³¹ / bear

— Salarino ³²
 I will not fail you. (We'll be there as planned.)

Exeunt Salarino and Salanio

—Gratziano
 You look not well, Signior Antonio; ³³
 You care too much concern about the world. {You have too much respect upon the world
 The ones who buy this world with too much care
 Are sure to lose it for want of enjoyment.³⁴ / Do end up losing it for want of joy
 Believe me friend, you are completely changed^o ³⁵ / you're not being yourself

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

30. This exchange seems more of a gratuitous gesture than an actual intention to get together. We sense a cordial distance between Bassanio and Salarino-Salanio, as they all seek Antonio's attention.

31. The meeting Lorenzo is referring to involves stealing Jessica [2.4] from her father's house. 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, in the original {I will not fail you} is amiss. Note that this notion to meet up at dinner time and steal away Jessica was made before Bassanio planned his dinner feast, with Shylock as his special guest. It also confirms that, on this very day, Bassanio borrowed money from Shylock, Jessica went off with Lorenzo, and Bassanio left for Belmont.

32. In the original, this line {I will not fail you} is attributed to Bassanio. However, there is no plan or meeting involving Lorenzo and Bassanio. Thus, this line has been assigned to Salarino. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.72]

33. Some commentators believe that the play may have initially opened here, at line 73. Gratziano's opening statement resembles that of Antonio's opening; and, here again, Antonio brings up the subject of his sadness. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.73] [See Appendix: *The Three Sals*]

34. {They lose it that do buy it with much care}
 / When too concerned about what can go wrong | You can't enjoy all the things that are right.
 Gratziano is saying that one who buys life with too much care (i.e., spends too much time in worry and sadness) cannot enjoy life. Said another way: things usually turn out poorly for one who is too concerned about how things will turn out.

35. {Believe me, you are marvellously changed} / Believe me friend, you don't look like yourself.
 / Believe me, you are decidedly different / Believe me when I say, you're not yourself

—Gratziano	Let me° play the fool:	/ me
	With mirth and laughter let old smiles° come,°	{ wrinkles }
	And let my liver rather heat with joy°	{ wine }
	Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.	
	Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,°	/ veins run warm with blood
	Sit like a marble° statue of his grandsire, ³⁶	/ granite
	Sleep when he wakes, and become ill with jaundice° ³⁷	{ and creep into the jaundice }
	By being peevish° (about everything)?	/ cranky / sad-faced
	I say Antonio, out of love I speak, ³⁸	
	There are a sort of men with no expression	/ reveal no emotion
	Who entertain a willfull kind of stillness °	{ And do a willful stillness entertain }
	Just like the muck cov'ring° a stagnant pond; ³⁹	/ atop
	They hope that others will look well on° them ⁴⁰	/ upon
	As men of wisdom, gravity, and depth,° ⁴¹	{ and profound conceit }
	As who should say,° 'I am Sir Oracle,	/ Who proudly say
	And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'	
	O Antonio, I do know of those°	{ these }
	Who are reputed° wise for saying naught,	/ Who are but held as
	When I am sure if they should move to speak	
	'Twould almost° dam the ears of those who listen ⁴²	/ 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	
	To catch the worthless° opinion of others. ⁴³	/ For the ill-gained / unvalued
	Come good Lorenzo. Fare ye well for now; °	{ awhile }
	I'll end my exortation° after dinner.	/ finish with my preaching

—Lorenzo
Well, we will leave you then, til dinner-time.⁴⁴

36. {Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster }

37. *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, Gratziano 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).

38. {I tell thee what, Antonio— | I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks }

39. {There are a sort of men whose visages | Do cream and mantle like a standing pond }

cream and mantle: cover over and mask; become pale and mask-like. This image suggests the algae that float upon the surface of a stagnant pond or the covering of cream on milk. [See Additional Notes, I.I.90]

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

41. {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

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

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

Here we are reminded of a quote by Abraham Lincoln: "Better to remain silent and be thought of as a fool than to speak and remove all doubt."

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

fool gudgeon: gudgeon are fish that were thought to be gullible, easy believers that would bite at any bait. Thus they were easy to catch. Some editions use Pope's emendation of *fool's gudgeon*.

These lines can be made more clear by adding an explanatory line:

But fish not with this melancholy bait | To catch opinons like a fool's gudgeon | (A fish well-known to bite at any bait.)

I must be one of these same dumb wise men
For Gratziano never lets me speak.

—Gratziano

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

—Antonio

Farewell. I'll grow a talker next time.^o 45

—Gratziano Please^o— {Thanks} / Please do
Silence is virtue^o in dried tongue of ox / Praise be for silence / I pray for silence
And in craggy old maids who've got the pox.^o 46

Exeunt Gratziano and Lorenzo

—Antonio

Did Gratziano say anything now?^o 47 / Words without wit—is that anything new?

—Bassanio^o 48

He speaks an infinite amount^o of nothing,^o {deal} // nonsense
More so than any man in all of Venice.
His point resembles^o but two grains of wheat^o 49 {His reasons are as} / And his main point is
Hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek^o / where you seek
All day before you find them. And alas,^o / And at last
When you have them they are not worth the search.

—Antonio

Well, tell me now about this same lady

44. Three references made to meeting later that day for dinner [70, 104, 105]. As we later come to learn, Bassanio also puts on a dinner that evening, with Shylock as the guest of honor, which he decides to put on *after* he secures the funds. As it turns out, the dinner mentioned here and the feast Bassanio decides to put on later that day are the same.

45. {Farewell. I'll grow a talker for this gear}

gear: a) discourse, talk, b) matter, affair, c) reason.

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

/ Please do | Silence is praiseworthy in ox-tongue dried, | And in a maid too plain to be a bride

neat's tongue dried: the dried tongue of an ox, which is commendable precisely because one does not want this kind of tongue to talk—one wants it to be dead, dried, and ready to eat.

not vendible: not saleable. Refers to a maid who cannot be sold (with a dowry) in the way of marriage. The implication is that someone who is old and unwed would speak with complaining words, so her silence would be welcomed. Some interpret *not vendible* as referring to a maid who is *too young* and not yet saleable (in the marketplace of marriage), and whose talk might be witless. It seems more likely that Gratziano would commend silence in a craggy old maid (who is wont to complain) rather than in a young maid who is not yet of a marriageable age. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.112]

47. / He speaks a great deal yet says not a thing / He speaks and speaks, and yet says not a thing

The line, as it appears in the original, is anomalous: {It is that any thing now.} This line is missing three syllables and appears to be typesetter-corrected. Editors have treated this 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?'; and c) changed *It* to *Yet*: 'Yet is that anything now?' The emendation found here is based on the premise that 'Yet' was found in the original manuscript and somehow became 'Yt' and then 'It.' It could also be that the original "new" was typesetter-corrected into "now." Another possibility is that the name *Gratziano* was originally intended to be part of Antonio's line and in some mix up got shifted to Bassanio's first line. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.113]

48. In Q1 these lines do not appear in meter, which is anomalous since all the verses before and after it do. This section, along with the previous line (delivered by Antonio), could have been unreadable in places and so the typesetter did his best to "correct" things. Here the text is further corrected by restoring the correct meter. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.118]

49. {His reasons are as two grains of wheat} *his reasons*: his point, his conclusions; the value of what he says

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,⁵⁰
That you, today, promised to tell me of.

—Bassanio⁵¹

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have depleted my savings^o {disabled mine estate}⁵²
By sometimes^o showing a more swelling port^o ⁵³ {something} / lavish style
Than my faint means could rightfully sustain;^o {would grant continuance}
Nor do I moan about being deprived^o {abridged}
Of such a noble life.^o Now my chief care ⁵⁴ {noble rate}
Is to come fully clear^o of all my debts^o {fairly off} {the great debts}
Wherein^o my years of waste and lavish spending^o ⁵⁵ / In which // wastefulness and spending
Hath left me bound.^o⁵⁶ To you Antonio ⁵⁷ {gaged}
I owe the most in money and in love,
And by your love I am granted permission^o {I have a warranty}
To unburden all^o my plots^o and purposes ⁵⁸ / To tell you all // plans
On how to clear myself of all my debts.^o

—Antonio

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;^o / tell me your plan
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured ⁵⁹

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

Referring to the meeting as a “pilgrimage” suggests that Bassanio had to travel some distance for this meeting.

To what lady did Bassanio swear a secret pilgrimage? If this was a meeting with some love interest it would not have been so secretive and Bassanio would have no reason to tell Antonio about it. Bassanio indicates that in this meeting he learns about Portia and the contest to win her, yet this was public knowledge and not something that needed to be sealed with a vow of secrecy. The meeting must have had a purpose such that Bassanio could not reveal the identity of the lady with whom he was meeting nor tell his dearest friend about the meeting or the true purpose of the meeting. Bassanio must have also known something about the general subject of the meeting (such that he promised to tell Antonio all about it). However, Bassanio never tells Antonio anything about his secret meeting despite having promised him he would. He only talks about Portia and the course of action he needs to take to win her. ... All indications suggest that Bassanio met with Nerissa, Portia’s trusted handmaid, to discuss Portia and the contest that was taking place in Belmont. Together they came up with a plan whereby Bassanio would get help from Nerissa, if he met a certain condition, and this would enable him to win the contest and Portia as well. He had to keep everything a secret because his intended course of action did not “stand within the eye of honour” but involved cheating in the contest to win Portia. [See, Additional Notes, 1.1.120]

51. In the following discourse Bassanio tells Antonio about his plans, and what he needs to carry out his plan, but nothing about to woman with whom he met or what they discussed at the meeting.

52. Bassanio seems to be part of an aristocratic class called ‘gentlemen,’ a class of young, single men who live off their parentage inheritance (or estate). As they do not need to work, their days are spent with entertainment, parties, feasting, womanizing, etc.

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

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

55. {Wherein my time something too prodigal} *too prodigal*: too extravagant, too wasteful

56. *gaged*: indebted, owing, entangled, pledged, bound

57. Is to pay off the debts I have accrued / Is to come fully clear of all the debts
During my years of wonton waste and spending / Wherein my time of wonton wastefulness
Which I now gag upon. To you, my friend / Hath left me now to gag upon. To you

58. Bassanio claims: *I will unburden all my plots and purposes* yet he does not tell Antonio about the woman with whom he met nor his true plot—a plot that involves winning Portia by way of a rigged contest (and not by a customary courtship, as Antonio is misled to believe). Bassanio tells Antonio about Portia, and his sureness of winning her—because she once looked on him favorably—but he does not disclose that he will be involved in a contest (where he must solve a riddle); nor does he reveal the real reason as to why he is so certain (and ‘questionless’) of success. Plain and simple: the plan is to win Portia by cheating at the contest; thus, he is not telling Antonio about his true plots and purposes.

59. {And if it stand, as you yourself still do, | Within the eye of honour}

My purse, my person,^o my extremest means^o / My bank, my body // and my every means
Lie all unlockèd to your every need.^o 60 {to your occasions}

—Bassanio

In my school days, when I had lost an arrow,^o {shaft} spending
I shot another one the self-same way / but
And in the self-same direction, yet now 61 / And in the same direction yet, this tim
With a more careful^o and advisèd watch; / much keener
Then, in my vent'ring^o for the second arrow, / in adventure / my searching
I oft found both.⁶² I urge^o this childhood proof^o / give // lesson / story
Because what follows is pure innocence:^o 63 / my plan holds the same innocence
I owe you much and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but, if you'd please^o / you were
To shoot another arrow the same way
Which you did shoot the first, [and loan to me
Again, one more amount,^o] I do not doubt— / another sum
Watching the aim with care—that I'll find both: 64
I will return^o the sums that now you risk,^o / bring back // loan
And funds enough^o to clear^o my former debts.⁶⁵ / And all I need // rest

—Antonio 66

You know me well, yet herein spend^o but time, / waste
To try my love with needless circumstance:^o 67 / burdensome detail

Antonio is adding a caveat here: Bassanio's plan must stand within the eye of honour. However, the plan as we know it, which is to receive help from Nerissa to unfairly win the contest, may not stand within the eye of honour, at least in Antonio's eyes. The plan, however, may stand within in the eye of honor for Bassanio, who feels justified to do a little wrong (get help from Nerissa) to do a great right (have the contest deliver to Portia someone she truly loves). And, Bassanio is not completely deceiving Antonio (who is lead to believe that this is a typical courtship that involves Bassanio wooing Portia) because, as stated, Bassanio must woo Portia, and win her love, in order to get help from Nerissa.

Antonio's caveat, however, is probably moot; his love for Bassanio causes him to overlook all of Bassanio's flaws and untold plots, and loan him the money irregardless. [See Additional Notes, 1.1.137]

60. Bassanio asking Antonio for money, yet again, suggests a pattern where Bassnio takes advantage of Antonio. In the past Bassanio borrowed money from Antonio to live beyond his means—and he made no attempt to repay any of the borrowed money. Here again Bassanio comes to Antonio for money. Bassanio may be aware of Antonio's blind love for him and he uses that affection—perhaps in an innocent or careless way but possibly in a deceptive way—for his own benefit. Bassanio, too, has genuine love for Antonio so the relationship is not merely one-sided.

61. {I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight | The selfsame way}

/ I shot another in the selfsame way | And in the selfsame direction, yet now

I'd see exactly where the next one fell, | And in the venturing forth I oft found both.

62. {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.

63. Not true. The plan—which is never told to Antonio—is far from innocent. In its highest embodiment it involves a deceitful appearance and an uncertain choice between three caskets (in a contest); in its lowest embodiment it involves deceiving Antonio and cheating to win a contest (for good reasons, no doubt).

64. { . . . I do not doubt, | As I will watch the aim, or to find both}

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

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

rest: put to rest, pay back *debtors for the first*: all my previous debts, debtors from before

[See Additional Notes, 1.1.151]

66. Antonio is so eager to accommodate Bassanio that he agrees to help him without so much as wasting time to hear his actual plan. {You know me well, yet herein spend but time | To try my love with needless circumstance.} He assumes that Bassanio is going to woo Portia in accordance with customary acts of courtship; he hears nothing of the contest (where Bassanio must solve a riddle to win Portia), nor that he is assured to get help he will get from Nerissa, and “questionless be fortunate” in winning Portia.

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

And certainly,⁶⁸ you offer me more wrong,⁶⁸ { And out of doubt }
 In doubting⁶⁹ my utmost desire to help,⁷⁰ / questioning
 Than if you had made waste of⁶⁹ all I have.⁷⁰ / laid waste to // my wealth
 Then do but say to me⁶⁹ what I should do, / All you need do is say
 That in your knowledge⁶⁹ may be done by me, / The most you know that
 And I'll be pressed unto it.⁶⁹ Therefore speak. / And I'll be bound to do it

—Bassanio

In Belmont is a lady richly left,
 <Having just come upon a countless fortune.>⁷¹
 And she is fair and, fairer than all words,⁷² { that word }
 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair hints of her affection.⁷³
 Her name is Portia, and she's worth no less⁷³ { and nothing undervalued }
 Than Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.⁷³
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renowned suitors; and her sunny⁷⁴ locks / golden
 Hang on⁷⁴ her temples like a golden fleece,⁷⁴ / Adorn
 Where Belmont beckons⁷⁵ like the shores of Colchis,⁷⁵ / Which now makes Belmont
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them⁷⁶ / along with them
 I have a mind portends me such success⁷⁷ { I presages me such thrift }
 That I, without a doubt, would win her favor.⁷⁸ / be fortunate

wind: a) blow wind, be long-winded. *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 your needing to waste your breath on details.

with circumstance: with details, circumlocutions, beating around the bush
 68. {And, out of doubt, you do me more wrong} *out of doubt*: beyond doubt, there is no doubt

69. {In making question of my uttermost} / In questioning my uttermost compliance

70. /And try my love with circuitous pleas⁶⁹ / long-winded appeals

That one so dear as you need never make;
 And now your doubt about my willingness
 To give my uttermost, does me more wrong

71. An explanatory line could be added here if the meaning of 'richly left' is unclear.

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

73. {I did receive fair speechless messages} / I did receive the most adoring glances

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

74. *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]

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

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).

/ Which turns her country manor of Belmont | Into the promising shoreline of Colchis

76. [See Additional Note, 1.1.174]

77. / My mind portends me of certain success

presages: foretells, foresees, augurs *thrift*: success, profit (which will come from Portia and her fortune)

78. {That I should questionless be fortunate} / That I, no doubt, will be most fortunate

How does Bassanio come to be so sure ("questionless") that he will be fortunate, i.e., that he will win Portia and all her wealth through the solving of a riddle? This has nothing to do with her "fair speechless messages." Does something he discussed at his secret meeting (with Nerissa) make him certain of his success? What was most likely agreed upon in the

—Antonio

You know that all my fortunes are at sea;

I have not money nor sufficient store^o 79

{ commodity } / goods to sell

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

/ To raise the sum right now

Try what my credit in Venice can do;^o 80

/ can bring you in Venice.

Let it be stretched^o even to the utmost^o 81

{ That shall be racked }

To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.

Go, presently inquire,^o and so will I.

/ Go and make inquiries

Secure the funds from whomever^o you must,

/ wherever

Based on my name, my credit, and my trust.⁸²

Exeunt

secret meeting was that Nerissa would help Bassanio pick the right chest, and win the contest, *if* he could win Portia's love. (This is in keeping with the spirit of the contest, so devised by Portia's father, who foretold that the one who wins the contest will be someone who Portia shall rightly love.) Thus, having received prior hints of affection from Portia, Bassanio is certain that Portia will fall in love with him (and he will get the help he needs to win the contest.) [See Additional Notes, 1.1.76] [See Appendix: *The Lottery*]

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

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

81. { That shall be racked, even to the uttermost } *racked*: painfully stretched, as if on the rack.

> Stretch my credit to the uttermost, get every ducat you can.

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

and I no question make: I will not question (nor place restrictions upon) from where you get the money.

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

*Enter Portia with her waiting-woman, Nerissa*¹

—Portia

By my word,^o Nerissa, this little body² is aweary of this great world. {troth}

—Nerissa

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as³ are your good fortunes. And yet, for all^o I see, those who indulge in excess are as sick as those who starve with too little.⁴ It is no small^o happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.⁵ Excess is soon accompanied by gray hairs, while those who are moderate live longer.^{6 7} *all: {aught} small: {mean}*

—Portia

Fine words and well-delivered.^o {Good sentences and well-pronounced}

—Nerissa

They would be better if well-followed.

—Portia

If to do good were as easy as to know what were good to do,⁸ <then the great giving of charity would turn> chapels into churches⁹ and poor men's cottages into princely palaces.¹⁰ It is a good preacher who follows his own sermon.¹¹ I could easier teach twenty others what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise^o ways to control the passion^o but hot desire¹² leaps o'er cold decrees. Such a hare is folly^o—the youth—that skips o'er the traps^o of good counsel—the cripple.¹³ But all this philosophy is not going to find me a husband

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 *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).

3 / in equal measure to

4 {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

5 {It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean} *mean*: meager, small; middle.

no mean happiness: no meager happiness, no small happiness; great happiness 'Mean' as found in Q1 was replaced with "small" in F1. The meaning is the same but the pun is lost.

/ Therefore, the means to happiness is to be seated in the mean

6 {Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs but competency lives longer}

/ Excess makes you old before your time, while moderation allows you to live longer / brings longer life

7 *all: {aught} indulge in excess: {surfeit too much} moderation: {competency} / sufficiency / having what you need*

8 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.

9 {chapels had been churches} / chapels would become churches

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

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

12 a hot temper} / rash impulses / heated passion

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

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

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

of my choosing.¹⁴ O me, the word, *choose*: I may neither chose who I would,^o nor refuse who I dislike.¹⁵ 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?^{16 17}

—Nerissa

Your father was ever-virtuous, and holy men nearing death have good inspirations. Therefore, the contest^o that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, wherein the one who solves the riddle and chooses the right chest,^o and thereby chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by anyone whom you shall not rightly love.¹⁸ But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that have already come?^{o 19}

—Portia

I pray thee, name them once again; and as thou namest them I shall describe them and, according to my description, level ⟨a guess⟩ at my affection.²⁰

—Nerissa

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

—Portia

Ay, there's a colt^o indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes^o it a great appropriation to^o his own good parts^{o21} that he can shoe the horse himself. I am much afeard, my lady, that his mother had a good ride upon the blacksmith!^{22 23}

—Nerissa

Then there is the Count Palatine.

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

not in the fashion: is of no use (in helping me chose a husband, according to my wishes)

15 {I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike}

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

16 {that I cannot chose one nor refuse none?}

I cannot choose one nor refuse none: Portia cannot choose who enters (or wins) the riddle-contest nor can she refuse to marry the one who wins the contest. She is unhappily bound by the conditions set by her father—and secretly wishing she could change things in her favor. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.26]

17 *chapels would be*: {chapels had been}

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

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

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

philosophy: {reasoning} / philosophizing / logic

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

18 {whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you; will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall love rightly.}

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

Nerissa is saying that the one who chooses the right chest (and wins Portia) will be one whom Portia rightly loves—but not necessarily the one who rightly loves Portia. Hence, her father devised a contest to reach a positive outcome for Portia as, apparently, he did not trust her to make the right choice for herself. Nerissa is assuring Portia of the wisdom of her father's contest yet, it appears, that neither Portia nor Nerissa have real faith in this method.

19 *contest*: {lott'ry} / lottery / riddle

chooses the right chest: {chooses his meaning} / chooses the right chest (according to its inscription)

already come: / since arrived?

20 *level at*: guess at, infer

21 / he counts it as some great virtue

22 {his mother played false with a smith} In this bawdy remark, Portia is saying that this noble suitor is able to shoe his own horse because his mother slept with a blacksmith behind his father's back.

23 *colt*: unruly youth *makes it*: /counts it *good parts*: / talent / qualities / virtue

appropriation to: / addition to / endorsement of / testament to

—Portia

He doth nothing but frown, as if to say: 'You would rather not have *me* choose.'²⁴
(He courts sadness and that is what he gets.) He hears a merry tale yet does not smile.
I fear he will prove to be the weeping philosopher²⁵ when he grows old, having been
so full of unmannerly²⁶ sadness in his youth.²⁶ I would rather be married to a skull^o
with a bone in its mouth than to either of these. God protect^o me from these two!²⁷

—Nerissa

What^o say you of the French lord, Monsieur le Bon? {How}

—Portia

God made him so, therefore, let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it's a sin to be a
mockers but he!—why he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's and a better bad
habit of frowning than the Count Palatine.²⁸ As he is no one, he tries to be everyone.²⁹
If a sparrow sings, he'll straight away begin to dance.³⁰ Afraid of his own shadow,
he'll draw a sword to fight with it.³¹ If I should marry him, I'd have to marry twenty of
him to have one husband. If he would despise^o me I would forgive him;^o but should he
love me to madness, that I shall never requite.^{32 33}

—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 hath 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? ³⁴ And how oddly he is suited! I think he bought^o his jacket ³⁵ in Italy, his
stockings^o in France, his round hat^o in Germany, and his behavior from who knows
where? ^{36 37 38}

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

25 *the weeping philosopher*: refers to Heraclitus, circa 500 B.C., who was known to weep at the sad condition of humanity

26 / so besieged by the sadness of his youth / so inclined to sadness since his youth.

27 *unmannerly*: unfortunate / unbecoming / unseemly > not fit for a youth

protect: {defend} / rescue / save *skull*: {death's-head}

28 / a frown more formidable than the Count Palatine

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

The meaning of this line is unclear. It could mean, 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, or b) as he is no one (and feeling inferior to those around him) he tries to be better than everyone else—a better horseman than the Neapolitan, sadder than the Count.

[See Additional Notes, 1.2.58]

30 {If a trassell sing, he falls straight a cap'ring} / he suddenly shakes with fear / he straight away begins to dance.

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

a cap'ring: merrily jumping about, gayly dancing, frolicking // convulsing in fright

The meaning of this line is unclear. It could mean a) that the moment he hears a bird sing he'll begin to dance (like a puppet without a will), or b) the song of a bird will cause him to shiver in fright (being overly fearful).

31 {He will fence with his own shadow}

The implication here is that his shadow is as real as he and/or that he is afraid of his own shadow. This would support the previous image of him shaking in fright when he hears a bird sing.

32 love me to madness: / fall in love with me

33 despise: / reject forgive him: / return the favor

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

35 {doublet} / suit (double-breasted suit) / vest > refers to a tight-fitting upper-garment

36 {and his behaviour everywhere} / from who knows where *behaviour*: manners / mannerisms / affection

—Nerissa

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

—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 do³⁹ to go (on living) without him.

—Nerissa

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

/ decide // carry out

—Portia

(It is a fate of which I am well aware.) Therefore, for fear of the worst,⁴⁰ I pray thee set a deep^o glass of Rhenish^o wine on the contrary^o casket; for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will chose it. I will do anything, Nerissa,⁴¹ ere I will be married to a sponge.^o ⁴²

[*Enter a Servant, speaks with Nerissa, and exits.* ⁴³]

—Nerissa

You need not fear, lady, in having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations,⁴⁴ which is indeed is to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit unless you may be won by some other sort^o than your father's condition^o of having to choose the right casket.⁴⁵

—Portia

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

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

38 The description of the next suitor, a Scottish Lord, is obscure and uninspired, and has been deleted. [See Additional Notes, 1.2.75]

39 *make do*: {make shift} / make the needed adjustments

40 / to prevent my worst fears from coming true

41 'I will do anything,' says Portia—anything short of directly disobeying her father's will. In her playful suggestion that Nerisaa dupe the German suitor into picking the wrong casket, Portia is expressing her unconscious wish that Nerissa somehow intervene on her behalf. Nerissa, not bound by anyone's will, may be inclined to act upon Portia's unspoken wish and alter the outcome of the contest in favor of her choice (without Portia ever asking her to do so).

42 *full*: {deep} *white*: {Rhenish}: a fine, white German wine, superior to the common table wine, which is red

contrary: / wrong *drunkard*: {sponge} / sop / one who soaks up liquor like a sponge

43 In the original, no Servant enters in to bring news (from the suitors) and Nerissa's next line reads: *You need not fear, lady, the having of any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home.* This indicates that the lords had informed Nerissa about their intention to leave before the scene opens, which seems a little odd. One way to rectify this would be to have a Servant enter with the news of the suitors' departure.

[See Additional Notes, 1.2.96]

44 {they have acquainted me with their determinations} / the have revealed their decisions

acquainted me: / apprised me of / told me of

their determinations: / what they have determined / what they've decided to do / their decision

45 {than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets} / means // condition: {imposition}

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

imposition: condition, demand, imposed methodology

depending on the caskets: contingent upon the contest he devised (of having to choose the right casket to win Portia)

If I live to be as old as Sibylla,⁴⁶ <a thousand years or more, > 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 reasonable⁴⁷ <in deciding to depart,> for there is not one among them whose very absence I do not dote upon—⁴⁸ and I pray God grant them a fair departure.⁴⁹

—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?⁵⁰

—Portia

Yes, yes, it was Bassanio—as I think so was he called.⁵¹

—Nerissa

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

—Portia

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

*Enter Servant*⁵²

—Servant

The four foreigners⁵³ seek for you, madam, to take their leave—and there is a messenger^o come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince, his master, will be here tonight. {forerunner}

—Portia

46 {If I live to be as old as Sibylla}

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

47 {are so reasonable}

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

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

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

49 Q1: {and I pray God grant them a fair departure.} F1: {and I wish them a fair departure.}

50 Here Nerissa 'tests the waters' to see if Portia shows any affection toward Bassanio. But why would Nerissa mention Bassanio, whom she says is a soldier and a scholar? There is no indication that Bassanio would ever be a suitor. And why was he referred to as a soldier and a scholar? Could it be that the last time he came to Belmont he came under false pretenses with a false persona just as he does the second time he visits Belmont. [See *Essays: The Lottery*]

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

52 The line found here in the original {Portia: How now! What news?} has been deleted: Most commentators hold that this line is superfluous and out of place: Portia is not likely to greet her servant in such a way. This line is omitted in F1.

If the *Servant* enters before [at line 96] then this short greeting might come as a result of Portia's surprise—and perhaps in apprehension that there might be some news that is contrary to the good news previously delivered (which is that all the suitors intend to leave). If the *Servant* had entered once before then Portia's line might read: *How now, more news?*

53 {four strangers} Six suitors are named in the original and the mention of four is probably a remnant of an earlier draft. As discussed in a previous note, it is likely that the original scene had only four suitors, with the Englishman and Scottish suitors being added in a later draft. This could easily be rectified by changing all the references according to the number of suitors. The original reference to *four* suitors has been preserved even though *five* suitors are named. The reason being that *four* and *fifth* are easier to pronounce than *five* and *sixth*. This omission of one suitor could imply that the Monsieur le Bon, the French suitor is not extant enough to be counted.

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart⁵⁴ as I bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. And if he has the temperament of a saint and the complexion of a devil⁵⁵ I'd rather he hear me confess my strife than take me for his wife.⁵⁶ Come Nerissa, (I'm at the mercy of fate once again.)⁵⁷

Whiles we shut the gate on one suitor more,^{o 58} {upon one wooer}
There comes another to knock at the door.^{o 59} {Another knocks at the door}

Exeunt

54 {with so good heart} /as whole-heartedly / with the same affection

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

condition: /virtue / character / temperament *the complexion:* / the dark color / the dark skin

[See Additional Notes, 1.2.127]

56 {I had rather he should shrive me than wive me}

If he has the dark complexion of the devil—and recall that fairness or lightness of skin was considered beautiful at the time—and the disposition of a saint, she would rather that he be her priest, and hear her confession (*shrive me*) than claim her as his wife (*wive me*). Portia is quick to judge by outer show, by what meets the eye, rather than the deeper meaning or character of a person. Not a sin, but someone inclined to mis-pick the gold casket (just as Morocco later does).

shrive me: hear my confession, absolve me of my sins (as would a priest) > the precise meaning is uncertain

57 {Come Nerissa, sirrah, go before} / Come Nerissa, (back to my choiceless fate) + once again

sirrah: a term used to address someone of low standing, such as a servant, or a boy. To clarify this line, as found in the original, it is often emended as follows: “Come Nerissa. (*to Servant*) Sirrah, go before.”

58 / When every suitor leaves to chance no more

59 The original lines do not conform to the standard meter:

{Come, Nerissa; sirrah, go before

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door}

Originally, *wooer* may have rhymed with *before* and *door*, thus providing a triplicate rhyme scheme. This triplicate rhyme scheme can be preserved but it is somewhat odd sounding: thus, in this rendition, a simple double rhyme is employed. A triplicate rhyme scheme could be used by replacing the line above, *Come Nerissa, (I'm at the mercy of fate once again)* with *Come now Nerissa, 'tis just like before.*

ACT ONE - Scene Three 1.3

Venice. Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

—Shylock

Three thousand ducats¹—yes?^o ²

{well} / good / no

—Bassanio

Ay sir, for three months.

—Shylock

For three months—yes?^o

{well} / good / no

—Bassanio

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

—Shylock.

Antonio shall be^o bound—yes?^o

{become} // {well} / good / no

—Bassanio

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

—Shylock

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

—Bassanio

Your answer to that?

—Shylock

Antonio is a good man.

—Bassanio

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

/ assertion

—Shylock

Oh, no, no, no, no. What I mean in saying, 'he is a good man' is to have you understand that he is

1 *ducats*: (lit., 'of the duke'); gold coins. These were first struck in Venice in the thirteenth century and came to signify a well-respected currency. Three thousand ducats, during that time, was an extremely large sum of money, worth about \$600,000. [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 spoken like a person going over a checklist and acknowledging that the stated condition is clear and understood. The term *well*, found in the original, may not be so clear to the modern ear. Many productions, in trying to make the term *well* sound somewhat 'natural,' have added different inflections and tonalities to it; and instead of the term being repeated in the same way, with the same tone, each time the word *well* is intoned it is different: a question, a note of surprise, a sense of disbelief, etc. Alternatively, *well* could be deleted from all three lines, with each line posed as a question.

3 *shall be bound*: shall cover the loan, shall be bound by the terms and conditions of the bond.

4 {May you stead me?} / Can you cover me? Can you stand in and make the loan for me?

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

sufficient (to cover the loan). Yet his means^o are in question.^o He hath an argosy^o bound for Tripolis,^o another to the Indies. I understand, moreover, from word on⁶ the Rialto^o he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad.^{7 8} Yet ships are but boards, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, land thieves and water thieves—I mean pirates.⁹ And then there is the peril of the water, wind, and rocks. The man is nonetheless sufficient.¹⁰ Three thousand ducats—I think I may take his bond.¹¹

—Bassanio

Be assured you may.^o

/ With assurance you may

—Shylock

I will be assured I may; and that I may be assured, I will think it over.^o May I speak with Antonio?¹²

{I will bethink me}

—Bassanio

If it please you to dine with us.¹³

—Shylock

Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the swine which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into.¹⁴ I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so forth^o—but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. ... What news!¹⁵ Who is he comes here?¹⁶

6 {upon} / from news on / as heard upon / upon word at

7 / scattered about / at risk in foreign waters / 'scattered recklessly' (Onions). *Squander* in this context may not carry the connotation of being 'wasteful' but may pertain to 'over-reaching.'

8 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 every detail concerning Antonio and his ventures.

9 The original reads {there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean pirates.} 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 following word order could also be applied: "There be land rats and land thieves, water rats and water thieves—I mean pirates.") In some productions the term *pirates* is pronounced as *pi-rats*. The reason for this pronunciation is uncertain; although it may be considered cute, this kind of emphasis conveys no meaning and is, therefore, distracting.

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

11 *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

12 Shylock already knows Antonio's store and need not think it over to be assured; nor does he need to discuss anything with Antonio to be assured. As we shall see, none of the subsequent conversation with Antonio leads to Shylock's further assurance as he never once asks Antonio about the state of his ventures (or other collateral that Antonio may have). Shylock is using this notion of needing to be assured as a rouse whereby he can speak directly with Antonio from a position of equals (which is never the case at any other time), and perhaps even a position of superiority, where Antonio needs his help and must listen to Shylock's grievances.

13. Bassanio appears to be completely aloof to Antonio's hatred of usurers, and Shylock in particular, and innocently invites Shylock to "dine with us." This simple invitation, however, is significant in that it tells us that Bassanio, a Christian, a dear friend of Antonio, neither hates nor shuns Shylock because he is 'a Jew.'

14 This line is often staged as an 'aside' rather than a direct comment to Bassanio. This is a reference 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 Legion into a herd of pigs (Mark 5:1-13). In both stories, the pigs were driven off a cliff into the sea.

15 Q1 reads: {What news on the Rialto, who is he comes here?} Many editions punctuate it as: "What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?" A more likely punctuation would be: 'What news on the Rialto! Who is he comes here?'

What news on the Rialto likely means something like "What great news!" "On the Rialto" suggests some kind of important news, worthy enough to be shared on the Rialto. In an inept staging, Shylock could see a fellow merchant and ask him about news on the Rialto. To avoid confusion, the first part of the line could be changed to "what news!" or "what good news!" or simply be deleted.

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

Enter Antonio

—Bassanio

This is Signior Antonio.

[*Bassanio goes over to converse with Antonio.*] ¹⁷

—Shylock [*aside*]

How like a fawning innkeeper^o he looks ^{18 19} {publican}
How I despise his haughty^o Christian virtue ²⁰ / holy / feigned
But more, for that in^o low simplicity,^o ²¹ / for in his // simple-mindedness
He lends out money *gratis* and brings down
The rate of interest^o here with us in Venice. ²² {usance}
If I can gain an upper hand but once ²³
I will feed fat^o²⁴ the ancient grudge I bear him. / exploit / I'll gratify
He hates our sacred nation and he rails—
Even there where merchants most do congregate—
On me, my contracts,^o and my well-won profit,^o {bargains} // well-earned {thrift} ²⁵ / gains
Which he calls, *usury*. Cursèd be my tribe ²⁶

17 Bassanio is unaware of Antonio's hatred toward Shylock and all the railing he has done against Shylock over the years. We know that Antonio despises usurers and cannot be pleased with the situation, yet, he is willing to enter this situation because his love for Bassanio outweighs his hatred of Shylock. 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 sensed and understood by an Elizabethan audience.

18 {How like a fawning publican he looks} / How like a slavish innkeeper he looks

fawning: humble, cowering, accommodating *publican*: innkeeper, pub-keeper.

A *fawning publican* refers to an obsequious and 'ever-ready-to-serve' inn- or pub-keeper. A publican could also be a reference to those who served as tax-collectors for the Romans [Luke 18:9-14]—and in so doing oppressed the Jews—but this is a more remote possibility. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.38]

19 To clarify Shylock's reference to Antonio as a *fawning publican* (innkeeper) an additional line could be added:

/ <Ever so willing to serve those is need> / <Ever so keen to be of humble service>

20 {I hate him for he is a Christian}

This highly controversial line, as found in the original, seems to portray Shylock as a Christian-hater. What Shylock hates is not Christians per se but more than that, something about Antonio and his brand of Christian charity that undermines Shylock's business. Some productions, in trying to put forth a pro-Shylock sentiment, delete this line (and the entire section), and only preserve the first line. If this line is taken at face value it would suggest that Shylock hates Antonio for no other reason than his being a Christian—which is clearly not the case. Shylock makes no such negative comment about Bassanio or any other Christian nor does he have reason to. Shylock hates Antonio personally, as Antonio rails at Shylock (where the merchants do meet) and undermines his business [See Additional Notes, 1.3.39]

21 {But more, for in low simplicity} *low simplicity*: naivety and ignorance

22 {rate of usance} The rate charge for use, or the rate of interest. This 'rate of usance' refers specifically to the rate of interest but could also include the rate of forfeiture, which is the exorbitant penalty that is exacted if the bond is forfeited (which occurs if the full sum owed is not repaid on time). Antonio brings down the rate of profit (for usurers) in both of these ways: he loans out money, *gratis*, and deprives Shylock of potential customers; and he loans out money, *gratis*, to avoid a forfeiture of the bond, thus depriving Shylock of his forfeiture amount.

23 {If I can catch him once upon the hip} *catch him upon the hip*: a wrestling term that means to grab hold of or gain advantage over one's opponent; to be in a superior position.

24 *feed fat*: indulge in, stuff oneself, exploit

Shylock is hoping to find a way to entrap Antonio, to gain an advantage over him, then to use that position of power to exploit or "feed fat" his long-standing resentment against him, i.e., finally get some revenge. What is Shylock's plan to 'catch Antonio upon the hip' and 'feed fat'? Could it be that Shylock's plan was to gain an advantage over Antonio by having him sign a bond with humiliating terms? The idea of Antonio defaulting on the loan was a long shot but still it could have been the basis of Shylock's plan to "feed fat" or kill Antonio.

25 *well-won thrift*: Shylock couches his ruinous practice of usury in favorable business terms as 'thrift.'

26 {Which he calls interest} *Which he calls usury*: Antonio views usury as theft, exploitation, the devil's work, etc.

Shylock is defending his business and profits {thrift} as being well-earned and justifiable.

{Cursèd be my tribe | If I forgive him}:

—Shylock ³²

When Jacob grazed^o his uncle Laban's sheep / tended
He then was third in line from Abraham—³³
This his wise mother had deftly arranged; {wrought in his behalf}
The third possessor—ay, he was the third.^o ³⁴ / and so he was.

—Antonio

And what of it^o? Did he take interest? {him}

—Shylock

No, not directly—hear what Jacob did:
He first agreed with Laban that for earnings^o / payment
He could have^o all the sheep born marked^o or spotted. / He would receive {pied}
'Tis known,^o whatever a ewe sees when mating / Now then
That's what her newborn will come to resemble.^o
Autumn^o had come; it was the time for breeding. / The fall
So Jacob peeled off the bark from some sticks,
And when the work of generations was
Between these woolly breeders in the act
He put the peeled timber before their eyes.
In spring the lambs that were conceived were spotted
And all the offspring rightly went to Jacob.³⁵
This was a way to thrive, and he was blessed;
And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.³⁶

—Antonio ³⁷

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for,³⁸
A thing not in his power to bring to pass
But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven ³⁹

32 The following interchange between Shylock and Antonio is taxing and irrelevant. It introduces a philosophical disagreement about usury, exposes Shylock's misuse of scripture and burdens the scene.

33 *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.

34 {This Jacob from our holy Abram was, | As his wise mother wrought in his behalf, | The third possessor; ay, he was the third} Jacob was made third in line through the cleverness (and deception) of his mother, Rebecca, who substituted Jacob for Esau, her elder son, so that Jacob would receive Isaac's blessing and inheritance (making him third in line from Abraham) rather than Esau, who rightly deserved it. (This deception is what Shylock cites as a 'wise' action.) Shylock is trying to justify his deceptive practice of usury by citing a Biblical precedence of deception. Shylock then goes on to tell how Jacob deceived Laban and thereby prospered. Both stories are used by Shylock to justify his deceptive practice of usury, which he calls 'thrift' and 'blessing.' Antonio does not 'buy' this explanation; to the contrary, he is appalled at the way Shylock misquotes and abuses scripture in support of his own immoral practices. [See Additional Note, 1.3.71]

35 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.

36 {And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not} Shylock is again using the euphemistic term 'thrift' to justify his harmful practice of usury. / Such thrift is seen as a blessing, if men | Gain it through cleverness and not through theft.

37 A line could be added here: <Your story tells of none but 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.

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

Antonio is implying 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).

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

Three months from twelve. Now,^o let me see the rate. {Then}

—Antonio
Well, Shylock, shall we be beholden^o to you? {beholding} / indebted

—Shylock
Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you berated^o me, {have rated}
About my monies^o and my usances; / business
Still I have borne it with a patient shrug, / Yet
For sufferance is the badge^o of all our people.^o 48 / mark / sign {tribe}
You call me misbeliever,⁴⁹ cut-throat,⁵⁰ dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then,^o it now appears you need my help. / Well, well
To hell with that!^o 51 You come to me and say: / Well spit on that! / What's up with that?
'Shylock, we wish for^o monies.' You say so, {would have} / need some
You who did void your rheum^o upon my beard^o / spit // face
And kick me as you'd spurn a worthless dog^o {stranger cur} / ling'ring dog
Over your doorway.^o Now you ask for money: 52 {over your threshold}
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur^o can lend three thousand ducats?' Or / dog / mutt
Shall I bend low, and in a servant's voice,^o 53 / lowly tone
With bated breath and whisp'ring^o humbleness, / whimp'ring
Say this: 'Fair^o sir, you spat on me on Tuesday;⁵⁴ / kind
You spurned me such a day. Another time
You called me *dog*—and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies'?

—Antonio
I am as like^o to call thee so again, / And I am wont
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too.⁵⁵

48 {For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe} *suff'rance*: forbearance, patient endurance (of abuse), long-suffering.
the badge of our tribe: refers to the distinguishing trait of Jews which is their ability to endure the hardship piled upon them by Christian oppression. It could also refer to the *badge*, a distinguishing yellow 'O,' that Venetian Jews were compelled to wear. In 1.3, the term *tribe*, designating the nation of Jews, is used by Shylock three times: cursèd 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 odd and it is unlikely that a Jew would refer to the nation of Jews by that term.

49 *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.

50 *cut-throat*: one who cuts the throat of others, a murderer. The terms would refer to the usurer who cuts the throat of, or kills, the livelihood of others.

51 {Go to, then} *go to*: an expression of annoyance and disbelief which, in some cases, could mean something like 'go to hell.' It could be more vaguely and less forcefully expressed as: 'come on now' or 'you must be kidding.'

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

53 {in a bondman's key} *bondman's key*: in the key (tone) of a bondman; in the feeble voice of a servant (bondman).

54 {Say this | 'Fair^o sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last} The original contains an orphan line of one iamb. This can be rectified by combining the two lines into one and removing "fair sir" (*Say this: you spat on me on Wednesday last*).

If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not^o / don't lend it
 As to thy friends—for when did friendship make / take
 Profit on barren metal from a friend?—^{56 57} / A fee for
 But^o lend it rather to thine enemy / Nay,
 Who, if he break, thou may'st with better face^o / stern expression / steely gaze
 Exact the forfeit. ^o {penalty}

—Shylock Why look how you storm!⁵⁸
 I would be friends with you and have your favour,^o {love} / grace
 Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
 Supply your present wants, and take no drop^o {no doit} / no hint
 Of interest^o for my monies, and you'll not
 Hear me. This kind I offer.^{59 60} {usance} / profit

—Bassanio This were^o kindness. / is / would be / is

—Shylock
 This kindness^{o61} will I show:
 Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your guarantee,^{o62} and in a merry sport,^{o 63} {single bond} // and then we'll say in jest
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Expressed^o in the condition, let the forfeit / Set forth
 Be designated as an equal pound⁶⁴ {Be nominated for} / Be thereby named for
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

55 Antonio is in need of Shylock's help yet this does not soften his attack. Antonio is willing to give up his life for Bassanio but he is not willing to treat Shylock as an equal or put aside his hatred of usury—which might increase Bassanio's chances of getting the loan. Earlier, Shylock claims that Antonio's hatred is against Jews, saying, 'He hates our sacred nation' [1.3.45] but this is not the case. Most usurers were Jews so Antonio's hatred for usurers could easily be misconstrued as a hatred for all Jews. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.127]

56 {A breed for barren metal of his friend} / A fee for barren metal strangely bred

breed: offspring. Charging interest on a loan (i.e., making money from money, producing 'offspring' from barren metal) was viewed as unnatural and ungodly. Money (silver and gold) cannot breed and multiply like a living thing.

57 / ... breed | Barren metal (as 'twere a living thing? | Such a perversion is unnatural.)

/ ... make | Interest on barren metal, (breeding it | Unnaturally, as if a living creature?^o) / as if it were alive

58 {Why look you how you storm} The original line is awkward in that it repeats the term *you* twice. (This may have been done, at some stage, to try and correct the meter.) However, when combined with Antonio's previous words {*Exact the penalty*} it creates a line of six iambs instead of five. This is rectified here by changing Antonio's previous line to two and a half iambs and this line to two and a half iambs (by deleting the first *you*).

59 {This is kind I offer} *kind*: a) kindness, benevolence, b) kinship, friendship

Shylock is offering to loan Antonio the money on Antonio's terms, in kind (in likeness) with his sentiments; and to loan him money (as would a friend) without charging interest. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.138]

60 In the original, Shylock's line {Of usance for my monies, and you'll not hear me} contains six iambs and the following line, when combined with Bassanio's next line, has an imprecise meter {This is kind I offer ... This were kindness}. These slight, and perhaps unnoticeable, errors were herein corrected. An alternative correction would be as follows:

Shy: Of interest for my loan and you'll not hear me. | This here is kind I offer. *Bas*: This were kindness.

61 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.'

62 {Your single bond} *single bond*: a bond that Antonio guarantees; an unconditional bond.

63 {Your single bond and, in a merry sport/: / in light-hearted fun / in a merry game/ and then, we'll say in jest

Shylock presents the terms of the bond as a merry sport, a fun game, as something that should not be taken seriously—even suggesting that a pound of flesh is useless and that he would not take it even if the bond were forfeited. This, again, can be seen as the deception that usurers use to entrap their victims. This is not a game; this is deadly serious.

64 / Be such that I may have an equal pound

From^o what part of your body pleaseth me.^o 65 66 {In}

<—Bassanio 67
 What kind of man comes up with this?^o Ne'er have / This be more beastly than bizarre
 I heard of terms so strange and ill-conceived. >

—Antonio
 I have no doubts;^o I'll seal to such a bond, {Content in faith}
 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^o my present needs.^o {I'll rather dwell in my necessity}

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

—Shylock
 O father Abram, how these Christians are:
 Their own hard dealings teaches them to suspect^o / mistrust > be suspicious of
 The thoughts of others! [to Bassanio] Pray you, tell me this:
 If he should break his day^o68 what should I gain / If he can't pay on time
 By the exaction of^o the forfeiture? / By my demanding of
 A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
 Has neither worth nor cannot bring such profit^o 69 / Is not so profitable, nor has worth
 As flesh of mutton, beef, or goat.⁷⁰ I say,
 To buy his favor, I extend this friendship: 71
 If he will take it, so; if not, adieu.
 And for this kindness, pray tell, wrong me not. 72

65 [See Additional Notes, 1.3.148a]

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

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

67 There is likely to be some emotional reaction (by Bassanio) to such a grotesque and bizarre condition—especially one that puts Antonio's life in danger. Hence, to make known this sentiment, two lines can be added.

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

69 {Is not so estimable, profitable neither}

70 This argument is, of course, false. Shylock argues that the pound of a man's 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 have rightfully asked, 'What would I gain from taking the pound of flesh and killing Antonio?'

71 What is Shylock trying to accomplish by having Antonio sign this bond? There are two possibilities: a) the remote possibility that Antonio defaults on the bond which would enable Shylock to exact the forfeiture and kill Antonio, or b) to debase Antonio, at least in Shylock's own mind.

72 {And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not} / I pray, don't wrong me with an evil motive
 / And for this gesture, for this act of kindness | I pray you, wrong me not with evil motives.

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

—Shylock
Then meet me forthwith^o at the notary's, / right away
Give him instructions^o for this merry^o bond; {directions} // playful
And straightaway I'll go and purse^o the ducats, ⁷³ / go collect
See to^o my house—left in the bumbling care^o ⁷⁴ / Check on {fearful guard}
Of an unthrifty knave⁷⁵—and soon thereafter^o {and presently} / and right away
I'll be with you.

Exit Shylock

—Antonio Hurry thee, ^o gentle Jew. ⁷⁶ {Hie thee} / Go with speed
The Hebrew will turn Christian—he grows kind.

—Bassanio
I like not fair terms in^o a villain's mind. ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ {and}

—Antonio
Come on, in this there can be no dismay, / Come now, in this there can be no concern
My ships come home a month before the day. / A month before the day my ships return

Exeunt

for my love: for this act of kindness *wrong me not*: blame me not, don't attribute to me some wrong.

The last part of Shylock's speech (or argument) is an 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. Yes, the flesh is worthless, it cannot be sold like a pound of beef, but the *taking* of the flesh (at the cost of Antonio's life) is not worthless. Then he contends that he is acting out of love and kindness yet the exact opposite is true: Shylock's real intention is not motivated by love but by hatred and revenge (as clearly stated by Shylock earlier in the scene.) [38-49].

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

74 *fearful guard*: / terribly poor guard / inept hands The implication here is that Shylock's inept servant (Launcelet) is not guarding the house, that he is asleep on the job.

75 {Of an unthrifty knave} / Of a do-nothing knave

unthrifty: wasteful, unproductive, unprofitable, good for nothing

76 These lines repeat what was already said. Its only use is that it introduces Launcelet (Shylock's unthrifty knave) who appears two scenes later. These lines could be kept, without any harm, or deleted.

77 {I like not fair terms and a villain's mind} Bassanio feels uneasy; he senses that Shylock, a villain, is using fair words, and gestures of friendship, and a merry sport to entrap Antonio. [See Additional Notes, 1.3.176]

78 Possible addition of one line: (Nor am I comfort'd^o by the terms we find.)

Adding this line (though it may weaken the rhyme scheme) would further reveal Bassanio's uneasiness.

Portia's house in Belmont.

A flourish of cornets. Enter a Prince from Morocco, with followers, along with Portia, Nerissa, and attendants

—Morocco

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

—Portia

In terms of choice,¹¹ I am not solely led

1 This short scene helps alternate the action between Venice and Belmont. Most productions simply merge the elements of this scene with Morocco's next appearance in 2.7.

2 / Do not disfavor me for my complexion

my complexion: Morocco is referring to his dark complexion. A light complexion was held (by Europeans) to be fair (beautiful) whereas a dark complexion was considered unattractive (it being the color of the devil). To fit the meter, *complexion* is pronounced with four syllables: comPLEXeeON

3 {To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.} / Which all my kin bred 'neath its rays do wear.

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

5 {Where Phoebus's fire scarce thaws the icicles} *Phoebus's fire*: the sun's heat. Phoebus was god of the sun.

6 {And let us make incision for your love}

7 / Has wrought great fear to those who're valiant / Has prompted many men to run in fright.

8 The whole of Morocco's plea, up to this point, is based on his physical appearance; he hopes to persuade Portia to overcome the prejudice and dislike she has for those with a dark complexion.

9 In the next part of this scene Morocco expounds on the virtue of his strength and physical attributes; swearing upon his sword, he tells how he would outstare and outbrave the most daring men, and defy bears and lions. After that he likens himself to Hercules, the strongest man on earth.

In terms of the three suitors, Morocco represents the physical dimension and its superior position (in terms of strength over others). This can be seen as the exterior or outermost attribute of a person; accordingly, Morocco chooses the gold chest. The next suitor, Arragon, represents the mind and its superior position when compared to the physical body. This is still exterior to the true essence or the heart of a man. Accordingly, Arragon chooses the silver casket which represents the quality of the mind. (Silver is the hue of the moon; the moon in many traditions represents the mind.) Bassanio, in this particular scene, represents the heart, the innermost being of a man; accordingly, he chooses the lead chest. Bassanio's speech in front of the chests, however, belies the true sentiment of the heart; his speech is critical, riddled with discordant images, and makes not one reference to Portia (or her attributes). Morocco is true to himself, and speaks and chooses accordingly; Arragon is true to himself, and speaks and chooses accordingly. With Bassanio, however, there is a mismatch; his speech before the caskets does not match his choice. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.73]

10 *to steal your thoughts*: to gain access to, or win, your thoughts; to 'win your affection.' In other words, Morocco would give up his dark appearance, which is his dearest possession, to win Portia's affection.

By that which gratifies° a maiden's eye.¹² {nice direction of}
 Besides the contest rendered° by my father¹³ / devised / designed
 Bars me the right° of voluntary choosing.¹⁴ / Prevents my right
 But if my father had not scanted° me, / thwarted / shorted
 And hedged° me by his wit° to yield° myself,¹⁵ / bound / forced // will /// give
 As wife, to he who chooses° the right casket¹⁶ / whom so chooses / whom doth choose
 Yourself, renownèd prince, would stand as fair° / {then stood as fair} / favored
 As any comer° I have looked on yet° / suitor // I've yet looked upon
 For my affection.°¹⁷ / To win my favor

—Morocco Even for that I thank you.
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar¹⁸ / Arab(ian) sword / faithful sword
 That slew the Sultan° and a Persian Prince, {Sophy} / Emp'ror / great Shah
 That thrice defeated the great Suleiman,° / the Sultan of Turkey
 I would o'er-stare the sternest° eyes that look, / harshest
 Outbrave the heart most daring on this earth¹⁹
 Pluck° the young suckling cubs from the she-bear, / Snatch / Grab
 Yea, mock the lion when it roars for prey,²⁰
 To win thee, lady. But alas the while,
 If Hercules and his servant play dice,²¹
 The hand of chance²² decides the better man° / determines the victor / winner
 Which may grant fortune° to the weaker hand: / vict'ry
 So is the hero° beaten by his page.²³ {So is Alcides} / So Hercules is / Great One

11 *In terms of choice*: Portia has no choice in the matter. So all of Morocco's pleas to Portia to 'mislike him not' for his dark complexion are irrelevant. Morocco, however, being a man of honor, would find no gratification in winning Portia if she despised the way he looked.

12 {By nice direction of a maiden's eye} *nice direction*: attraction toward what is pleasing. She is saying that his looks and her affection toward him, or lack thereof, is irrelevant.

13 {Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny} / of my father's will / deems my fate

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

15 *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)

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

17 Portia tells Morocco that he is held in the same favor, and with the same affection, as any suitor she has yet looked upon. Morocco takes this as a complement. What Portia does not tell Morocco is that she has found all the previous suitors to be deplorable—Morocco, looking like a dark devil 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 that Morocco has as fair (equal) a chance of winning her as any suitor she has thus far looked upon.

18 *scimitar*: a curved, single-edged sword. In a possible staging, Morocco could draw and flourish his scimitar (much to the surprise of Portia's attendants). This would make clear that *scimitar* refers to a sword; however, it would draw attention to something rather irrelevant. It might further portray the difference in nature and sensibilities between Morocco and Portia but his dark skin, compared to her light skin, is difference enough.

19 / Outbrave the boldest heart that e'er did beat

20 / And grab the prey from a hungry lion

21 {If Hercules and Lichas play at dice} *Lichas*: Hercules's somewhat low-minded servant. Lichas was thrown into the sea by Hercules after he (Lichas) unwittingly brought Hercules a poisoned shirt which ended up killing him (Hercules).

22 / A throw by chance / A random throw / A chanced toss

23 {So is Alcides beaten by his rage} *Alcides*: Hercules

rage: wanton behavior, wild folly, anger. Although Hercules was known to display rage, the notion of him being defeated by his rage, with respect to the chance drawing of the contest, does not fit. Pope emends *rage* with *page*. If

And so may I, blind fortune ^o leading me, ^{24 25}	/ with mere chance
Miss that which one unworthier may attain ^o — ²⁶	/ of lesser worth attains
And die from ^o grieving.	{ with }
—Portia You must take your chance,	
And either not attempt to chose at all	/ vacate all your rights to choose
Or swear before you choose, ^o if you choose wrong,	/ beforehand, that
To ne'er thereafter take a lady's hand ^o	/ propose to a lady
In ^o way of marriage. ²⁷ Therefore, be advised. ²⁸	/ By
—Morocco	
I need not. ^o Come, bring me unto my chance. ^o	{Nor will not} // the caskets / my choice
—Portia	
First forward to ^o the temple, ^o <there to take	/ go ye to // chapel
The solemn oath required.> After dinner ²⁹	
Your hazard shall be made.	
—Morocco Good fortune then,	
To make me ^o blest or curséd'st among men.	/ To be most

Flourish of cornets. Exeunt

adopting this emendation, the intended meaning would be that Hercules is beaten by his *page*, by a far lesser man, both in terms of strength and skill—which is possible when the contest is based upon pure chance, like a throw of the dice.
24 Morocco is complaining that the contest is comparable to a chance throwing of the dice and, as such, may go to a lesser man than himself. Morocco is used to proving his worth and power through physical means; this means of winning Portia through the solving of a riddle is alien to the physically-oriented Morocco and, thus, appears like something of chance.
25 One could add a clarifying line here: <And not the skillful means of mine own hand >
26 / And I, now being led by blinded fortune, | May miss the prize a lesser man might win.
27 {Never to speak to lady afterward} This indicates that he shall never take a wife nor have any heirs.
28 {Therefore, be advised} / Hence, consider well / Therefore, ponder well / Thus, proceed with caution
29 / First, make your oath at the chapel. This evening / Make first your solemn vow. Then, after dinner

ACT Two, Scene One A ¹

2.1A

Venice. Enter Shylock and Tubal

—Tubal

Three thousand ducats to Antonio—gratis?

—Shylock

Gratis, yes, but should he break I will get my payment a hundred times over.

—Tubal

He will not break. There is no change he will break.

—Shylock

If there is one chance in a thousand, I will take it. He loathes me; he spits on me and calls me dog. Why?—because I loan money to those in need. Well, now Antonio is in need. Let him revile me at the mart. How shall I respond? Shall I turn my head when he kicks me and spits on me as well? No, I shall say: ‘Antonio, were you not once in need? Did *I* not loan you money, gratis, out of friendship?’ What would the good Christian say to that? In the very least, I shame him into silence with my bond.

Exeunt

¹ This additional scene, which explains Shylock’s motivations for his bond, could be placed here or after 2.2.

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

—Launcelet

Certainly my conscience will not serve me to run from this Jew, my master.² The fiend at mine elbow tempts me, saying to me, ‘Gobbo, Launcelet Gobbo, good Launcelet,’ or ‘good Gobbo,’ or ‘good Launcelet Gobbo’—‘use your legs, take the start, run away.’ My conscience says, ‘No, take heed, honest^o Launcelet; take heed honest Gobbo,’—or as aforesaid, ‘honest Launcelet Gobbo’—‘do not run, scorn running^o with thy heels.’ Well the most courageous fiend bids me pack.^o ‘Get going!’³ says the fiend. ‘Away!’ says the fiend. ‘For the sake of heaven, rouse up a brave mind,’ says the fiend, ‘and run.’ Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,⁴ says very wisely to me, ‘My honest Launcelet,’ being an honest⁵ 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 ...) ⁶—well, my conscience says, ‘Launcelet, budge not.’ ‘Budge!’ says the fiend. ‘Budge not!’ says my conscience. ‘Conscience,’ say I, ‘you counsel well.’ ‘Fiend,’ say I, ‘you counsel well.’ To be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew, my master, who—God forgive me for saying—⁷ is a kind of devil. And, if I were to run from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who, with all due respect,⁸ is the devil himself.⁹ My conscience is but a kind of hard conscience that offers to counsel me to stay with the

1 Launcelet’s soliloquy, which provides some comic relief, 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. [See Additional Notes: 2.2.1]

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

/ will not permit me to run / will try and stop me from running

certainly: Launcelet opens the scene with the word, *certainly*, which tells us that he is certain about his own uncertainty.

serve: a) permit, allow, b) prevent, not permit, not allow. In the context of the following monologue—where Launcelet’s *conscience* is bidding him to stay while the *fiend* is telling him to go—the term *serve* would more likely mean *prevent* than *serve* (or allow). (It could also be an error for *sever*—an odd form meaning *prevent* or *keep me from*.) 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 {Via!} / Get ye gone! / Away! *via*: Italian for ‘away’

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

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

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

/ did something that 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; b) a flavor or trait

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

taste: a) inclination toward; b) enjoyment, relish in; c) 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.

7 {God bless the mark}

8 {saving your reverence} / pardon me for saying

9 The line found in the original {Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and in my conscience—“} was likely inserted by someone. This addition weakens (and contradicts) the word play found in the 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 should be deleted.

Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment—I will run.¹⁰

*Enter Old Gobbo, gravel-blind, with a basket*¹¹

—Old Gobbo

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

—Launcelet [*aside*]

O heavens, this is my true-begotten father¹² who, being more than sand-blind—high-gravel-blind¹³— knows me not. I will try confusing him.¹⁴

—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. Marry, 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 God¹⁵ 'twill be a hard place^o to find.^o Can you tell me whether one Launcelet, who is supposed to live with him, still lives with him or no?

place: {way} find: {hit}

—Launcelet

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

—Old Gobbo

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

¹⁰ *will not serve: {will serve} / will not allow honorable: {honest} bids me pack: urges me to pack for the sake of heavens: {for the heavens} / for heaven's sake*

¹¹ Launcelet's exit could be staged by his running into his gravel-blind father, who is just entering. Thus he is stopped by his conscience (represented by his somewhat blind father).

This exchange between Launcelet and his father takes up over 75 lines and then involves Bassanio for another 50 lines yet none of this moves the story. This lengthy comic interlude may be too taxing for most audiences. As such, most productions edit down or delete this portion of the scene altogether. If removing Old Gobbo, the scene would include Launcelet's opening monologue, then have Launcelet exit the stage and run into Bassanio or one of his men. With no actual father present, Launcelet (unable to muster his own courage to speak directly to Bassanio) could invoke an imaginary father and play the part of himself and his father. Alternatively, the entire interaction between Launcelet, his father, and Bassanio could be deleted and/or the rest of the scene. Jessica could overhear the end of Launcelet's monologue and then skip to 2.3 [See Additional Notes 2.2.29]

¹² *my true begotten father: a mix-up for, 'my true begotten son.'*

¹³ *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.*

¹⁴ {I will try confusions with him.} *confusions: Q2 renders this as conclusions which means 'experiments'—'I will try experimenting with him (to see how he reacts.)' Launcelet, however, seems more intent on playfully confusing his father.*

¹⁵ {By God's sonties} / By God's little saints / Even with God's help
sonties: a) little saints, b) sanctity, blessedness.

—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? ¹⁶

—Launcelet

But I pray you, *ergo*,¹⁷ old man, *ergo* I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelet?

—Old Gobbo

Of Launcelet, if it^o please your mastership. should it

—Launcelet

Ergo Master Launcelet. Talk not of Master Launcelet, old man,^o for the young gentleman—according to fates and destinies, and various omens,^o and the three oracles,¹⁸ and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven. {father} {such odd sayings}

—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? A staff or a prop?¹⁹
Do you not know me father?

—Old Gobbo

Alack the day, I know you not young gentleman. But I pray you, tell me, is my boy—God rest his soul—alive or dead?

—Launcelet

Do you not know me father?

—Old Gobbo

Alack sir, I am all but blind.^o I know you not. {I am sand-blind}

—Launcelet

Nay, indeed, even if you had your eyes you might still fail in knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child.²⁰ Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son.

16 {Your worship's friend and Launcelet, sir.} / My worship, do you know my boy Launcelet, sir?
your worship: honorific title for someone of high standing

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

18 {the 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 lifespan.

/ the three sisters (who measure out and cut the thread of one's life)

19 {Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop?} *cudgel*: short branch, club

20 Inversion of the proverb: 'It's a wise child who knows his own father.'

[*he kneels*] Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light, a murder cannot be hidden for long. A man's son may <also hide> but in the end, truth will come out.^o /
be known

—Old Gobbo

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 ²¹ 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 art mine own flesh and blood.

Old Gobbo reaches out to feel Launcelet's face; Launcelet offers the back of his head ²²

Lord worshiped might he be, ²³ what a beard hast thou got! Thou has 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:^o 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?^o I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

—Launcelet

Well, well, but for mine own part, I have decided to risk it all ²⁴ and run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. ²⁵ My master's a very^o Jew. Give him a

21 / stop all the pretending

22 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 blind father's blessings. Jacob, who was smooth-skinned, placed lamb wool over his face and hands in order to 'feel' hairy like his brother. When his 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.

23 / All praise the Lord / What blessings the Lord has granted!

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

Set up my rest is a phrase used in the card game *primero*, where a final wager is made and one bets (risks) all he has. In the modern poker-style game of *Texas Hold-em*, this would be akin to going *all in*.

present? Give him a noose!²⁶ I am famished in his service;²⁷ you may count^o every rib I have with your fingers.^{28 29}

⟨Launcelet guides Old Gobbo's fingers to the side of his chest.³⁰ Old Gobbo's fingers fall down to Launcelet's pot belly; Launcelet again guides Old Gobbo's fingers to his ribs, then pulls away.⟩

Father, I am glad you are come. Give your present for me³¹ to one Master Bassanio who indeed fashions his servants with fine new uniforms.³² If I serve him not I will run as far as God has made ground.³³

Enter Bassanio, with Leonardo and other followers

O rare fortune,³⁴ here comes the man—to him, father, ⟨give your gift to him.⟩³⁵

—Bassanio [*to one of his men*]

You may do so, but let it be so hastened that supper be ready at the latest by^o five o'clock. See these letters delivered, put the uniforms to making, and direct^o Gratziano to come anon to my lodging.³⁶ / no later than // {desire}

Exit Servant

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

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

—Bassanio
Many thanks.³⁷ Would'st thou want^o with me? {aught}

25 In Q1 the word play is on the two meanings of *rest*: 'I have set up my *rest* (i.e., I'm willing to risk it all) in deciding to run away, and I will not *rest* till I have run some ground.'

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

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

28 {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.'

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

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

31 {Give me your present} / Give your present on my behalf

32 {gives rare new liveries} / gives rare new outfits ⟨to his servants⟩ / gives embroidered costumes ⟨to his workers⟩

33 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.

34 / What a stroke of luck!

35 The original reads: {To him father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.} *I am a Jew*: I am a villain

This appears to be another *ex post facto* addition which also occurs in 24-25 and 160. As expected, most of these appended, Jew-disparaging lines are found toward the end of a passage, where they can more readily be 'slipped in.'

36 *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]

37 {Gramercy}: lit.: 'grant mercy'; God grant you mercy, God reward you.

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

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

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

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

—Old Gobbo [*pulled in front*]
His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce on good terms.³⁸

—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 wise old^o man—shall frutify³⁹ unto you.
/ a respected man / a man with wisdom

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

—Launcelet [*pulls his father away*]
In very brief, the suit is impertinent⁴⁰ to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and though I say it, it is though this old man, this poor man,⁴¹ my father—

—Bassanio
Let one but speak for both. [*to Launcelet*] What do you seek?^o { What would you seek }

—Launcelet
To serve you, sir.

—Old Gobbo
That is the very defect⁴² of the matter, sir.

—Bassanio [*to Launcelet*]
I know thee well. Thou hast obtained thy suit.^o / I shall grant thy request
Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day
And recommended thee.⁴³ But why prefer^o { And has preferred thee, if it be preferment }

38 {are scarce cater-cousins} *scarce*: hardly *cater-cousins*: close friends, those who cater to eachother like cousins

39 Error for *fructify* or *certify*.

40 Error for *pertinent*. *Impertinent* seems to be a blend between *important* and *pertinent*

41 {though I say it, though old man,^o yet poor man, my father }

42 Mistake for *effect*, purpose, or purport

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

/ The lowly servant of a poor gentleman

—Launcelet

The old proverb says, 'The grace of God provides enough.'⁴⁴ This separates my
master Shylock and you, sir.⁴⁵ You have the 'grace of God,' sir, and he hath 'enough.'

—Bassanio

Thou speakst it well. Go, father, with thy son.

Take leave of thy old master; then make way

Unto my house. [*To one of his men*] Give him a uniform^o {livery}

More fancy^o than his fellows.^o See it done. {guarded} / braided // the others

—Launcelet

Father, let's go.^o I cannot get a service job <on my own>?—I have ne'er a tongue in
my head! [*Looking at his palm*] Well, if any man in Italy has a fairer palm, which he
may^o use to swear upon the Book, I shall have good fortune. [*Looking more closely at
the lines*] What?⁴⁶—here's a simple line of life, here's small trifle of wives, alas,
fifteen in the least;⁴⁷ a dozen⁴⁸ widows and nine maids is a simple fate for one
man.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this task. Father, come,
I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.^{51 52}

Exeunt Launcelet and Old Gobbo

—Bassanio

I pray, Le'nardo, attend thee to this:⁵³

When everything is bought and stowed on board^o ⁵⁴ {orderly bestowed}

Return in haste, for I do feast tonight

43 Bassanio is referring to a conversation he had with Shylock earlier that day. This tells us, moreover, that Shylock and Bassanio are on speaking terms and seemingly somewhat friendly. We do not know what Shylock could have said about Launcelet to prompt Bassanio to so readily accept him, unless it was that Shylock, wanting to get rid of gormandizing Launcelet, recommended him to Bassanio.

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

45 {The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir.}

46 {Go to}: a) an expression of disbelief or surprise; b) a slight curse, on par with *damn*, or *to hell*. Launcelet, looking at his palm, could be pleasantly surprised about his good fortune and all the wives and adventure he is going to have, or be taken aback and cursing his discovery of a simple lifeline—which he then refutes. [See Additional Notes, 2.2.153]

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

48 {a leven}: The two-word term suggests the analogy of 'a dozen' (or 'an even dozen') though most editions list this as *eleven*. Some editions retain the spelling 'aleven' which awkwardly implies 'eleven.'

49 {is a simple coming-in}: could imply income, perhaps from a dowry or inheritance; or something coming in, or fate.

50 {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 a humorous mix-up of the phrase 'the edge of a sword' with 'the edge of a feather-bed.'

51 {I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.}

in the twinkling: immediately, without delay, in 'the twinkling of an eye.'

52 *let's go*: {in} *he may*: {doth} *palm*: {table} *and it tells of*: {here's} *in the least*: {is nothing}

task: {gear} / work / business / matter

53 {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

54 Bassanio is preparing to leave for Belmont and is having his provisions stowed on board his ship.

My most esteemed acquaintance.⁵⁵ Hurry, go.

/ All of my dearest friends. Now hurry, go

— Leonardo

My best endeavors shall be done herein.^o

/ I'll do my utmost to complete the task

Leonardo moves to exit. Enter Gratziano.

—Gratziano

Where's your master?

—Leonardo

Yonder, sir, he walks.

Exit Leonardo

—Gratziano

Signior Bassanio!

—Bassanio Signior Gratziano!⁵⁶

—Gratziano

I have a suit for you, do not deny me.^o

/ say "no."

Pray tell,^o I must go with you to Belmont.^{57 58}

/ Signoir / Kind sir

—Bassanio

Why then you must, but hear thee Gratziano:

Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice—

Parts that become thee happily enough^o

/ Aspects that suit thy manner well enough

And in such eyes as ours appear not faults,⁵⁹

But, where thou art not known,⁶⁰ why there they show^o

/ these may appear

Something^o too overbearing.⁶¹ Thus, take pains

To allay with some drops of self-control^o

{some cold drops of modesty}

Thy bounding^o spirit lest through thy wild behavior

{skipping} / leaping

I be disfavored^{o62} in the place I go^o

{I be misconstered} // in the eyes of others

55 { . . . for I do feast tonight | My best-esteemed acquaintance }

Bassanio refers to his *best-esteemed acquaintance*. Some might interpret this as a reference to Antonio yet Antonio is his dearest friend not his *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 that enabled him to make his journey. Obviously Bassanio does not view Shylock with the same vitriol as does Antonio. In 1.3.26 Bassanio warmly invites Shylock to dinner {if it would please you to dine with us} but Shylock refuses: *I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you*. Thus, if Shylock attends Bassanio's feast he is not likely to be eating anything.

56 Q1 has: 'Gratiano.' *Signior* has been added to *Gratziano* to complete the meter.

57 The original reads:

{G: I have a suit for you. | B: You have obtained it. | G: You must not deny me. I must go with you to Belmont.}

Gratziano's second line is suspect because the iambs are incomplete and the line is too long. In addition, Gratziano is amiss in making a demand [*you must not deny me*] after his request has already been granted. (Yet, as most of Gratziano's behavior is amiss, this reasoning is not assuring.) To restore this line's iambic meter some editions add, "Nay": 'Nay, you must not deny me. I must go | With you to Belmont.'

58 Bassanio may have anticipated Gratziano's suit before he even asked it—and that is why he granted Gratziano's request without even hearing it. It is quite possible that during his secret meeting with Nerissa, she told Bassanio that he should bring Gratziano along with him. [See Additional Note, 2.2.171]

59 / And, to our eyes, do not appear as faults / And traits that we do not decry as faults

60 {But where thou art not known} / But where they know you not

61 {Something too liberal}: Something too boisterous, 'in-your-face,' etc.

And lose^o my hopes ⟨of success⟩.⁶³ / ruin / dash

—Gratziano Now^o hear me: {Signor Bassanio}
 If I do not put on^o a sober habit,^o ⁶⁴ / display // staid demeanor
 Talk with respect, and swear but now and then; ^o / only swear but once
 Hold prayer books in my hand,^o look demurely, {Wear prayer books in my pocket}
 Nay, more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes ⁶⁵
 Thus, with my hat, and sigh, and say, ‘Amen,’
 And follow every count of good behavior—^o ⁶⁶ / manner of politeness
 Like one well-studied^o in a sad ostent^o / well-practiced // demeanor
 To please his grandma—never trust me more.^o ⁶⁷ / ne’er trust me again

—Bassanio
 Well, Gratziano, we shall see your bearing. / Well, we shall see the way you hold yourself.

—Gratziano
 Nay, but I drink^o tonight.⁶⁸ You shall not guage^o me {bar} / judge
 By what we do tonight.

—Bassanio ’Twould be a pity. ^o {No that were pity}
 I would entreat you rather to put on
 Your boldest suit of mirth; for we have friends
 That want some merriment.^o But fare you well, {That purpose merriment}
 I must attend to the business at hand. {I have some business} ⁶⁹

—Gratziano
 And I must meet^o Lorenzo and the rest. {to}
 But we will visit you at suppertime.

Exeunt

62 {I be misconstered}: / I be misconstrued / I find disfavor
 63 {And lose my hopes} Gratziano’s rude and boisterous behavior might cause Portia to look less favorably upon Bassanio. If Bassanio intended to solve the riddle (and win Portia) by his own wits then Gratziano’s actions would have no effect on the outcome nor ever cause Bassanio to ‘lose his hopes.’ Thus we might surmise that Bassanio is pinning his hopes of success on something other than his ability to choose the right chest. If Bassanio was assured that he would get help to win the contest (from Nerissa) if he were to win Portia’s heart then Gratziano’s rudeness might be a factor as it might rub Portia the wrong way and lessen Bassanio’s chances. [See Additional Notes, 2.2.181]
 64 *sober habit*: a) solemn, serious, funeral-like behavior; a sober look.
 65 / Nay more, while saying grace, cover mine eyes
 66 {Use all observance of civility} / Observe all manner of good behavior / And employ every manner of politeness
 67 {Like one well-studied in a sad ostent | To please his grandam, never trust me more.}
 / Like one well-practiced in a restraint, enough | To please his grandma
 68 {but I bar tonight. You shall not guage me} : I go to the bars tonight, do not judge me
 69 The original line {I have some business} is truncated. Additional syllables were added to complete the meter.

Shylock's house. Enter Jessica and Launcelet.

—Jessica

I'm sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
 Our house is hell^o and thou, a merry devil,
 Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
 But fare thee well. There is a ducat for thee.
 And Launcelet, soon at supper shalt thou see
 Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
 Give him this letter; do it secretly.
 And so farewell. I would not have my father
 See me in talk with thee.

> hellishly dull

—Launcelet

Adieu. Tears exhibit² my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew, if a
 Christian did not fool 'round with your mother and get thee³ I am much deceived.
 But adieu. These foolish drops^o do sometimes drown my manly spirit. Adieu.

drops: / tears

Exit Launcelet

—Jessica

Farewell, good Launcelet.
 Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
 To shun my father and betray his trust.^o ⁴
 But though I am a daughter to his blood
 I am not to his manners.^{o5} O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,
 Become a Christian and thy loving wife.⁶

/ bring him dishonor

/ I am not kin to his ways

Exit

1 Rowe did not divide 2.2 - 2.6 into separate scenes but played them all as one continuous action.

2 Slip for *inhibit*, but this term might also imply that his tears are telling what his tongue is unable to tell.

3 {If a Christian do not play the knave and get thee} / If a Christian did not fool behind you your father's back.

4 {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.' Jessica may feel ashamed for what she is about to do: betray her father, stealing his money, and run off with a Christian.

5 {I am not to his manners}

manners: most likely refers to Shylock's somber and thrifty (or hardened) ways but it could also refer to his adherence to Jewish tradition. [See Additional Notes, 2.3.19]

6 / If as you promise, if your word be true, | I'll soon be Christian, and e'er with you.

Venice. Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio¹

—Lorenzo

Nay, we will slip^o away at supper-time, {slink}
Meet at my lodging, put on our disguise,
And then return here all within the hour.²

—Gratiano

We have not made good enough^o preparation.³ {good} / sufficient

—Salarino

We have not spoke us^o yet of torchbearers.⁴ / spoke as yet / spoken yet

—Salanio

This plan will go afoul if not well-made;⁵
And best, I think,^o abandoned altogether.⁶ / methinks // And better yet

—Lorenzo

'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To get things ready.^o {To furnish us} / to run the plan / to finish up

Enter Launcelet with a letter

Launcelet, what's the news?⁷

—Launcelet [*handing him the letter*]

Break up this seal and it shall signify.⁸

—Lorenzo

I know the writing,^o 'tis from a fair hand, {I know the hand, in faith}⁹
And whiter than the paper 'tis writ on

1 Here Lorenzo is discussing the plan to steal away Jessica later that night.

2 This is a poorly conceived plan as Gratiano notes in the following line. They do not even know if Shylock is going to be at the feast tonight, a contingency upon which the plan is based.

3 The original line {We have not made good preparation} will adhere to the standard meter if *preparation* is stretched to five syllables.

4 This need to speak about torchbearers, as part of the plan, is not clear. Torchbearers illumine the way or, in the case of a masque, mark someone's grand entrance. Lorenzo repeated refers to Jessica as his torchbearer, so it could be a code-word for Jessica or have something to do with her. Line could remain or be deleted.

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*: well-, carefully, with consideration *ordered*: a) planned, b) carried out

6 {And better in my mind not undertook} / And better yet, the plan should be abandoned

This refers to the ill-conceived plan to steal away Jessica that evening. 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?} Jessica instructed Launcelet to deliver the message to Lorenzo at dinner: {soon at supper shalt thou see | Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest. | Give him this letter; do it secretly}. Here it is four o'clock, not six o'clock. [See Additional Notes, 2.4.9]

8 {And it shall please you to break up this, it shall it seem to signify} *break up this*: break the seal on this letter / And shall it please you to break the seal, it shall tell you

9 {I know the hand; in faith, 'tis a fair hand} *I know the hand*: refers to Jessica's handwriting.

Is the fair hand that writ.

—Gratziano Love-news, I think. ° {in faith}

—Launcelet
By your leave, kind sir. °¹⁰ / I'll take my leave, sir

—Lorenzo Whither goest thou?

—Launcelet
Marry sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup tonight with my new master the Christian.¹¹

—Lorenzo
Hold here, take this [*gives him a coin*]. Tell gentle Jessica,
I will not fail her.^{12 13} Speak it° privately. / Tell her

Exit Launcelet

Go gentleman—get ready for the masque.^{14 15}
I am provided with a torchbearer.¹⁶

—Salarino
Ah Marry, I'll get to it straight away.¹⁷ {Ay marry} / God willing

—Salanio
And so will I.

—Lorenzo Meet me and Gratziano
At Gratziano's lodging one° hour hence. {some}

10 The original {By your leave, sir} falls one syllable short. Since the fool is not expected to speak in meter, this need not be corrected.

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 be going to Bassanio's dinner 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 Jew's eye.* [2.5.39-42] Thus, at some point, he finds out about the plan.

13 What we come to learn is that Lorenzo *does* fail her, that he comes an hour late [2.6.2]—a delay that, in all likelihood, should 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.

14 {Will you prepare you for the masque tonight?} / Will you be ready for the masque tonight?

15 The original line contains seven iambs: {Go Gentlemen, will you prepare you for this mask tonight}
[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 is uncertain; it does not mean that she will mark his entrance at the masque but seems to indicate she will illumine or lead the way with the runaway plan.

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.

—Salarino

'Tis good we do so.^o

/ We'll surely do so

Exit Salarino and Salanio

—Gratziano

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

—Lorenzo

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,

What gold and jewels she is furnished with,^o

/ she will bring with her

What page's suit she'll wear for her disguise.^o ¹⁸

{ she hath in readiness }

If e'er the Jew, her father, comes to heaven

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake; ¹⁹

Come, go with me; [*gives letter to Gratziano*] peruse this as thou goest.

Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.²⁰

Exeunt

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. Jessica seems confident that her father will accept the offer.

19 The next three lines, as found in the original, are odd and out of place and have no reason to come out of Lorenzo's mouth. These lines appear like the other anti-Semitic emendations that rudely impose themselves, usually toward the end of a scene, right before a character's exit. Accordingly, these lines have been deleted.

The lines found in Q1 read as follows:

{ And never dare misfortune cross her foot }

{ Unless she do it under this excuse: }

{ That she is issue to a faithless Jew }

[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.

Venice. Enter Shylock and Launcelet

—Shylock

Well, thou shalt° see, thy eyes shall be thy judge	/ shall / will
The difference ‘tween° old Shylock and Bassanio.	{of}
[<i>calling</i>] Hey° Jessica! Thou shalt not stuff thyself ¹	{What}
As thou hast done with me. Hey° Jessica!	{What}
Nor sleep, and snore, and wear all out your pants	{And sleep, and snore, and rend apparel out}
From sitting round all day. ² Hey° Jessica!	{Why}

—Launcelet

Hey° Jessica!	{Why}
---------------	-------

—Shylock

I do not bid thee call.	/ Who bids thee call? Not I
-------------------------	-----------------------------

—Launcelet	Your worship always
Told me I could do nothing without bidding.	

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 wherefore° should I go?	/ why then
I am not bid for love. They flatter me. ^{3 4}	
But yet I’ll go in spite,° to feed upon	{hate}
The wasteful° Christian. Jessica, my girl,	{prodigal}
Care for° my house. I am right loathe to go;	{Look to} / Attend / Maintain
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest° ⁵	/ in my mind
For I did dream of money lost° tonight°— ⁶	{money bags} / last night

1 {Thou shalt not gormandize} / Thou shall not gluttonize.

A curious combination of a Jewish commandment, ‘thou shalt not’ and a Christian admonition against gluttony.

2 *rend*: this terms usually implies *tearing*. In this context *rend* would imply the wearing out of clothes through sitting on them all day.

3 It is unclear as to why Shylock would go to the feast. He is not bid for love. It may be that this is a rare opportunity to appear with Antonio as an equal.

4 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], that Shylock is now going to eat with him. It seems that Bassanio is aloof to Shylock’s practice of usury, or his Jewishness. Moreover, Bassanio is somewhat friendly toward Shylock and may even feel grateful toward him. And the uncertain meaning of line 2.2.165{for I do feast tonight | My best-esteemed acquaintance} could mean that Shylock is Bassanio’s guest of honor.

5 / There is something about which is disturbing / There is something amiss that ruins my peace

6 During Elizabethan times, a person’s dreams were thought to portend an *opposite* occurrence in real life. Hence, Shylock’s dream of money-bags portends its opposite—a loss, empty money bags.

Exit

—Shylock

What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha? ¹⁵

—Jessica

His words were, 'farewell mistress'—nothing more.

—Shylock

The patch^{o16} is kind enough but a huge feeder.^o

/ dolt / fool // eater

Snail-slow in working,^o and he sleeps by day

{profit} > producing anything

More than the wildcat. Drones that do not work

Stay not in my hive.^o Thus I part with him—^o

{Drones hive not with me}

Now to the Christian so he can help waste^o ¹⁷

/ with whom he can waste

His borrowed purse.^o Well Jessica, go in,

/ funds / wealth

Perhaps I will return immediately.^o

/ return at once. So now

Do as I bid and^o shut doors^o after you:

{you} //close up

'Fast bind, fast find'—

/ One who is fast to bind is fast to find

A proverb ne'er stale in a thrifty mind.¹⁸

Exit

—Jessica

Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed,

I have^o a husband,^o you a daughter lost.¹⁹

/ gain {a father}

Exit, opposite side

¹⁵ *Hagar's offspring*: a negative reference to Ishmael, the foolish son of Abraham'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]

¹⁶ *patch*: dolt, fool, clown. This term refers to the motley or 'patchwork' garb of professional fools.

¹⁷ {To one that I would have him help waste}

¹⁸ This 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.

/ Those who fast bind assuredly fast find [See Additional Notes, 2.6. 54]

¹⁹ {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); with a stretch, it could indicate her gaining a 'holy Father,' through her marriage and conversion to Christianity.

crossed: she is hoping that her fortune (her plan to run off and marry Lorenzo) be not *crossed*, be not blocked, thwarted, or jinxed. We are reminded of the star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet, who were doomed to fail because their stars (i.e., their destinies as determined by the stars) were crossed, at odds. In astrological terms, the square (where planets are 90 degrees apart) is an aspect of hardship and difficulty, where the planetary energies are crossed or at cross-purposes.

*Venice. Enter the maskers, Gratziano, Salarino, and Salanio.*¹

—Gratziano

This is the window^o under which Lorenzo
Told us to wait.^o

{penthouse} / balcony
{Desired us to make stand}

—Salarino His hour is almost past.

—Gratziano

And it is marvel he outdwells his hour,^o
For lovers ever run before the clock.

/ And 'tis // that he comes so late

—Salarino

O, ten times faster fly love-stricken youths^o ²
To seal their^o bond new made than they are wont,
In faith, to keep obligèd vows intact.^o ³

/ flies a love-struck youth
{love's}

—Gratziano

That ever holds.^o Who riseth from a feast
With the keen^o hunger of one sitting down?
Where is the horse that gallops^o yet again
Another lap^o with the unbated fire^o
That he did pace the first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chasèd^o than enjoyed.
How like a young man^o or a prodigal
The bannered ship^o leaves from her native bay,⁴
Hugged and embracèd^o by the wanton^o wind;⁵
How like the prodigal doth she return
With over-weathered^o ribs and raggèd sails,

/ 'Tis always true
/ same
{untread} / retread
{His tedious measures} // same kind of passion
/ vigor pursued
{younker}/ young son
/ The ship so proud
/ caresséd {strumpet} / lustful
/ weather-beaten / a storm-beaten hull

1 The stage heading in Q1 reads: 'Enter the maskers, *Gratiano* and *Salerino*.' There is a reference to *Salerino* (rather than *Salarino*). The original heading was probably, *Enter maskers* which would indicate the entrance of Gratziano, Salarino, and Salanio. Most editors assume that Salanio (because he is not specifically named in the stage directions) is absent from the scene, however, this is unlikely since Salarino and Salanio were both part of the original planning and both have always appeared together. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.0]

2 (O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly)

Venus' pigeons: could refer to the pigeons that draw Venus's chariot though this image is '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 bird) though such an emendation offers no improvement. *Venus' pigeons* most likely refers, metaphorically, to a youth smitten by love (Venus) and who flies fast (like a pigeons) to obtain the object of his desire.

3 {To keep obligèd faith unforfeited.} *obligèd*: pledged, obligated

Salarino is saying that lovers are quick to enter a new bond of love (and make all kinds of pledges)—rushing in like the pigeons of Venus—yet are just as quick to break those same vows. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.7]

4 {The scarfed bark puts from her native bay} / The decorated ship leaves from her bay

scarfed: refers to something wrapped or adorned with streaming banners, such as the side of a ship (*bark*) decorated with flags and steamers while it makes a glorious departure from her native port.

5 {the strumpet wind} / a good, strong wind

strumpet: refers to something inconsistent, something promising yet unreliable. The term brings to fore the metaphor of the Prodigal Son and the prostitutes (strumpets) upon whom he wasted his fortune. Here the inconsistent wind brings one's ship out to sea and, later, it is that same wind that brings the ship to ruin.

Lean, rent, and beggared by the wanton^o wind!

{strumpet} / lustful

Enter Lorenzo

—Salanio

Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter.

—Lorenzo

Sweet friends, your patience for^o my long delay.^o

/ forgive me for {abode}

Not I, but my affairs have made you wait:⁶

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives^o

/ a wife-stealer

Then I will watch as long for you. Approach.^o

/ Come here

Here dwells my father⁷ Jew. [*calling*] Ho!^o Who's within?

{Howe} / Hay

Enter Jessica above, dressed as a boy

—Jessica

Who are you? Tell me for more certainty

/ so I am assured / can be sure

Although^o I'll swear that I do know your voice.^o

{Albeit} > "all be it" / {tongue}

—Lorenzo

I say, it is Lorenzo and thy love.⁸

—Jessica

Lorenzo certain,^o and my love indeed—⁹

/ surely

The one I love so much.^o 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.¹⁰

I'm glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,

For I am much ashamed of my appearance.^o

{exchange}¹¹

But love is blind and lovers cannot see

The pretty^o follies they themselves commit;^o

/ petty // they're wont to commit

For if they could, Cupid¹² himself would blush

6 Such tardiness put the plan in jeopardy since the delay might have given Shylock ample time to return from dinner. What more pressing affairs could have caused Lorenzo to be so late?

7 *father*: future father-in-law.

8 The original line {Lorenzo, and thy love} is missing two iambs.

9 / Lorenzo certainly, my love indeed

10 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 the group, with a gesture "no," to carry it down instead.

11 *exchange*: change of appearance (into a boy), transfiguration

12 Cupid, god of love, is often blind-folded thus conveying the sense that love is blind, that it obeys the heart and not outer conditions. If Cupid was not blind-folded and could see Jessica dressed as a boy it would make him blush.

To see me thus transformèd to a boy.¹³

/ transformed into

—Lorenzo

Come down,^o for you must be my torchbearer.¹⁴

{Descend}

—Jessica

What, must I hold a candle^o to my shames?

/ bright flame

They are already, good sooth, much^o too light.^o¹⁵

{too} / far

Why, 'tis love's nature^o to remain in hiding,¹⁶

/ 'Tis love's true nature

And I should be concealed.^o

{obscured}

—Lorenzo

So are you, sweet,

Yet^o in the lovely^o garnish^o of a boy.¹⁷

{Even} // outfit

But come at once <and tarry you no more^o>:¹⁸

/ But tarry you no more and come at once

The close of night^o is quick to run away.^o¹⁹

/ The covered night

And we are stayed for^o at Bassanio's feast.²⁰

/ And we're expected

—Jessica

I will make fast the doors and guild myself²¹

With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

Exit Jessica above

—Gratziano

Now, by my word,^o she's more gentile than Jew.²²

{by my hood} / I do swear

—Lorenzo

Now scold^o me but I love her heartily.²³

{Beshrew}

For she is wise, if I can be the judge;^o

{if I can judge of her}

And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;

And true she is, as she hath proved herself.

13 / To see the way I've changed into a boy.

14 Lorenzo refers to Jessica as his 'torchbearer' on several occasions but it is not clear why. He seems to be saying, 'you must be the one who brings light and radiance into my life.' This is in contradiction to Jessica's wish to remain hidden under the cover of night.

15 {They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light} / They are, good heavens, already too light.

too too light: a) much too apparent, evident; b) immodest, unethical.

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' or 'good God.'

16 {Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love}

17 *lowly*: Q1 has *louely*, but this 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.

18 The original line {But come at once} is truncated and likely in error.

19 {For the close night doth play the runaway}

close: covered, secret; darkness *play the runaway*: is fading quickly, is running away (ending).

20 It appears that someone at Bassanio's feast is waiting for them.

stayed for: waited for. The term *stay* (wait) also appears in 59 (*Our masquing mates by this time for us stay*) and 63 ('*Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you*). [See Additional Notes, 2.6.48]

21 *guild myself*: provide myself with more ducats. It also carries the implication of dressing or gilding herself with more gold just as an ornament might be gilded with gold. Here again we see a conflict in Jessica: she wants to remain hidden (and not hold a candle to her shame) yet here she is gilding herself in gold which makes her more noticeable.

22 {Now by my hood, a gentle and no Jew}

23 {Beshrew me but I love her heartily} *Beshrew me*: A mild swear akin to 'curse me' > derived from the injury that comes from the bite of a shrew. / Admonish me if so but her I love

And therefore, like herself—wise, fair, and true—
Shall she be carried^o in my constant soul. {placèd}

Enter Jessica

Alas, what beauty comes! Signoirs, away, {What art thou come! On gentlemen, away}
Let us make ground^o awhile the maskers play.^{24 25} / haste

Exeunt Lorenzo, Jessica, Salarino, and Salanio

*Enter Antonio*²⁶

—Antonio^o / Leonardo
Who's there?

—Gratziano Is that Signior Antonio?^o / Is that my comrade Leonardo?

—Antonio
Fie^o Gratziano! Where are all the rest?^{27 28} {Fie, fie} / Ay
'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay^o for you. / wait
No masque tonight, the wind has come about,²⁹
And now Bassanio is^o aboard his ship. {Bassanio presently will go aboard}
He has sent twenty out to seek for you.^o / men to look for you.

—Gratziano
I'm glad of it:^o I seek^o no more delight, {I am glad on't} {desire} / wish
Than to be under sail and gone tonight.³⁰

Exeunt

24 {What, art thou come! On, gentlemen, away | Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.}

masquing mates: fellow party-goers who will be at Bassanio's feast / masquerade party.

This is an indication to make haste, since their friends at the party are now waiting for them and may grow suspicious; at it is already nine o'clock. In 2.8 Salarino tells Salanio of Bassanio's departure and so Salarino must have proceeded to the masque while Salanio helped Lorenzo and Jessica steal away from Venice. [See Additional Notes, 2.6.59]

25 In the Kean production of 1858, the scene ends here as 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.

26 The timing of Antonio's arrival near Shylock's house is amiss. Antonio would not be out in search of Gratziano; rather he would be eking out his last moments with Bassanio. This section could be improved if another character, such as Bassanio's helper Leonardo was here instead of Antonio. With such a change, one line would have to be emended: *Gra*: Is that my comrade Leonardo? [See Additional Notes, 2.6.60]

27 {Fie, fie, Gratziano} This scene is often played out with Antonio being somewhat annoyed that Gratziano is out and about and delaying Bassanio's departure. If Leonardo appears instead of Antonio he would not be upset with Gratziano nor address his with 'Fie, fie' but rather with something neutral, such as 'Ay.'

28 {Where are all the rest?} It is not clear who Antonio is referring to when he says 'all the rest.'

29 {No masque tonight, the wind is come about.} / No masque for you tonight—the wind has come

no masque tonight: this indicates that the masquerade party, going on that night, will not be attended by Gratziano (due to Bassanio's immanent departure). 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*.

the wind is come about: the wind has turned favorable (which now allows Bassanio to make a swift departure).

30 Gratziano, the ultimate party man, would have little reason to delight upon hearing that he could not attend the masque unless there was something greater he desired, which could only be found in Belmont.

Belmont.

Enter Portia and the Prince of Morocco, with their attendants

—Portia [*to servant*]

Go, draw aside the curtains and reveal^o {discover} / disclose
 The triple^o caskets to this noble prince. {several}
 Now make your choice.¹

The Prince examines each casket

—Morocco

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

—Portia

The one of them contains my picture, prince;
 If you choose that, then all of mine is yours.^{o 3} {then I am yours withal}

—Morocco

Some god direct my judgement. Let me see.
 I will survey th’inscriptions once^o again.⁴ {back}
^oWhat says this leaden casket?⁵ + <Now look with care;>
 ‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
 Must give, for what? For lead? Hazard^o for lead? / Risk all
 This casket threatens: Men that^o hazard all / who
 Do it in hope of fair^o advantages.^{o 6} / untoward /of undeservèd gain
 A golden mind stoops not to shows^o of dross.^{o 7} / such as scheme
 I’ll neither^o give nor hazard all^o for lead. {I’ll then nor} {aught}
 What says the silver with her virgin^o hue?⁸ / moonlike

1 The original line is truncated and could be corrected. /And now, good prince, it’s time to make your choice

2 The inscriptions on the chests 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]

3 *withal*: “with all.” I am yours withal; all of what is mine is yours / If you chose that, then I am wholly yours

4 / I will survey the inscriptions once more / I will survey the sayings once again.

5 The original line is truncated and could be corrected by adding: *Now let me see.*

6 {Do it in hope of fair advantages} / Do so in hope of undeservèd gain

fair advantages: gaining something not fully deserved

7 *shows of dross*: untoward schemes, worthless displays

8 *virgin hue*: ‘silver is the color of the moon, and Diana, the virgin goddess, is the moon’s goddess.’ (Kittredge)

‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
‘As much as he deserves’—pause^o there Morocco / stay / stop
And weigh thy value with an even^o hand. / a steady
If thou be^o rated by thy worthiness,^o {be’st} {estimation}
Thou dost deserve enough, and yet ‘enough’
May not extend so far as to the lady.
And yet to be afeared^o of my deserving^o / afraid // fear what I truly deserve
Would be^o a weak disabling^o of myself. {Were but} // debasing
As much as I deserve^o—why, that’s the lady! / ‘As much as he deserves’
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces,^o and in qualities of breeding,⁹ / In manner
But more than these, in love I do deserve.^o / deserve her
What if I strayed no further but chose here?
Let’s see once more this saying ‘graved^o in gold: / this quote engraved / this saying carved
‘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.¹⁰
The Persian deserts¹¹ and the vasty wilds^o / vast expanse
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The wat’ry kingdom^o whose high-reaching wave^o / raging ocean {ambitious head}
Spits¹² in the face of heaven, is no bar^o / has no chance
To stop these foreign spirits,¹³ ^o who but come^o / dauntless suitors {but they come}
As o’er a brook to see fair Portia.¹⁴
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is’t like that^o lead contains her? ‘Twere damnation / Could it be
To think so base a thought. It is^o too gross {were}
That she be housed in lead and wrapped in cerecloth
Like one who’s buried in the òbscure grave.¹⁵
Or shall I think in silver she’s immured^o / enclosed / contained
Being ten times undervalued to^o tried gold. / Which holds one-tenth the value of
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse^o than gold. They have in England / less

9 *qualities of breeding*: more suggestive of Arabian horses than a royal bloodline. This is an image favored by Morocco but may be ill-suited for European sentiments.

10 *this shrine*: a container for the relics (and/or bones) of a saint. Morocco refers to the Portia as a *shrine*—an object of worship—but, realizing that a shrine may also refer to a tomb that contains a dead saint, he quickly corrects himself with a modifier, calling Portia, a ‘mortal breathing saint.’

11 {The Hyrcanian deserts and vasty wilds} / The unrelenting deserts and vast wilds
Hyrcania: an area south of the Caspian Sea known for its wilderness. Q1 = ‘vastie’; F1 = ‘vast.’

12 *spits*: the image of a wave’s crest spewing water into the air

13 *foreign spirits*: men of courage and determination (who hail from foreign lands); the suitors of Portia

14 These suitors are so eager and relentless that they cross over the vast oceans as if jumping over a brook.
/ To stop these suitors who but leap the waters | As ‘twere a brook, to see fair Portia.

/ ... who but leap | <Across the vast ocean> as o’er a brook | To catch one glimpse of fairest Portia.

15 {To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave}

cerecloth: waxed cloth that corpses were wrapped in *obscure*: a) dark, distant b) undistinguished, forgotten

It is *too gross* to think that she (her image) could be found in lead like a commoner who is *ribbed* in cerecloth and buried in *the obscure grave*.

A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stampèd° in gold. But that's insculpted upon° 16 17 / That's stamped / Engraved // engraved upon
 The surface, here an angel lies within! 18 / I will stop here—now bring the key I say
 I will stop here, deliver me the key; {Here do I choose and thrive I as I may}
 Here I do choose and thrive as I may be. 19

—Portia
 There, take it prince; and if my form lie there / and if you find my form
 Then I am yours.

Morocco unlocks the golden casket

—Morocco O hell! What have we here?
 A hideous skull,° within whose empty eye {A carrion death}
 There is a written scroll. I'll° read the writing: 20 / Here

All that glitters° is not gold; {glitters} / glistens
Often have your heard that° told. / this
Many a man his life hath sold,
For the° outside to behold, {But my}
Gilded tombs° 21 do worms enfold.° / graves {infol}
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in° judgement old, / but
Your fate would not be so° inscrolled— {Your answer had not been}
Fair you well, your suit is cold.

Cold indeed, and labor lost.
 Then° farewell heat, and welcome frost. 22 / Now

16 *insculpted upon*: engraved upon the surface. This obscure word is found in the English translation of *Gesta Romanorum*, the source from which the Author borrowed the casket story: 'The third vessel was made of lead, full within of precious stones, and thereupon was insculpt this posey: *Who so chooseth me, shall find what God has disposed for him.*' [See Additional Notes, 2.7.9]

17 / Could e'er be set° in something worse than gold. / Was ever set
 There is° a coin in England, stamped in gold, / They have
 That bears the figure of a rad'ant angel
 But that's insculpted on° the outer surface / engraved upon

18 It is the picture of Portia, representing Portia, that lies within.

19 / Here I do choose, deliver me the key | And let my fortune fall as it may be.
 / Deliver me the key and straight away | Here do I choose and prosper as I may

The original reads: {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. Bassanio's speech before the caskets ends in a rhyme; Arragon's last line ends with *here*, rhyming with Portia's next line, ending with *there*. With Morocco, we find the same rhyme as Arragon but reversed: Portia's first line (after Morocco chooses) ends with *there* while Morocco's following line ends with *here*.

20 Morocco could be so distraught that he is unable to read the scroll. Thus, he could say "Here, read the writing" as he hands it off to one of his attendants to read.

21 Q1 reads: *Gilded timber do worms infold*. To rectify the meter, most editions follow Johnson's emendation and change *timber* to *tombs*. Rowe, however, replaces *timber* with *wood*. *Timber* refers to a wood coffin that is gilded on the outside but which decays and soon becomes enfolded with worms.

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

Morocco's first two lines follow the same seven-syllable meter as the scroll (which is also the case with the lines spoken by Arragon and Bassanio after reading the scroll); however, Morocco's next two lines revert back to the iambic pentameter.

Portia, adieu, I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave,^o thus losers part.^o

/ And here
/ For long 'good-bye's // so I depart

*Exit with his attendants*²³

—Portia
A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go—
Let all with his vainglory^o choose me so.^o

{complexion}²⁴ // conceit select me so

Exeunt

Farewell frost: This is an inversion of the old proverb, 'Farewell, frost': "Therefore are you so foule, and so, farewell, frost." (Lilly's *Mother Bombie*); "Farewell, frost, will you needes be gone" (Wapull's *Tyde Taryeth No Man*, 1576)
23 Some editions add *flourish of cornets* as part of the stage direction. 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 cornets 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.

24 *complexion:* most notably refers to Morocco's dark complexion. If one were to interpret this in a politically correct way, it could refer to Morocco's mannerism or disposition, as the term *complexion* also has this meaning in [3.1.28].

/ For such good riddance, I have fate to blame | May all with his vainglory chose the same.

*Venice. Enter Salarino and Salanio.*²

—Salarino

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail;
With him is Gratziano gone along.
I'm sure Lorenzo is not on their ship.^o

/ has not gone with them

—Salanio

The villain Jew with outcries raised^o the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.³

/ roused

—Salarino

He came too late; the ship was under sail.^o
But there the Duke was giv'n^o to understand
That in a gondala, were seen together,
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica.⁴
Besides, Antonio did assure^o the Duke
They were not with Bassanio on his ship.^o

/ had just left port

/ made

/ That seen together, in a gondola

/ Were young Lorenzo and his Jessica

{certified}

/ That they were not aboard Bassanio's ship

—Salanio

I never heard an outburst^o so confused,
So strange, outrageous,^o and incoherent^o ⁵
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats! ⁶
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!
A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,⁷
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her and the ducats!'

{a passion}

/ outlandish {variable} / so oddly spoke

—Salarino

1 This is a filler scene and is inserted to provide some time between the scene with Morocco and that with Arragon. It is similar to 3.1, where the Sals again are talking about the events of the day. It could be edited down and/or replaced with 3.1, which is an essential scene unlike this one.

2 Both Sals helped Lorenzo steal away Jessica but both headed back toward Bassanio's ship. Salarino was at Bassanio's ship and saw him depart while Salanio saw what Shylock was doing. [See Additional Notes, 2.8.0]

3 Only someone of considerable influence (and in utter desperation) could wake the Duke and summon him from his house to investigate a minor incident.

4 / That someone saw Lorenzo, and his love | Jessica, fleeing in a gondola.

5 *so oddly spoke*: {so variable} / incoherent, out of whack, discordant

6 *my Christian ducats*: this line seems to be part of Shylock's repetitive, somewhat incoherent, free-association rant about his daughter: {My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! | Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!} Since it follows the line, "Fled with a Christian" it likely means that his ducats have also fled with a Christian and are now possessed by a Christian. 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 in the play there is a reference to a diamond purchased in Frankfurt for 2000 ducats [3.1.80] but the second stone is not certain.

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him
Crying, 'His stones, his daughter, and his ducats!'

—Salanio

Let good Antonio look to keep^o his day.^o {look he keep} // forfeit not
Or he shall pay for this.

—Salarino Ay,^o well remembered.

I conversed^o with a Frenchman yesterday {Marry}
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part^o {reasoned} / I'd spoken
The French and English, there did lay in ruin^o / between
A vessel of our country, richly fraught.^o {there miscarrièd} / overturnèd
I thought about^o Antonio when he told me,⁸ / fraught with riches
And wished in silence that it were not his. {upon}

—Salanio

You're^o best to tell Antonio what you hear^o {You are} / 'Tis
Yet do it gently so as not to grieve him.^{o 9} / else such news could grieve him

—Salarino

A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:¹⁰
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return. He answered, 'Do not so.^o /Antonio said, 'Do not
Rush not your heart's song^o for my sake, Bassanio,¹¹ {Slubber not business}
But stay the very riping of the time.¹² / 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.^o {mind of love}
Be joyous^o and employ^o your chiefest^o thoughts¹³ {merry} // engage /// highest
To courtship and^o such fair ostents^o of love¹⁴ / To win her with // displays
As shall most fittingly^o become you there.'¹⁵ {conveniently}
And then, right there,^o his eyes aflow with tears, {And even there}

8 / I thought it might be good Antonio's ship

9 {Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him}

10 From this account we understand that Salarino was present at Bassanio's departure while Salanio was not.

11 Q1 has *slumber* which Q2, F, and most modern editors change to *slubber*.

slubber: to perform with haste and/or with lack of care; sully, spoil, ruin

slubber not business: don't rush or hurry with your affairs

slumber not business: don't fall asleep on the job; attend to the task at hand. In modern English, the term *slumber* is readily recognized whereas *slubber* is not. This term might bring up associations with such words as *slobber* or *blubber*.

12 {But stay the very riping of the time}

13 / Be joyous; let your only^o concern be / foremost

14 *fair ostents of love*: / fair displays of love / fair showings of love

ostent: a shortened form of *ostentation*. *Ostents*, as used here, means to show or display, whereas the term *ostentation* carries the meaning of a grand, pompous, or even pretentious display.

15 / As shall arise in your heart when you're there

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 the 'fair ostents of love.' And in order for such a courtship to fully ripen and be successful Antonio is telling Bassanio to take all the time he needs. Thus, Antonio is putting Bassanio's needs, and his desire to woo Portia, above his own life. Antonio was never told of the true nature of Bassanio's venture which involved a riddle and a contest, and had nothing to do with courtship.

Belmont. Enter Nerissa and a Servant

—Nerissa

Quick, quick,^o draw back the curtain straight away.¹ / Quick now
 The Prince of Arragon has ta'en his oath
 And comes at once to make his choice of caskets.²

[*A flourish of cornets.*]

Enter the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and attendants

—Portia

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince.
 If you chose that wherein my picture's found,^o ³ {I am contained}
 Straight away shall we take^o our nuptial vows.⁴ / Then straight away we'll take
 But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,^o / without another word
 You must be gone^o from hence immediately.⁵ / depart

—Arragon

I am enjoined^o by oath to observe three things: / obliged
 First, never to disclose^o to anyone {unfold} / reveal
 Which casket 'twas I chose. Next, if I fail
 Of the right casket, never in my life⁶
 To join^o a maid in way of marriage. Lastly, {woo}
 If I do fail^o in fortune of my choice,
 Without delay^o to leave you and be gone.⁷ {Immediately}

—Portia

To these injunctions^o everyone doth swear⁸ / conditions
 Who comes to hazard for my worthless^o self.⁹ / lowly

—Arragon

And so am I obligèd.^o¹⁰ Fortune now {And so I have addressed me}
 To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead:
 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
 You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.¹¹ ¹²

1 {Quick, quick, I pray thee, draw the curtain straight}

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 / To leave at once^o and forever be gone. / forthwith

8 / These are the terms to which all men must swear

9 *worthless*: insignificant, less than worthy (when compared to the worth of these great suitors)

This is a supposed show of modesty.

10 *addressed me*: I have addressed (and fulfilled) these injunctions by taking the required vows.

What says the golden chest? Ha,° let me see: / Ah
 ‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.’
 What ‘many men desire’ may indicate° 13 / And yet that ‘many’ may well indicate
 The foolish multitudes° that choose by show, {fool multitude} / ignorant masses
 Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach, 14
 And never prying inward for the truth; 15
 They’re like the martlet 16 that prepares its nest / But
 In the harsh weather of the outer wall,
 Putting itself upon the road of hardship.° 17 / Subjecting itself to a path of hardship
 I will not choose what many men desire
 Because I will not jump° with common spirits 18 / join
 And rank° me with the barbarous multitudes. 19 / class / judge
 Now then, to thee, thou silver treasure-house.
 Tell me once more what title° thou dost bear:° / saying // inscription thou bear
 ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
 And well said too! For who shall go about° / For what man shall attempt
 To swindle° fortune and look honorable {cozen} / and to show their honor
 Without a dint° of merit? Let none presume {the stamp} / the seal
 To wear an undeservèd dignity.° / worthiness
 O if ° one’s status, wealth, and high position 20 {that}
 Were not derived corruptly;° and if true° honor / by falsehood {clear}
 Were duly earned by those who deem to wear it— 21 22
 How many dressed° with medals would stand bare! 23 / clothed / decked

11 Some productions mistakenly have Arragon address this line directly to Portia, indicating that she’s not fair enough. This direction is clearly misplaced since he is, in fact, risking all on her, just as she is.

12 Arragon dismisses the lead casket with one line saying: you must look more beautiful before I would risk everything on you. Hence, he makes his decision based upon looks alone without considering the inscription. Then, ironically, the bulk of his speech is dedicated to condemning the ‘fool multitude that choose by show.’

13 The original reads: {What many men desire? That ‘many’ may be meant | By the fool multitudes}. This line contains an additional iamb; it is unlikely that the learned Arragon would stray from the standard meter when there was no reason to do so. The original most likely would have read: ‘*What many men desire*’ may be meant.

14 / Not seeing past the fondness of their eyes / Not seeing past what their eyes are most fond of
fond eyes: that which is attractive to the eye and which appeals to the outer senses

15 /And never prying to the interior /They never pry within to find the truth

16 {martlet}: a bird, probably referring to the house-martin or swift

17 {Which pries not to th’interior, but like the martlet | Builds in the weather on the outer wall | Even in the force and road of casualty}

/ Which pries not inwardly, but like the martlet | That builds its nest upon the outer wall, | And puts itself in harm’s way and in danger.

Even in the force and road of casualty: / E’en if it brings calamity or death / E’en at the risk of injury and death
 [See Additional Notes, 2.9.29]

18 {Because I will not jump with common spirits} / 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.

19 /And have me ranked with the ignorant hordes / masses

20 {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

21 {Were purchased° by the merit of the wearer} / Were found upon the worth of those who wear it.

22 The previous two lines could be expanded to three lines: Were not obtained through some corrupted means | And that true honor were justly bestowed | In accord with the worth of those who wear it.

23 {How many then should cover that stand bare!} / How many then would be without their crowns!
cover: succeed, be covered with medals, honorariums, etc.

stand bare: a) stand naked, stand without honorariums. Could refer to the bare head of servants who do not wear a hat in the presence of their masters.

a) How many then would *cover* (be decorated for their honorable acts) that should *stand bare* (having no such honor)?

b) How many then (without true honor) would cover their bare heads with a hat or crown (to signify honor)?

/ All those bedecked with metals should stand bare. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.43]

How many that command would be commanded!
 How much low peasantry^{o24} would then be gleaned / How many simpletons
 From the false seed of honor^o; and how much honor / those of false honor
 Could we bestow upon the dregs of man^o / On simple commoners
 With a few medals.^{o25 26} Well, but to my choice: / With phony medals / With decorations
 ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
 I will assume what’s deservèd for me, / I will assume desserts, what is for me
 And find my fortune here—now give the key!^{27 28} / I choose the silver chest, give me the key

He unlocks the silver casket

—Portia
 Too long a pause for that which you do see.^o {find there} / would agree

—Arragon
 What’s here? The portrait of a blinking idiot,^o / fool
 Presenting^o me with an ill-fated scroll.^{o 29} / Offering // an inauspicious scroll
 How much unlike art thou to Portia!
 How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
 ‘Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.’³⁰
 Did I deserve no more than a fool’s head?
 Is that my prize? Are my deserts^o no better? > Is what I deserve

—Portia
 By thine own hand thy fortune was determined.^{o 31} / you committed the offense
 Can I be judge of that?^{o 32} / I can’t be judge of that

24 {How much low peasantry would then be gleaned} F1 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

25 The original reads:

{From the true seed of honour, and how much honour
 Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times | To be new varnished!}
the true seed of honor: interpreted as “the false seed of honor”
the chaff and ruin of the times: the dregs of society, low lifes.

To be new varnished: newly painted, as one might find with a coat of arms. Some outer display of merit, like some old object covered with new varnish. Suggests a new (and undeserved), shiny, outer display of honor, to be varnished on someone, in the form of medals, awards, coat of arms, etc. [See Additional Notes, 2.9.48]

26 If the lines in purple are deleted, an additional five syllables is needed to complete the meter:

/ What rank dishonor / What shame and falsehood / O the dishonor

27 {I will assume desert. Give me a key for this | And instantly unlock my fortunes here}

/ I am deserving, and now for the key | To here unlock the fortunes meant for me.

28 Morocco’s final line {O hell! What have we here} [2.7.62] rhymes with Portia’s previous line, ending with “there.” Likewise, Aragon’s final line, ending with “here,” rhymes with Portia’s next line ending with “there.” To add a sense of closure, Aragon’s final lines in front of the caskets (as well as Morocco’s final lines) are put into a rhyme scheme.

Arragon makes no mention of Portia, only himself. Morocco mentions both himself and the lady. Bassanio mentions neither himself nor the lady.

29 {Presenting me a schedule. I will read it.} The original line has been emended so that Aragon no longer says “I will read it.” This allows for one of his attendants to read the scroll later in the scene. Alternatively, the line could be emended as follows: *Presenting me a schedule. Must I read it?*

30 Arragon misquotes the inscription which suggests that he is recalling it and not actually reading it.

31 {To offend and judge are distinct offices | And of opposed natures} The meaning of this line is unclear.

/ By your own hand your fortune was determined // It was determined by your very hand

/ By your own hand, you have rendered a verdict / By your own hand, O Prince, you made your choice.

32 / I can’t be judge of that / I cannot serve as judge / ‘Tis not my place to judge / I cannot make a judgment

[See Additional Notes, 2.9.60]

—Portia

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter a Messenger*⁴⁵

—Messenger

Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one who has arrived^o

{comes before}/ who comes in advance

To indicate^o the approach^o of his lord,

{To signify} // th'arrival

From whom he bringeth the most abundant^o greetings.

/ auspicious

Yet more than praise and courteous words, he brings

Gifts of rich value.⁴⁶ Til now I've not seen^o

{Yet, I have not seen}

So hopeful^o an ambassador of love.^o

{likely} // So promising a messenger of love

A day in spring has never come^o so sweet

{A day in April never came}

To show the bounty of summer's approach⁴⁷

As this forerunner^o comes before his lord.

{fore-spurrer}

—Portia

No more, I pray thee. I am half afeared^o

/ afraid

That thou will say anon he is your cousin,^o

{Thou wilt say anon he's some kin to thee}

Thou spend'st such lavish wit^o in praising him.⁴⁸

/ your finest wit / such high-blown wit

Come, come,^o Nerissa, this I long to see,

/ now

One from Cupid's post come so gracefully.^o

{mannerly}

—Nerissa [*aside*]

Bassanio! Lord Love, if thy will it be!^o⁴⁹⁵⁰

/ Lord of Love, O let it be!

Exeunt

/ And with that ancient saying I agree | ...

45 The line that appears next, the original, is: {*Messenger*: Where is my lady? *Portia*: Here, what would my lord?} Portia's address of a messenger as 'my lord' is amiss. This line is suspect and should be deleted.

46 {From whom he bringeth sensible greets | To wit, besides commends and courteous breath, | Gifts of rich value} / To wit, besides his praise and courteous words / More than commendable and courteous words

sensible: evident to the senses, abundant *greets*: a) salutations, greetings b) gifts

to wit: namely, that is to say *commends*: praise, compliments *courteous breath*: complimentary words

47 {To show how costly summer was at hand} *costly*: lavish, full, bountiful

48 {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,

49 Q1 reads: 'Bassanio Lord, love if thy will it be.' Most editors reject this punctuation and follow the emendation of Rowe: 'Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be! The punctuation in Q1 refers 'Lord' to Bassanio (Lord Bassanio), rather than to Cupid (Lord Love), who is mentioned in the previous line. One could also direct this line to God, the Lord: 'O Lord—Bassanio, if thy will it be!' [See Additional Notes, 2.9.100]

50 How did Nerissa come to know or even surmise that Bassanio was a suitor and might be arriving in Belmont? Her plea to Lord Love (Cupid) that it be Bassanio tells us that she was anticipating his arrival. How would that be possible? In their secret meeting, Bassanio told Nerissa that he would need a few days to secure the money in order to present himself as a worthy suitor. He returns to Venice and gets the money from Shylock; he then makes preparations, holds a feast, and leaves that same night. The whole thing may have taken two or three days. Bassanio's arrival also portends the arrival of Gratiano, which may be what Nerissa was truly hoping for. [See Essays: *The Lottery*]

Venice. Enter Salanio and Salarino

—Salanio

Now, what news on the Rialto?

—Salarino

Why yet it lives there unchecked,¹ that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading,² wrecked[°] on the narrow seas. The Goodwin Shoals[°] I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat,[°] and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried.³ This is the news if my gossip report be a woman of her word.⁴

—Salanio

I wish she were as lying a gossip as a ginger-knapper⁵ who weeps and has her neighbors believe that her husband just died—for the third time! But it is true, without any mixing of words, or crossing the plain highway of talk,⁶ that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, O that I had a title good[°] enough to keep his name company—⁷

—Salarino

Come the full stop.[°]

/ Enough already

—Salanio

What sayest thou? That he hath lost a ship? ⁸

—Salarino

Indeed—I hope he sees no further losses.^{9 10}

{I would it might prove the end of his losses}

1 {it lives there unchecked} / Why the news is spreading fast

lives: / breeds, goes on *unchecked:* unstopped, uncontradicted

2 {that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading} / that Antonio's ship, laden with riches *rich lading:* rich cargo

3 *wrecked:* {wrackt}, wracked, strewn about *the Goodwin Shoals:* {the Goodwins}: a shoal off the coast of Kent, England

flat: sand bar, sand flat, shoal

4 {if my gossip report be an honest woman of her word} / If the rumors be true

This double-positive (honest + woman of her word) could be simplified or emended as follows: 'if my gossip report be an honest woman' or 'if my gossip report be a woman of her word.'

5 {as lying a gossip that as ever knapped ginger}

It's not clear how knapping (chewing) ginger relates to lying. Old maids were known to knap ginger; this, then, might be a reference to an old lady who has nothing better to do than to sit around and tell high tales to her neighbors.

6 {without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk}

prolixity: wordy, verbose, long-winded—tiresome as a result of being too wordy

slips: lapses into, indulgence in

slips of prolixity: without using too many words (or euphemisms to try and cover up the hoped for truth), etc.

crossing the plain highway of talk: deviating from a straight-forward account; 'beating around the bush.'

7 *knapped:* chewed on *title good enough:* / merit enough

8 In the original line {Ha, what sayest thou, why the end is, he hath lost a ship} Salanio reports that Antonio has lost a ship, however, the scene opens with Salanio asking Salarino about news on the Rialto (i.e., the fate of Antonio's ships). Hence, this line has been emended such that Salanio is asking about Antonio's ship rather than offering a report.

9 /Yes. 'Twould it might prove the end of his losses.

10 One way to edit this scene would be to have Salarino and Salanio exeunt here and delete lines 19-50. Without the Sals on stage, Shylock would be alone and deliver his famous speech, 'Hath not a Jew eyes?' to the audience. This might have been how it was played out in an earlier draft of the play (which did not include the Sals).

—Salanio

Let me say, 'amen' to that. And let us pray some more for here comes the devil in the likeness of a Jew.¹¹

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.¹²

—Salarino

That's certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor¹³ that made the wings she flew upon.^o
{withal}

—Salanio

And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was ready to fly,^o as it is the nature^o of all to leave the nest.^{o14}
ready to fly: {fledged}
nature: {complexion} / disposition *nest*: {dam}

—Shylock

She is damned for it!¹⁵

—Salarino

That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

—Shylock

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

—Salanio

This bag of flesh is sure to rebel for a man of your years.¹⁶

—Shylock

I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood. (She has rebelled against me.)

11 {Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.}
betimes: while there is still time; right now / quickly

12 It seems that Jessica's flight took place a few weeks ago; this is consistent 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; however, this is the first time that Shylock sees Salanio and Salarino since Jessica's flight.

13 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 when she flew away.

14 {leave the dam}: leave the nest. The substitution of *nest* for *dam* makes the line more understandable yet ruins the unimportant word association with the next line where Shylock says, 'she is damned for it.'

15 Here the blame quickly shifts from Salarino and Salanio to Jessica (where it belongs) and then the blame morphs into rage against Christians and Antonio in particular. Shylock's words to the two Sals—even after being mocked by them—is friendly and familiar. He never attacks them in the way they attack him.

16 The original reads: {Out upon it, old carrion, rebels it at these years}

out upon it: Refers to something like, 'damn it,' 'to hell with it,' 'out with it,' etc. A similar term ('out upon her') is used by Shylock later in the scene [113] when referring to his daughter.

old carrion: the body which is corporeal, weak, and subject to aging

rebels it at these years: the body rebels (does not follow one's wishes) when it gets to be this age. This may be a crude reference by Salanio to one's sex organ which, at this age, rebels and does not act in accord with one's desires.

—Salarino

Enough with all this talk about rebellion.¹⁷ But tell us, did you hear whether Antonio has had any loss at sea or no?

—Shylock

There I have another bad match.^{o18} A bankrupt,¹⁹ a spent man,^{o20} who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar that was used to come so smug upon the mart.²¹ 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 as a Christian courtesy—let him look to his bond.

a spent man: {a prodigal} bad match: bad story

—Salarino

Why I am sure if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. What’s that good for?

—Shylock²²

To bait fish withal.²³ If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million times.²⁴ He hath laughed at my losses, mocked 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,²⁵ senses, affections, passions?²⁶ <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 like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humble response?²⁷ Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy²⁸ you teach me I

17 The original reads: {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.} Salarino talks here in a familiar tone where he seems to know Jessica and Shylock well enough to make such a comparison. Also, it is odd to hear a merchant speak about the difference between red wine and white Rhenish. Accordingly, this line was replaced with something more neutral.

18 {There I have another bad match} / There I have more bad news / There I have another bad tale to tell.

It’s unclear exactly what a ‘bad match’ refers to. Jessica’s departure and theft is the first bad match. The second bad match is Antonio’s losses—a bad match for Antonio but not necessarily for Shylock, who would prefer that Antonio break his bond rather than keep it. For clarity sake, it might be preferable to use the phrase, ‘another bad story.’

19 *a bankrupt*: someone whose funds (bank account) has been routed; someone who is bankrupt

20 *a prodigal*: a wasted man, a spent man, someone who has squandered all his wealth

21 *upon the mart*: at the Rialto; where the merchants and traders meet

22 As discussed earlier, Salarino and Salanio were not found in the original draft of the play (nor the second draft, for in that draft only Salarino existed); the pair came to be in the third draft. 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, both of whom are unsympathetic to Shylock. Their presence only diffuses the impact of Shylock’s words. If the Sals do not comment on Shylock’s speech then the Sals could exit before Shylock delivers his words. For example, after Salarino says, ‘What’s that good for?’ Antonio’s man enters and the Sals exit with him. Shylock then opens his monologue by repeating Salarino’s words, ‘What’s that good for?’ then continues.

23 / To use for baiting fish. / To use as bait for fish

Saying that it can be used to bait for fish implies that it is a worthless kind of meat. In keeping with Antonio calling Shylock as a dog, and Shylock’s frequent reference to that, he could’ve said that the flesh could be used to feed stray dogs.

24 {hindered me half a million}: a) hindered me half a million times, b) caused me a loss of half a million ducats

25 {dimensions} / a body frame / bones > which make up a person’s height

26 {affections, passions} *Affections* generally refer to objective desires, things a person likes, things influenced by the senses; *passions* refer more to subjective feelings, stirred from the heart.

27 {what is his humility?} *his humility*: his humble response / what does he offer in return? / What is his recourse

28 *villainy*: ill-treatment, villainous treatment, vulgarity / The villainous treatment you show me

The term *Jew* is sometimes used synonymously with *villain*; we see this reference in a line by Launcelet: *for I am a Jew [villain] if I serve the Jew any longer.* [2.2.108]

will return unto you;²⁹ and it shall go hard, and it shall be a lesson you will not soon forget.^{30 31}

[Optional lines]

Salarino claps slowly, mockingly

—Salarino

Your words are filled with pique and passion yet fail to impress.³² This revenge you talk of is not a thing you learned by Christian example, 'tis a thing of your own creation. If Christian and Jew be alike in seeking revenge why not in their readiness to forgive?

—Salanio

Antonio is the best of men. You say he mistreats you because you are a Jew but, no, it is because you are a usurer. Jews be Jews but it is usurers that Antonio despises.

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.³³

Exeunt Salarino, Salanio, and Man

*Enter Tubal*³⁴

—Shylock

How now, Tubal. What news from Genoa?³⁵ Hast thou found my daughter?

—Tubal

I often came where I did hear of her but could not^o find her. {cannot}

29 {execute} / repay unto you / carry out

30 {and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction} The abuse and ill-treatment you teach me I will teach (return) to you but my lesson will be harder and more painful than yours.

31 There is a continued reference to Christians even though the object of Shylock's revenge is Antonio. Antonio is the one who has mistreated Shylock, and he (Antonio) has become a symbol for Shylock which represents all Christians and their mistreatment of Jews. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.69]

32 / Your words are filled with grit and passion yet they miss the mark

33 Q1 reads: {*Solanio*. Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be matched unless the devil himself turn Jew.} As mentioned, anti-Semitic remarks 'appendaged' to the text are often found at the end of a line and made as a last remark before a character exits. These add-ons have the feel of being penned in *ex post facto* by someone other than the Author and lack all manner of the art. In this section, a Jew is likened to a *devil* three times [19, 31,73]. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.73]

34 To preserve the integrity of the timeline, much of the interaction between Tubal and Shylock should be deleted, especially the parts indicating a long passage of time, such as Tubal's travel to Genoa and Shylock directing Tubal to find an officer to give Antonio a two-week notice. Such would indicate that over two months had passed (since Antonio borrowed the money); yet, the next scene opens with Bassanio in Belmont, indicating that only two days had passed. The timeline is already stretched out when Shylock talks about Antonio as a bankrupt (who dare show his head on the Rialto) but this could be overlooked by the audience.

35 Genoa is 200+ miles from Venice. More likely, one could mention Padua, which is only 20 miles away.

—Shylock

Why there, there, there, there! ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ Two thousand ducats in that and other precious, precious jewels. I wish^o my daughter were dead at my feet^o and the jewels in her ear! That^o she were hearsed at my foot^o and the ducats in her coffin! ³⁸ 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; ³⁹ nor no ill-luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders, no sighs but of my^o breathing, no tears but of my^o shedding. ^{40 41}

—Tubal

Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

—Shylock

What? What? Tell me, what kind of ill luck? ⁴²

—Tubal

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

—Shylock

I've heard the same.^o I thank God. I thank God. {Is it true, is it true?}

—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?

—Tubal

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night, eighty ducats. ⁴³

—Shylock

Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. ⁴⁴ Eighty ducats in one sitting! Eighty ducats!

36 Stage direction: [*Shylock motions his hands in different directions, indicating a carefree waste of his ducats*]

37 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 but the betrayal of his daughter (and her waste of his hard-earned money) has reached his core and has caused Shylock, for the first time, to feel the curse that fell upon his nation. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.81]

38 {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!} [See Additional Notes, 3.1.81b]

39 Herein Shylock is using the term *thief*—and 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 character and not something he learned from Christian example (as he stated in his famous 'Hath not a Jew eyes?' speech).

40 {nor no ill luck stirring but what lights a my shoulders, no sighs but a my breathing, no tears but a my shedding.}

41 *wish*: {would} *feet*: {foot} *That*: {Would} / I wish *at my foot*: / right here *spent*: / lost / wasted / expended

42 {What, what, what, ill luck, ill luck.} / What? What? Ill luck for Antonio?

This odd repetition of words is also found in line 96 [I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?], and line 99 [I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news. Ha, ha!], as well as 104, 109, and 121.

43 {four score ducats} / eighty 'Four score ducats' is replaced with a more recognizable amount of 'eighty ducats.'

—Tubal

And, in my company to Venice, there came several of Antonio's creditors who swear he cannot chose but break.

break: / go bankrupt / go bust

—Shylock

I am very glad of it. I'll plague him, I'll torture him. I am glad of it.⁴⁵

—Tubal

One of them showed me a ring that he had from your daughter, in exchange for a monkey.

—Shylock

Damn her for it.⁴⁶ Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise. I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a jungle full^o of monkeys.

jungle full: {wilderness} / whole jungle

—Tubal

But Antonio is certainly undone.⁴⁷

—Shylock

Nay, that's true, that's very true. *Go Tubal, get me an officer, and give him a two-week notice.*⁴⁸ I will have the heart of him if he forfeit—for were he out of Venice I can do what business I will.⁴⁹ *Go, Tubal, and meet me at the Rialto. Go, good Tubal; at the Rialto Tubal.*^{50 51 52}

Exeunt

44 Shylock is not lamenting that he will never see his daughter again only that he will never see his gold again. He's too angry at his daughter right now to want to see her again—unless she were dead at his feet with his ducats in her coffin.

45 It may feel odd how Tubal consistently directs the conversation back and forth between Jessica and Antonio.

46 *Damn her for it:* {Out upon her}: Too hell with her.

47 Tubal, again, diverts Shylock from his grief (over his daughter) to something he will be glad of—Antonio's losses.

48 {Bespeak him a fortnight before}. Tell the officer to arrest Antonio in a fortnight (when the bond is due).

This securing of an officer in two weeks (when the bond is due) defies the time frame of the play, as does Tubal's trip to Genoa (which is 200 miles from Venice). As such, it would do no harm to delete it.

49 [See Additional Notes: 3.1.121]

50 {Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.} The intention here is to show that Jews use their synagogue as a place to do business, which is the very thing that Jesus revolted against. Here *synagogue* is changed to the *Rialto* since that is where Shylock does business. [See Additional Notes, 3.1.123]

51 This line is the last of a series of odd lines, spoken by Shylock, where he repeats his words. Other lines include:

What, what, what? Ill luck? Ill luck? [94] I thank God, I thank God. Is it true? Is it true? [96]

I thank thee good Tubal. Good news, good news! [99] Four score ducats at a sitting! Four score ducats! [104]

52 [See Additional Notes, 3.1.124]

Belmont.

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and attendants.

—Portia [*to Bassanio*]

I pray you, tarry.° Pause a day or two ¹	/ linger
Before you hazard, ² for in choosing wrong	
I lose your company. Thus, forbear° awhile.	/ hold back
There's something tells me, but it is not love, ³	/ but I dare not say
I could° not bear to lose you. And you know	{ would }
Disfavor° counsels not in such a way.°	/ Indifference {Hate} // {quality}
But lest you should not understand me well°—	/ fully
And yet this maiden hath no tongue but thought— ⁴	
I would detain° you here some month or two	/ I want to keep
Before you venture for me. I could teach you	
How to choose right, but then I break my oath,°	{ I am forsworn } ⁵
And that will° never be. So, may you miss me.	{ So will I } / thus
But if you do,° you'll make me wish a sin,	> miss me / choose wrong
That I did break my oath.° So blame your eyes, ⁶	{ That I had been foresworn }
They have bewitched° me and divided me: ⁷	{ o'erlooked }
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	{ naughty } / woeful
Bars us from claiming what is rightly ours. ⁸	{ Put bars between the owners and their rights }
And so though yours, not yours. Now make your choice	
And prove it so. And should you choose the wrong ⁹	
Let Fortune go to hell for it, not I.	/ My hopes and dreams will go to hell, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to slow° the time, ¹⁰	{ peize / piece } / weigh

1 Portia bids Bassanio to tarry a day or two; and then suggests that he be detained a month or two so he could learn how to make the right choice. However, Bassanio does not tarry; he makes his choice the day he arrives.

2 *Before you hazard*: Before you make your choice; before you put yourself in harm's way by agreeing to the terms of the contest (and possibly choosing wrong).

3 *But it is not love*: By all accounts it *is* love. It appears that Portia does not allow herself to overtly declare her love for Bassanio (as that might be seen as favoritism) but she keeps describing her love, without actually saying the words.

4 This may indicate that Portia can only think about what she wants (i.e., being with Bassanio) but cannot say anything that would bring this about, that would direct him to choosing the right casket.

5 *I am forsworn*: I have broken 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* where 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).

6 { Beshrew your eyes }

7 { 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: This may refer to the effect that Bassanio's eyes have on Portia (dividing her sentiments, with one part loyal to her obligation, and keeping her vow to her father, with the other part loyal to her heart, wanting to break her vow and help Bassanio).

8 / Bars us from claiming what we rightly own

9 / And so, though yours, still not yours. Make your choice

10 { 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.

To eke° it and to draw it out in length,¹¹
To stay you° from your choice.°

{ech / etch}
/ To hold you {election}

—Bassanio Nay, let me choose,
For as I am, I live upon the rack,
<Stretchèd and tortured with each passing moment.>¹²

—Portia
Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
What treason there° is mingled with your love.

a. / What heresy

—Bassanio
None but the ugly treason° of my doubt,°
Which makes me fear that I might lose my love.¹³
There is more kinship and affinity°
'Tween snow and fire, than treason and my love.¹⁴

b. / blaspheme {mistrust}
/ Where I'm unsure that I will have my love
/ kinship and likeness of kind

—Portia
<You say your love is pure and without treason,°>
Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack
Where men enforcèd do speak° anything.¹⁵

/ and truly taintless
/ will say

—Bassanio
Promise me life and I'll confess the truth.

—Portia
Well then, 'confess and live.'¹⁶

piece the time: draw out, elongate, add pieces to the time (as in seconds, minutes, hours, etc.)

Q1 has *peize* which means, 'to weigh down, and may refer to the slowing of the clock, which is accomplished by hanging heavier weights upon the pendulum. Many editors dismiss this image and take *peize* to be a misspelling of *peise*, meaning to *piece*, augment, or add to. *Piece the time* would mean to add pieces to it, so as to make the time longer. In both cases the meaning is the same: it relates to slowing, weighing down, or adding to the time. Portia, not confident that Bassanio will choose the right casket by his own wit—which would force him to leave at once—wants to hedge her bets and enjoy his company for a little while longer.

11 {To ech it and to draw it out in length} / To draw and eke out every last moment

ech (eke): to prolong, extend, protract, augment, increase. Often used with *out*, as in 'eke out the time.'

12 / I feel as if I'm° stretched upon the rack, / I feel like someone

<Where every moment is another torture.°>

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 (who were accused of treason). The term *rack*, means 'to painfully stretch.' Bassanio, like someone on the rack, is being tortured with every passing moment and, therefore, does not want to eke out the time, as suggested by Portia.

13 {None but the ugly treason of mistrust | Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love}

Bassanio's treason could be in his mistrust of the contest devised by Portia's father, which makes him fear the enjoying of love. And, due to this mistrust, he feels the need to collude with Nerissa to win the contest, to do a little wrong for a great right. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.29]

14 {There may as well be amity and life | 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love}

There is as much kinship between snow and fire (which are opposites) as there is between treason and my love. In other words, there is no treason, deceit, or falsehood mixed with my love—it is pure and taintless. The treason is in my doubt (as to whether or not I will enjoy that love).

15 / Where men compelled do confess anything

Portia is teasingly testing Bassanio, saying that his admission of love may not be sincere since, as he himself admitted, he lives upon the rack and, thus, will make a false confession just to avoid the torture.

16 *confess and live*: an inversion of the proverb, 'Confess and be hanged (die).'

—Bassanio ‘Confess and love,’¹⁷
 Will ever be the sum of my confession.
 (For it is love, e’er love, that I confess.)¹⁸ / For love is all I e’er have to confess
 O happy torturer, now set me free;
 Show me the caskets, let my fortune be.^{19 20} / Now to my choice and let my fortune be

—Portia
 Away then! I am locked in one of them:
 If you do love me, you will find me out.²¹
 Nerissa and the rest, stand all aback.^o {aloof}
 Let music sound while he doth make his choice.²²
 Then if he lose, he’ll make a swan-like end,²³ / die just like a swan
 Fading in music. That the metaphor^o {comparison}
 May stand more true,^o my tears^o shall be the stream^o {proper} {my eyes}
 And^o wat’ry deathbed for him. Should he win,^o / The {He may win}
 And what is music then? Then music is
 The teeming flourish^o of joyous^o cornets / fanfare // sparkling
 That play to honor a new-crownèd monarch;
 Or like the dulcet^o sounds at break of day / ambrosial
 That creep into^o the dreaming bridegroom’s ear / fall upon
 And summon him to marriage.^o Now he goes, / And call him sweetly to wed
 With no less grandeur,^o but with much more love,²⁴ {presence}
 Than youthful Hercules when he rescued {young Alicides when he did redeem}

17 This wordplay, where Portia says, ‘Confess and live’ and Bassanio responds with ‘Confess and love’ is unclear. It seems to indicate that Bassanio’s only confession is ‘love.’ {This is the very sum of my confession} In this rectification it is made clear that ‘love’ is Bassanio’s only confession. Alternatively, this wordplay could be entirely replaced with:

Portia: Well then, confess the truth and you shall live. *Bas:* Love is the only truth I do confess.

18 {Had been the very sum of my confession} / ‘Love’ is the very sum ... / ‘Love’ is the only truth ...
 / For love is all I have for my confession / The only thing that I confess is love / For love is all I hold true to confess

19 {O happy torment, when my torturer | Doth teach me answers for deliverance}

In the original it is unclear how Portia doth teach Bassanio the answers needed for deliverance. It is possible, however, that these lines could be a response to Nerissa, who is Bassanio’s torturer, and who just gave Bassanio the nod indicating that he has fulfilled the agreed-upon condition and that she will teach him the answers for deliverance. i.e., give him the clue he needs to win the contest and Portia.

O happy torment: the torment is happy because it will soon be over [See Additional Notes, 3.2.38]

20 At this point it is certain that Portia loves Bassanio. In a possible staging (consistent with the notion that Bassanio will receive help from Nerissa if he is able to win Portia’s love) Bassanio could look over toward Nerissa, asking with his eyes, ‘Is this enough? ‘Is it clear that she loves me?’ After he gets an approving nod from Nerissa (and the assurance of her help) he wants to make his choice immediately. As part of their plan, Nerissa now has to convey to Bassanio which casket to choose. In a possible staging she could exhort him to the caskets, arm in arm—and, as previously agreed—but not necessarily seen by the audience—she could squeeze his arm once for gold, two for silver, three for lead.

21 *If you do love me:* The contest was designed to find Portia a man who would truly love her. Portia has been resisting the ‘wisdom’ of her father’s contest, uncertain that such a scheme will find one who truly loves her—and also, uncertain, that it will find someone whom she truly loves. But now, not able to intervene or prolong, Portia surrenders to her fate and her father’s will. Her words, *If you do love me, you will find me out* are more likely a hopeful prayer than a confirmation of her father’s wisdom. *find me out:* find the casket that holds my picture

22 This is not a directive for the musicians to begin playing. They could, however, begin playing some kind of musical interlude and go into their song when instructed to do so later in the scene.

23 {Then if he lose he makes a swan-like end} / Then if he lose he’ll play a dying swan

a swan-like end: swans were associated with music and were believed to sing a song (a swan-song) before they died. This belief was also found in Plato, Euripedes, and Aristotle, and commonly held as true during Shakespeare’s time: “It is said of the learned, that the swan, a little before her death, sings most pleasantly, as prophesied by a secret instinct her near destiny.” *Shepherd’s Calendar* (1597). The use of the term *swan song*, which is based on this supposition, now refers to the last great thing a person does before dying or the final work of a person’s life. 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.

24 / With no less dignity but much more love

The virgin tribute²⁵ paid by weeping Troy^o
 To the sea-monster.²⁶ Now I'm the sacrifice.^o
 The rest aback are the women of Troy^o ²⁷
 Who now^o come forth^o with bleareð visages ²⁸
 To view the outcome^o of this grand exploit.
 Go Hercules! ²⁹ If thou live, I will live: ³⁰
 But here I view the fight with more dismay^o
 Then thou, the hero, who makest the fray.³¹

/ sacr'fice {howling Troy}
 {I stand for sacrifice}
 / around me are the Trojan wives
 / here // approach
 {issue}
 / I view the fight with more dismay

A song while Bassanio reflects on the caskets. ^{32 33 34}

[—Singer]
 Tell me, where is fancy bred,
 In ^o the heart or in the head?
 How begot, how nourishèd? ³⁵

{Or in} > Either in
 / Eas'ly lost or eas'ly led?

[—Chorus]
 Tell me, tell me.^o

{Reply, reply}

[—Singer]
 'Tis engendered in the eyes,^o
 With gazing fed all fancy dies^o
 In the cradle, where it lies.^o

/ Dull and heavy in the eyes

Let us all ring fancy's knell, ³⁶

25 Refers to Hercules's rescue of the virgin princess Hesione From Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.56] *with much more love*: Hercules did not rescue Hesione out of love but for payment. Portia is bringing up this story, but then saying that Bassanio (coming with the same grandeur/ presence 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—so she believes. Hercules's agreed-upon reward for saving Hesione was not her hand in marriage but her father's magical horses.

26 {The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy}

virgin tribute: only after the virgin princess was offered as a sacrifice to the sea-monster would the ravages and floods afflicting Troy be appeased. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.58]

27 {The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives}

28 *blearèd visages*: tearful eyes

29 {With bleareð visages come forth to view | The issue of th'exploit. Go Hercules.}

30 {Live thou, I live} The sense is that if Hercules lives—and does not die in his attempt to rescue Hesione—then she will live. Thus, if Bassanio wins (lives) then Portia will be rescued (and live the life she wants.)

31 {Live thou, I live. With much much more dismay | I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.}

32 The original stage direction reads: *A song whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself*. This could imply that the song is played *whilst* Bassanio is commenting on the caskets (and directing his comments to himself). This, of course, would prevent him from hearing the words of the song (and any hint that might be contained therein.) However, the line *comments on the caskets to himself* is commonly understood to mean that he silently ponders and reflects on the caskets while the song is playing.

33 Some commentators hold that Bassanio may have received help on which casket to choose from the rhyme scheme of the song, where the last word of the first three lines of the song all rhyme with *lead*. However, without Bassanio being 'tipped off' to listen carefully to the last word of each line such a hint would be lost on him. Some productions put special emphasis on the words in the song that rhyme with *lead*. (One production has it where Bassanio hears the song and is about to choose the wrong casket, so the song is played again, with special emphasis on all the words that rhyme with *lead*.)

34 The song is uninspired and no melody has survived. If a production does not use it to overtly tip off Bassanio then it could be replaced with another song or with some background instrumental.

35 {Tell me where is fancy bred,} / Tell me where does loving start,

{Or in the heart, or in the head?} / In the head or in the heart?

{How begot, how nourishèd?} / Does it bind or rend apart?

Apart from the rhyme scheme, the words of the verses may also provide a clue in their warning against the fancy of the eyes, i.e., the gold and silver caskets. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.65] [See: *Essays, The Lottery*].

[spoken] I'll begin it: [sung] *Ding, dong, bell.*

[—Chorus]
*Ding, dong, bell,*³⁷

—Bassanio [*to the gold casket*]³⁸

So may the outward shows be least themselves.³⁹ / Those who show most without are least within
The world is e'er° deceived° by ornament.°⁴⁰ {still} // grand displays
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt / argued with a glib and gracious voice
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice, / act
Obscures the show° of evil? In religion, / {error}
What damnèd act° does not become a blessing / When some dry scholar sanction it with scripture
When sober brows approve it with a text {Hiding the grossness}
Hiding gross error° with fair ornament? / no vice as it is
There is no vice so simple° but assumes°⁴¹ / weak // have hearts that would crumble
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts. {stayers} / Like stairs
How many cowards, whose hearts are as false° / fearless
As stairs° of sand, wear yet upon their chins / searched within
The beards of Hercules and frowning° Mars; / {To render them redoubted}
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk, / {Which therein works}
And but assume the outer show of valor⁴² / who apply the most
To render them most fearful.° Look on beauty {snaky}
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight— / {Upon supposed fairness, often known}
A cream that works° a miracle of nature,⁴³ / {the dowry of} / bestowed them from
Making them fairest who wear most of it.° / outer show // tempting
So are those crispèd, flowing,° golden locks, / threatening
Which maketh such wanton gambols with the wind. / {Veiling an Indian beauty} / a darkened visage
But this supposed beauty,° known to be°
The hair begotten from° a second head
The skull now lost in some forgotten grave.⁴⁴

36 {*Let us all ring fancy's knell.*} > Let us all put an end to fancy, ornament, ostentation

knell: a death bell, the solemn bell marking a death

An alternative wording to the song could be used; this also gives a hint as to which casket to choose:

Alt: *Let the sun of fancy set, / I'll begin—and you beget, / So we will, but not quit yet*

Chorus: *What you give is what you get.*

37 [See Additional Notes, 3.2.72, for facsimile of Q1 original]

38 Orson Wells made the fanciful suggestion 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 be sure that the winning casket was lead.

39 / The outer display e're belies the inner

40 {The world is still deceived with ornament}

still: always, ever; has always been *ornament*: lavish outer display

41 {No vice so simple but assumes} > No vice that is as it is (a vice), as nowadays it assumes the appearance of virtue.

42 {And these assume but valour's excrement} / They but assume the outer shows of valor / a valiant outer show

valour's excrement: refers to facial hair (as hair was seen as a waste product). This is a specific reference to beards that are associated with men of valour.

43 {Which therein works a miracle of nature} / when plied upon the face does wonders

44 {The skull that breed them in the supluche} / The skull now resting in a distant grave

T'entrap^o the wisest. Therefore, gaudy gold, / To trap / To snare
 Hard food that Midas could not hope to eat,^{45 46}
 I will have none of thee; nor none of silver:
 Thou art the drudge of pale and common coin
 That pass between the greedy^o hands of men. / grasping / grudging
 But thou, thou meager lead, which rather^o threatens / herein
 Than dost give promise of profit or gain,
 Thy plainness^o moves me more than eloquence.⁴⁷ {paleness}
 ‹I do not seek not to *gain* as shown by gold,
 Neither to *get* as promised^o by the silver, / offered
 But e'er^o to *give* as required^o by lead. / Only // demanded
 Here, here chose I. When all is done and said^o / When everything is said
 A heart that giveth all is ne'er misled.^o 48 / He who giveth all can ne'er be misled

—Portia [*aside*] ⁴⁹

How all the other passions fleet to air,
 As^o doubtful thoughts and rash-embraced despair; / First gone is doubt then rash-embraced despair
 And shudd'ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy—
 O love be sparing, ease^o thy ecstasy. {allay}
 In measure rein^o thy joy, scant^o this excess!⁵⁰ {raine} / rain // tame
 I feel too much thy blessings,^o make it less.⁵¹ / For I fear surfeit, please
 [For I fear surfeit] ⁵²

—Bassanio [*opening the leaden casket*]

What find I here? A portrait of fair Portia.^o {Fair Portia's counterfeit}
 What demigod hath come so near to creation?⁵³

45 / You're as worthless to me as hardened food | That greedy Midas could not hope to eat
 46 {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; 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, a common rectification would read: *T'entrap the wisest. T'fore thou gaudy gold.*

Hard food for Midas: Refers to the legend of King Midas who was granted the wish that everything he touched would turn to gold—which, unfortunately, included his food and drink. Thus, gold, which in normal circumstance would have great value, was in this instance was the hard (and worthless) food that Midas could not eat.

47 The original ends with a two-line rhyme schema:
 {Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence | And here chose I. Joy be the consequence!}

In this rendition, Bassanio's soliloquy is amended with three lines that reveal the secret to solving the riddle: a man of the heart (who will truly love Portia) is selfless, inclined to *give* and *sacrifice* (as offered by lead) and not to *gain* or *get* (as promised by silver and gold). In addition, two more lines are added to indicate his selection of the lead casket.

48 / Here, here I choose: when all is said and done | A heart that gives all has already won

49 The next six lines are cartoonish and not anything we would find in real life. They weaken Portia's character and, in most cases, should be deleted. These lines, though amiss, are not intolerable or character-ruining like the lines found in the next section (where Portia portrays herself as an unschooled girl and commits herself to Bassanio as her lord and king). [See Additional Notes, 3.2.113]

50 *in measure:* in limited and controlled amounts, as not to flood or overwhelm

raine: hold back, rein in. This can also be understood as *raine*, meaning to rain down or pour forth. In both instances the meaning would be the same, as Portia is asking for her joy to be held back or poured forth in measure.

51 / How all my passions fleet upon the air: | First gone is doubt, then rash-embraced despair;

/ This fear and monstrous jealousy be gone | O love, be kind—don't turn more pleasure on.

/ In measure rein thy joy, tame this excess; / For I fear surfeit—please make it less!

52 {For fear I surfeit} This line, as it appears in the original, is truncated and out of place. It might have been part of the previous line in a possible draft: *For I fear surfeit—please make it less*

An additional set of rhyming lines—expressing a more positive sentiment—could be added here:

/ And in the waves of love's ocean I'm lost: | Beyond all hope, and ignoring all cost

/ And in the heat of love's fire I'm swelting | Lost in the blessedness of mine own melting

That° makes this image ride upon my eyes / To make
Such that it seems to move and yet move not? ⁵⁴
And here, her gentle lips lay slightly open
Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a breath° { a bar } / an air/ wisp
Should sunder such sweet friends.⁵⁵ And in her hair
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh t'entrap the hearts of men
Faster than⁵⁶ gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
How could he see to do them? Having made one,
Methinks its beauty° should steal both his eyes ⁵⁷ / power
And leave the work undone.° {itself unfurnished}
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow° / picture
In underprizing it, so far this shadow° / just as this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance <of her beauty°>. ⁵⁸ / fair Portia
And here's the scroll, the summ'ry of my fortune: ⁵⁹ / that tells my fate and fortune:

*You that° choose not by the view, / Thou who
Chance as fair° and choose as true. / Take fair chance
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well-pleased with this,
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn ye toward your loving miss {Turn you where your lady is}
And claim her with a loving kiss.⁶⁰*

A gentle° scroll! Fair lady, by your leave, / kindly
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Just like a fighter who obtains the prize, {Like one of two contending in a prize}

53 / What artist, possessing the spectral power | Of demigods hath come so near creation?
/ What demigod has fashioned such a portrait| That comes so near to God's own creation?

54 {Move these eyes | Or whither riding on the balls of mine | Seem they in motion?}
This line is uncertain and could be deleted.

55 { . . . Here are severed lips | Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a bar | Should sunder such sweet friends }

56 *faster than*: a) more quickly than, b) more securely than (as in 'bind fast')

57 {Methinks it should power to steal both his }

58 These lines can be summarized as follows: Look at how the substance (full measure) of my praise doth wrong this shadow (picture) in underprizing it (in not fully describing its beauty), just as this shadow (portrait) doth limp behind (doth underprize, does not compare with, does not do justice to) the substance (the real beauty of Portia).

Bassanio is invoking the Neo-platonic theme of opposites employing the contrasting concepts of *substance* and *shadow*.

In this speech, Bassanio never mentions Portia by name nor does he reveal any feelings of exuberation or love *for her*. All his praise is about her picture; his reference to her as "the substance" is as far as his compliments go. This is more of the same indirect, non-compliments of Portia we find later in the scene, most of which should be deleted. One would do best to keep the first and last lines of this speech and delete the rest.

59 {Here's the scroll, | The continent° and summary of my fortune} / container [See Additional Notes, 3.2.129]

60 It is not clear as to when—if ever—Bassanio claims Portia *with a loving kiss*. Some productions, concurring with Rowe, have Bassanio claim Portia (with a loving kiss) at the end of this line (*I come by note, to give and to receive*) and after handing her the note. This timing is doubtful since, later in the same passage, Bassanio tells of his confusion, his unsureness, and so he would not have been in a position to claim Portia before that time. 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 the original there is no stage direction for the kiss nor any indication as to when such a kiss would take place. We cannot say for sure that one is even given at all. If looking for a Hollywood ending, the kiss could come at the very end of the play.) A truer account would be if the kiss never comes, suggesting that Portia was never truly 'claimed' by Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.138]

Who thinks he hath done well in the people's eyes,^o / seems triumphant in the people's eyes
 Hearing applause and universal shout^o / and an echoing shout
 Giddy in spirit, yet gazing in doubt,
 Whether those clam'ring cheers^o be his or no, {peals of praise}
 So, thrice-fair lady stand I even so,⁶¹
 Yet doubtful^o whether what I see be true, {As doubtful} / Still doubting
 Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.⁶²

—Portia

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 Such as I am. Though, for myself alone,^o / when it comes to me
 I would not be so daring^o in my wish {ambitious}
 To wish myself much better, yet for you⁶³
 I would be tripled^o twenty times myself;⁶⁴ {trebled}
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
 More rich, that I, in beauty, dignity,
 Comfort,^o and virtue might exceed account.⁶⁵ {Livings} / Friendship
 But the full sum of me is sum^o of something / all
 <That's yet to be complete.> To term^o more fully:^o ⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ / To state {To term in gross}
 I'm^o an unlessoned^o girl, unschooled, unpracticed;^o {Is} // unfinished
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old
 But she may learn^o; and happier than this, / grow
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
 Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours, to be directed
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.
 <And now my love I say this unto you:>
 Myself and what is mine, to you and yours, / Myself and what is mine I now impart
 I now impart.^o But now I was the lord {Is now converted}
 Of this fair mansion,^o master of my servants, / of this estate
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,⁶⁸
 This house, these servants, and my very self,^o / and my every thing
 Are yours, my lord.^o ⁶⁹ I give them with this ring. {my lord's}

61 Bassanio's confused metaphor, invoking the image of cheering crowds, is similarly expressed, again, later in the scene. Both of these cheering-crowd metaphors are abstract, impersonal, and taxing. As such, both can be deleted.

62 Why is Bassanio still unsure of whether or not he has won the prize? Did he not understand the terms of the contest? Perhaps he is seeking assurance that he has not only won the contest (which is obvious) but that he has also won Portia's heart and the fullness of her love (which is not assured by the contest). Or, his expression of doubt and confusion could just be a cover for his lack of love for Portia or his inability to express it. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.148]

63 / I am content and would not dare to wish | That I, myself, be better, yet for you

64 {I would be trebled twenty times myself} / I would have myself tripled twenty times

65 {More rich, that only to stand high in your account} The original line contains six iambs.

[See Additional Notes, 3.2.155]

66 { . . . But the full summe of me | Is sume of something: which, to term in gross }

some (or *sum*): Q1 has *sume* which can be read as *sum* or *some*. Both readings, though differing in nuance, are essentially the same, both diminutive and somewhat self-deprecating: [See Additional Notes, 3.2.158]

67 {to term in gross} : in sum, to say in full, to tell you the whole story, to tell you (the whole) truth. *Gross* might also refer to blunt honesty, and frankness, and could be akin to such an expression as 'to say in all honesty.'

/ But the full sum of me is but a part | Of something, which, to tell you the whole truth

68 This section is weak with the word "now" repeated four times. One could delete it without a loss.

She holds up the ring

Which, when^o you part from, lose, or give away, / if
'Twill mark the ruin of your love, I say,^o / {Let it presage the ruin of your love}
And give me cause to scold you out^o all day.⁷⁰ / chastise you

She places the ring on Bassanio's finger

—Bassanio
Madam, you have bereft me of all words;^o / but stolen all my words
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins. / All that can speak is the blood in my veins.
<But this I vow unto you:>
 And there is such confusion in my powers,^o / speech / words / breath
 As after some oration, fairly spoke {fairly spoke}
 By a belovèd prince—that doth appear
 Among the buzzing, pleasèd multitude—
 Where every sound being blended together
 Turns to a roar^o of the most joyful silence, {wild} // of silence, full of joy
 That all can hear yet not hear.⁷¹ When this ring {Expressed yet not expressed}
Parts from my finger, life will part instead
Then be so bold to say, 'Bassanio's dead.'⁷²

—Nerissa
My lord and lady, it is now our time.
We have stood by and seen our wishes prosper;
Now we cry, 'joy!^o Good joy, my lord and lady!' {To cry 'Good joy'}

—Gratziano
My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that one^o can wish, {you}/ I

69 The part of this passage where Portia commits herself to Bassanio like an unschooled girl, to be directed by him as her "her lord, her governor, and king," is disturbingly out of character. To protect the integrity of Portia's character, these lines should be deleted. We see that this passage ends, not with more misplaced devotion but with a test, which she is somewhat sure that Bassanio will fail: "*I give them with this ring, which **when** you part from, lose, or give away ...*"

70 {And be my vantage to exclaim on you} / And give me reason to scold you all day.

vantage: just cause, give me cause, advantage, a good reason.

to exclaim: yell at, rail, scold, etc. (*ex-claim*: give up your claim on me.)

The triplicate rhyme scheme found in this emendation is somewhat odd. This could be "corrected" by changing the wording of the first line (so it does not rhyme with "ay") or deleting the third line. [See Additional Note, 3.2.174]

71 This part of the discourse, where Bassanio describes the "confusion in his powers" and why he cannot speak, would best be deleted. Portia expresses her love to Bassanio, and the joy that their union will bring, but when his turn comes he is unable to reply with any show of love at all, just a long and confusing discourse about the buzzing cheers of a crowd. He lavishes praise on her portrait, but not on her. His soliloquy in front of the casket is about deception not love, with not one mention of Portia.

Previously, when Bassanio is unsure that he has won Portia [141-45] he uses the imagery of a crowd cheering for its champion. Here, after it's confirmed that he has won his prize, he again invokes the impersonal imagery of a cheering crowd rather than something personal, something to ratify his love for Portia.

Why is there such confusion in Bassanio's powers, in his ability to articulate how he feels? He is insinuating that he loves Portia, that he is speechless with joy, yet never in all his words and long-winded metaphors does he confirm and/or ratify his love for her. Either he cannot express his love for Portia or, more likely, he does not have real love to express.

72 {But when this ring | Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence | O then be bold to say, 'Bassanio's dead.'}

[See Additional Notes, 3.2.185]

For I am sure you'd wish the same for me.° {you can wish none from me.}
 And when your honours mean to seal with vows° {solemnize} / celebrate
 The pledging° of your faith, I do beseech you {bargain}/ contract
 E'en at that time, I may be wed as well.° {I may be married too}

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

—Gratziano
 I thank your lordship, you° have got me one. / I

Taking Nerissa's hand

My eyes, my lord, can look° as swift as yours: / find
 You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
 You loved, I loved—forgoing all delay⁷³ / avoiding
 No more pertains to you, my lord, than me.
 Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
 And so did mine too, as the matter falls.^{74 75}
 For I did woo until I poured° with sweat, / ran
 And swearing till° my very roof went dry /swore until
 With oaths of love, at last—if promise last—
 I got a promise of this fair one here,
 To have her love, provided 'twas your fate° {that your fortune}
 To win° her mistress.⁷⁶ {Achieved}

—Portia Is this true, Nerissa?

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

—Bassanio
 And do you, Gratziano, speak in truth?° {mean good faith}

—Gratziano
 In truth,° my lord. {Yes, 'faith} / In faith

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

73 {for intermission} / for taking such a break

74 {And so did mine too, as the matter falls} / And like as well, as fate would fall, did mine.

75 / You loved the one, and I did love the other; | And neither you, my lord, nor I, could bear | A long delay. Your fortune stood upon | Your choice, so too, as fate would fall, did mine.

76 Gratziano was bound by Nerissa's fateful terms: only if Bassanio chooses the right casket (and won Portia) would Gratziano and Nerissa be together. Why were such terms imposed by Nerissa? And how did she become so sure that there would be a positive outcome for all? [See Additional Note, 3.2.196]

—Gratziano [*to Nerissa*]

We'll place a wager^o for a thousand ducats
That the first boy be ours.

{play with them}

—Nerissa

What, and stake down?

—Gratziano

No, we shall ne'er win that bet with stake down!^{o 77 78}

77 {No, we shall ne'er win at that sport and stake down}

stake down: to lay down money (on a table) to cover a bet. The term is similarly used in 'staking one's claim.' In the first instance (as used by Nerissa) *stake down* means to place down money to cover a wager; in the second instance, as used here, the phrase refers to a male *stake*. Gratziano is saying that they can never win the wager (to have the first boy) with his *stake down* (as opposed to up). Many productions have Gratziano play out this bawdy imagery by holding a stick or a stretched piece of fabric in the position of an erection and then lowering it when he mentions that they cannot win the bet with his *stake down*.

78 In the original play, Salerio enters here with the bad news that Antonio's bond was forfeited. There's a problem with the timeline (which will be discussed later) but apart from that, what was Bassanio thinking, or not thinking, to have let Antonio's bond forfeit? It is likely that Bassanio just assumed—based on the previous assurances from Antonio—and having heard no word from Antonio—that the bond was already paid. In addition, Bassanio could have been taken in by all that was happening in Belmont, so much so that he never inquired about the status of Antonio's bond—again, just assuming it was already paid or, perhaps thinking, that if there ever was a problem, he could get to it later. In any case, Bassanio is implicated in gross negligence. His plan was to pay Antonio back (for this loan and all the other loans) which is something he should have done forthwith, months before the bond expired.

Through Gratziano is never the adult in the room he could broach the subject of the bond as they are exiting:

Gra: What will you do about Antonio's bond?

Bas: There will be plenty time to think on that.

For now, my friend, we should enjoy our fortune | And celebrate the fair ostents of love.

Exuent

Act 3, Scene 3 [In Venice, with Shylock, Antonio, and the Jailor]

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and others ³

—Gratiano

This celebration has been going on
And on for months now. *I* am finally spent.

—Nerissa

I'm sore to think it will go on much longer.^o / how long it will go on

—Gratiano

The mast was up on our trip to Cadiz;
The wind blew hard in Athens and in Nice.⁴
For sure we'll win that wager for a boy.

—Nerissa

I only wish we'd staken down some more.⁵

1 The play's troublesome collapse of time is most keenly felt here, with the sudden coming of bad news from Venice (which indicates that three months have passed since Antonio signed the bond.) According to the apparent timeline, Bassanio receives money from Shylock, makes preparations, and leaves for Belmont that same day. (This timeline of events is also confirmed by the stealing away of Jessica, which was planned for in the opening scene of the play, and which happened on the same day that Bassanio secured the money and left for Belmont.) Bassanio then arrives in Belmont the next morning and, without delay chooses the right casket and wins Portia. The whole of the action takes place within two days but now we hear that Antonio has forfeited his bond, which means that three months have passed. This collapse of time breaks with reality and is something that the Author burdens the audience to tolerate and/or excuse. One way to rectify this problem would be to have everyone exit here (off to the dual wedding feast and celebration); then play out Act 3, Scene 3; then come back to this scene. A few lines could be inserted to indicate the passage of time, or some kind of staging could take place to suggest that, such as endless celebrations, Bassanio lost in his new responsibilities, etc. (This would be a lot easier to pull off in a film than in a play.) [See; Essays: *Time Warp*]

2 Since the three months magically disappear, one way to rectify the play would be to employ the magic of a naughty spirit who puts everyone to sleep for three months:

The couples walk over to a table for their feast. A naughty spirit enters with his wand and puts a spell on their drinks which causes everyone to fall into a deep slumber. Act 3, Scene 3 is played out on the far side of the stage, while the couples sleep. Everyone wakes up, looks around, and brushes off the dust that has settled on their clothes. Enter Servant.

Gratiano: How long have we been lost away in slumber?

Nerissa: It could be days or weeks, or more like months;
I just don't know.

Servant: It's been three months my lady.

We tried our best to wake you but could not.

3 The couples could enter normally or be accompanied by servants who carry in luggage, suggesting that they are arriving back in Belmont after a trip abroad.

4 Including talk of travel to foreign ports tells us that the couples were away from Belmont on an extended honeymoon. If Bassanio was in Belmont during that time, Antonio could have easily delivered a message telling him that the bond would default in two weeks or so, thus giving Bassanio plenty of time to reach Venice and pay for the bond. In his description of travel Gratiano could put an emphasis on the words *up* and *hard* while Nerissa responds with an emphasis on *down*.

5 The pun is the same as mentioned by Gratiano in the previous scene. Since they are going to win the wager, Nerissa wishes they had wagered (staken down) more, while at the same time she wishes that Gratiano's stake was down more.

—Gratziano
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel.
What? And my old Venetian friend Salerio.⁶

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

—Bassanio
Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither—
And by the power of my new interest here
I take the liberty to bid you all {I bid my very friends and countrymen}
The warmest welcome.⁷

—Portia As do I, my lord.
We welcome you with all sincerity.⁸ {They are entirely welcome}

—Lorenzo
I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here,
But having met⁹ Salerio by the way^o {But meeting with} // road
He did entreat me past all saying ‘nay’
To come along with him.

—Salerio I did, my lord,
And with good cause: Signoir Antonio sends a. {And I have reason for it. Signoir Antonio}
An urgent message.⁹ b. {Commends him to you} / Sends you a message

He gives Bassanio the letter

—Bassanio Ere I ope his letter / But before I read it
I pray you, tell me, how my good friend doth.¹⁰ / fairs

—Salerio
Not sick, my lord, but ill in mind and spirit.¹¹

6 Salerio needs to be introduced here by name and by reference (Venetian) because this is the first time the audience sees the character. [See *Essays: The Sallies: Salarino, Salanio, and Salerio*]

7 The original passage speaks of the ‘youth’ of Bassanio’s interest. It has been emended to take into account that three months have passed. In addition the lines are awkward in that Bassanio uses the word ‘welcome’ three times and his focus shifts from his friends to Portia midstream:

{If that the youth of my new interest here | Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave

I bid my very friends and countrymen, | Sweet Portia, welcome.}

8 The original line contains four iambs and is addressed to Bassanio; here it contains five and is addressed to the guests.

9 Salerio does not offer any reason for bringing along Lorenzo; he certainly could have delivered the message without help. It could be that Salerio knew that Lorenzo was Bassanio’s good friend and that he might be of comfort to him when he gets the devastating news.

10 Bassanio, completely aloof to the date that the bond expires, is asking about how Antonio is doing rather than the fate of the bond. Three months have passed and Bassanio never once inquired about the status of Antonio’s bond. As mentioned, we can assume, then, that he just assumed—based on the previous assurances from Antonio—and having heard no word from Antonio—that the bond was paid. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.231]

11 {Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind, | Nor well, unless in mind}

Salerio’s response is vague. It could mean something like: Not sick but in a desperate state of mind (sick in mind); and not well unless in mind (unless he uses his mind to imagine something well.) Some commenters interpret {unless in mind} to mean: ‘unless his fortitude allows him to suffer his misfortune’ (Kittredge); ‘unless he is comforted by fortitude’ (Brown); ‘unless he has the fortitude to sustain him’ (Mahood).

His letter there will tell of his condition.^o

{show you his estate}

Bassanio opens the letter

—Gratziano

Nerissa, cheer our guest and bid her welcome.
Your note,^o Salerio. What news from Venice?
How is^o that royal merchant,¹⁴ good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success:
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

{cheer yon stranger}¹²

{hand}¹³ / help

{doth} / does

/ Like Jason, we have won the golden fleece

—Salerio

I wish you'd won the fleece that he hath lost.¹⁵
[I loathe to say that all his ships are gone.^o]¹⁶

{would}

/ his fleet of ships is gone

—Portia [*seeing Bassanio*]

There are some vile^o contents in yond same letter
That steals the color from Bassanio's cheek.
Some dear friend dead?—else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution^o¹⁸
Of such a^o constant man.¹⁹ What, worse and worse?
With leave,^o Bassanio, I am half yourself
And I must freely have the half of all^o
That this same paper brings you.

{shrewd}¹⁷

/ favored disposition

{any}

/ O please

{anything} / whate'er

—Bassanio

O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the most dreadful^o words
That ever blotted paper. Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, (that I had nothing but^o
The favored status of) a gentleman.^o
And what I spoke was true.^{o20} And yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see,
How much I was a braggart.^o When I told you^o

{unpleasant'st}

/ Came from the favored status of my birth

/ From my position as a gentleman

{And then I told you true}

/ overstated // said

12 Jessica, who was previously called 'infidel' is here referred to as 'stranger'—meaning an outsider, i.e., non-Christian.

13 *your hand*: a) the note or news you carry in your hand

14 *that royal merchant*: This address is somewhat aloof. Had Salerio been a friend of Antonio (as are Salarino and Salanio), Gratziano might have said, "How is our good friend, Antonio?"

15 *Fleece* is a pun on *fleets*: I wish you had won the fleece [fleets] that he hath lost

16 A line is added here for clarification.

17 {There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper}

shrewd: often interpreted to mean 'evil,' 'cursed,' 'unfortunate,' 'harmful, etc. but could also mean sharp or cutting. If taken at face value it could mean 'clever' or 'crafty' in that the words are able to steal away the color from Bassanio's face.

18 Could so forcibly change the disposition / Could, with such force, disrupt the steady nature

19 *constant man*: steady, unwavering, steadfast

Portia is describing Bassanio as a constant man. She is not yet aware of his true character as an irresponsible spendthrift who is not constant enough to keep his vows. She is still holding to her idealized version of him.

20 Bassanio told Portia that the only wealth he had ran in his veins yet, in the context of Bassanio appearing to have substantial wealth (all from borrowed money) she would not have taken his claim literally but perhaps metaphorically, as a gesture of humility. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.254]

My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for indeed
I borrowed money from my dearest friend,
And bound my friend to his worst enemy,²¹
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,
The paper is^o the body of my friend { as }
And every word in it a gaping wound
Issuing life-blood. But it is true, Salerio?
Hath all his ventures failed? What,^o not one hit?^o ²² / With
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Africa,^o and India— { Barbary }
And not one vessel ‘scaped^o the dreadful touch { ‘scape }
Of merchant-marring rocks?

—Salerio Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear that if he had
The present money to discharge^o the Jew / repay
He would not take it. Never did I know / have I known
A creature that did bear the shape of man
So keen and greedy to destroy^o a man. { confound }
He plies^o the Duke at morning and at night / spurs
And reprimands^o the freedom of the state { doth impeach }
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port have all tried^o to dissuade him^o / toiled { all persuaded with him }
But none can drive him from the vengeful^o plea { envious }
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

—Jessica ²³
I heard he swore^o to Tubal and the others ²⁴ { I heard him swear }
That he would rather have Antonio’s flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, the Duke,^o and power deny not { authority }
It will go hard with^o poor Antonio. / on

—Portia
Is it your dear friend who is thus in trouble?

21 { I have engaged myself to a dear friend | Engaged my friend to his mere enemy } *mere*: worst, fullest

22 [See Additional Notes, 3.2.265]

23 Portia may suspect that Jessica is Jewish from her appearance and from Gratiano’s former address—*Lorenzo and his infidel*—yet she has no way of knowing that she is the daughter of the ‘Jew’ whom Salerio is so loathsomely describing. From this reference, however, it would become clear that Jessica is related to the ‘Jew’ in question.

24 The original reads: { When I was with him I have heard him swear | To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen. }

Jessica’s account is unlikely since Shylock began swearing and making oaths to have his bond (and go hard on Antonio) *after* Jessica betrayed him and only after it became a possibility that Antonio might forfeit. She could have heard about this from others, in which case the line, *I heard he swore* would be more fitting. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.283]

—Bassanio

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The most beloved^o and unwearied^o spirit
In serving others;^o also one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

{best-conditioned} / generous
{in doing courtesies}
/ Embodies more of ancient Roman honor
/ Than any man who draws breath in Italia

—Portia

What sum owes he the Jew?

—Bassanio

Three thousand ducats.

—Portia

<A mere three thousand ducats> —what, no more?
Pay him six thousand and deface^o the bond.
Double six thousand and then triple^o that²⁵
Before a friend of this description^o
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's mistake.^o
Don't linger on; we'll have the carriage ready.^o²⁶
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.²⁷
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself, meantime,
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away,
For you shall hence upon this very day.^o²⁸
Since you were bought at O so dear a price
I'll bear the wait for love^o not once but twice.²⁹³⁰

<And such a meager sum>—what, nothing more?
/ annul
{treble}
/of such kindness and worth
{fault}
{First go with me to church and call me 'wife'}

/ Meanwhile, my good Nerissa and myself

{upon your wedding day} / before the end of day
/ at such a heavy price
/ you

—Gratziano

But let us hear the letter from Antonio.³¹

25 Portia is offering to resolve the issue with a show of more and more money. At this point she not convinced of Shylock's resolve to take Antonio's flesh even after hearing from Salerio [270-2] and Jessica [284-5] that no amount of money would cause 'the Jew' to 'deface' the bond.

26 {First go with me to church and call me 'wife'} The original line should be used if the time-frame remains uncorrected and if Bassanio and Portia are not yet wed. If the couples have been abroad for three months then use the emended line.

27 Again, Portia is not convinced of Shylock's true intention, nor that the bond cannot be cured with wealth, even though this is the specific number that Jessica previously mentioned, saying, *That he would rather have Antonio's flesh | Than twenty times the value of the sum | That he did owe him.* [284-6]

28 If extending the time frame, the original {For you shall hence upon your wedding day} would need to be replaced.

29 {Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer | Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.}

Some commentators are troubled by this closing line, feeling that it's insensitive; yet, as Bassanio is rushing away on his wedding day, Portia has every reason to be upset. This line marks the turning-point in the way Portia addresses Bassanio: before this it is all love, afterwards it is all scolding. Bassanio being 'dearly bought,' means that Portia paid a high price for him—not only in terms of all her father's wealth, but emotionally, having had to submit herself to her father's will and, thus, being in constant fear of having to marry a suitors she loathed. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.311]

30 / Since you have come at such a heavy price | I'll dearly wait for you, not once but twice

31 This line, originally assigned to Portia, weakens Portia's double-rhyming couplet which typically comes at the end of a scene and are the last words a character utters before he/she exits. Most editors believe that this line, and all that follows (including Bassanio's reading of Antonio's letter) were part of a later draft of the play. These lines convey an added sense of urgency and also allow Bassanio close out the scene with a double-rhyme. Since Portia has already "bowed out" with her

—Bassanio [*reads*]

‘Dear Bassanio, my ships have all been lost, 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. All I ask is that I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, do as you please.³² If your love does not persuade you to come, let not my letter.’

—Portia

O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

—Bassanio

Since I have your good leave to go away

I will make haste but I go in dismay.

All beds that beckon, I’ll solemnly spurn,

And shall not sleep^o a wink til I return.³³

/ And slumber ne’er

*Exeunt*³⁴

double-rhyme, this line is given to Gratiano—who has, up to this point, remained curiously silent. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.312]

32 {use your pleasure} / do what best suits you

33 Q1 reads: {Since I have your good leave to go away, | I will make haste, but till I come again,
No bed shall e’er be guilty of my stay, | Nor rest be interposed ‘twixt us twain.}

The original rhyme scheme is difficult since the rhyme applies to every other line. In addition, the emphasis of the first line seems to fall on the third syllable rather than the fourth.

In this passage, Bassanio makes the customary vow of a romantic hero, which is that he will not sleep until his task is completed and he returns to his beloved. [See Additional Notes, 3.2.324]

34 If the timeline is rectified (as suggested) then Bassanio, Gratiano, and Salerio exit, while Portia, Lorenzo, and Jessica remain on stage for the remainder of the scene. If the original timeline is retained (where the couples are not yet married) then a comical staging could be as follows: *Bassanio rushes to make a hasty exit, stage right, toward Venice, but is caught by Portia, and swung about Dosey Doe, to stage left, to the church.*

*Enter Shylock, Antonio, [Salarino, Salanio,] and the Jailer.*²

—Shylock ³

Jailor, keep your watch.° Tell me not of mercy. {look to him}

This is the fool who lends° out money gratis.

Jailor, keep your watch.° {look to him}

—Antonio Hear me yet, good Shylock.

— Shylock ⁴

I'll have my bond.° Speak not against my bond. / And I'll have it

I've sworn an oath that I will have my bond.⁵

You call'dst me 'dog' before you hadst a cause,

But since I am a dog, beware my fangs. ° / teeth

The Duke shall ⁶ grant me justice. I do° wonder, / but

Thou wicked° jailor, why art thou so fond° {naughty} / corrupt / foolish

To let him walk about° at his request.⁷ {To come abroad with him}

—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,

To shake my head, relent, and° sigh,° and yield / so meekly, // moan

To Christian meddlers.° Stay there, follow not.⁸ {intercessors}

I'll have no speaking—I will have my bond.⁹

Exit Shylock

—Salanio

It is the most impenetrable dog° {cur}

1 As mentioned in an earlier note, this scene could be moved to an earlier point in the play to help rectify the timeline.

2 The stage direction of Q1 reads: Enter the Jew, and Salerio, and Anthonio | and the Jaylor

The name *Salerio* in the stage heading (instead of *Salarino* or *Salanio*) is an error. Salerio, as we know, is in Belmont delivering a message to Bassanio and could not be present in this scene. Most editors, assuming that there is a one-to-one correspondence between Salerio and one of the Sals, rectify this error by replacing *Salerio* with either *Salanio* or *Salarino*. (Q2 replaces *Salerio* with *Salarino*, while F1 has *Solanio*). However, the most likely scenario is that both *Salarino* and *Salanio* are present since they always appear together. [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 And additional line could be added here, playing on the word *good*: <Now I am 'good'? I say, my bond is good!>

5 Why, and for what purpose, does Shylock tell Antonio that he has sworn an oath? [See Additional Notes, 3.3.5]

6 *shall*: > a) must, b) will

7 {Thou naughty jailor, thou that art so fond | To come abroad with him at his request.}

naughty: unfit, no good, corrupt, foolish *to come abroad*: to walk outside the jail, in the street

[See Additional Notes, 3.3.10]

8 {To Christian intercessors. Follow not} / To interfering Christians. Follow not.

9 In this short scene, Shylock bids Antonio to *speak not* four times; and he speaks the words, *my bond*, six times.

That ever kept^o with men.

/ stayed

—Antonio Let him alone.

I'll follow him no more with bootless^o prayers.¹⁰

/ feckless / useless

He seeks my life; his reason well I know:^o

/ I know the reason why he seeks my life

I oft delievered from his forfeitures

Many that have at times cried out^o to me.^{11 12}

{made moan}

'Tis why^o he hates me.¹³

{Therefore}

—Salarino I am sure the Duke

Will never grant^o this forfeiture to hold.

/ not allow

—Antonio

The Duke cannot deny the course of law,

For the commercial rights^o that traders^o have

{commodity} {strangers}

With us in Venice, if it be denied,

/ if 'tis not upheld

Will much impugn^o the justice of the state,

{impeach} / impair

And such will harm the city,¹⁴ which is port

Of trade to every nation.¹⁵ Therefore, go.

These griefs and losses have so bated^o me¹⁶

/ weakened

That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh

a. / That when my bloody bondsman calls tomorrow

Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.

b. / I'll hardly have a pound of flesh to spare

Well Jailer, on. Pray God Bassanio come

To see me pay his debt, and then I care not.

Exeunt

10 *bootless*: lit. 'without boots'; unable to run, i.e., ineffectual, hopeless, 'going nowhere,' etc.

11 The two previous lines could be replaced with:

/ Men who could not repay their loans on time; | To me they'd cry and I would always help them.

12 A more confessional Antonio might add: (Moreover, I have often cursed the man | Railing at him upon the Rialto

| And spitting on his face each time I passed.) [See Additional Notes, 3.3.23]

13 Antonio is recounting the many times that men would borrow money from Shylock (by signing a bond) which was often an instrument of entrapment; the bond may have contained the condition that if the bond was not paid on time, as a forfeit, a man would lose all his goods and property. When men were caught in this predicament they would come and bemoan 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 *gratis* 'robbed' Shylock of all the extra profit he was eager to extract from his victims.

14 Everyone (i.e., Antonio, Shylock, and Portia as the judge) seem to know that not honoring the exact terms of a bond would harm the reputation of Venice and interfere with its commercial interests; however, this is not true. Had the Duke dismissed this case, and had the law emended such that the forfeiture of a bond could only refer to goods and property, it would have had no effect on the trade or commerce of Venice.

15 {Since that the trade and profit of the city | Consisteth of all nations}

16 *bated*: abated, reduced, diminished; implying a lose of weight.

Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar, Portia's servant ²

—Lorenzo

Madam, although I'm hesitant to say it, ^{o 3}	{I speak it in your presence}
You have a noble and a true conception ^o	{conceit}
Of godlike friendship, ^o which appears most strongly	{amity}
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.	
But if you knew to whom you show this honor, ^{o 4}	/ favor
How true a gentleman you send relief, ^o	/ deem to help
How dear a friend he is unto your husband, ^{o 5}	{How dear a lover of my lord, your husband}
I know you would be prouder of the work ⁶	
Than customary giving would afford you. ^{o 7 8}	/ Than from obligèd acts of charity

—Portia

I never praised myself ^o for doing good,	{did repent}
And ^o shall not now; for in companions, ^o	{Nor}
Who do converse and spend ^o their time together,	{waste} / pass
Whose souls do bear an equal ^o yoke of love, ⁹	{egal}
There must be needs a like proportion ¹⁰	
Of character, ^o of manners, and of spirit, ¹¹	{lineaments}
Which makes me think that this Antonio,	

1 At this point Portia has decided to go to Venice and intervene on Antonio's behalf—having no faith that Bassanio, by his own devices, could deliver Antonio. But upon what information has she come to make this decision? Initially she thought that her overwhelming show of ducats could save Antonio despite Jessica saying that Shylock 'would rather have Antonio's flesh than twenty times the value of the sum.' But something has since changed her mind and now she believes that neither her money, nor the justice system of Venice, nor Bassanio's wit would be sufficient to save Antonio. Thus, she concludes that *she* must go to Venice and preside over the case. This change in Portia's course of action could only have come through her continued conversation with Jessica, who filled her in on the details of the situation. We are not clear how Portia came to conclude that only her legal acumen could save Antonio especially since she had no legal training and no knowledge of Venetian law. We are also not clear as to how she came to know that her cousin, Bellario, one of the great legal minds of the age, had been summoned by the Duke to rule on the case, but was too sick to do so.

To indicate their continuing conversation between Portia and Jessica the two could be seen entering the scene together, ahead of the others, in conversation. [See Additional Notes, 3.4.0]

2 If the timeframe is rectified—which entails moving Act 3, Scene 3 to a point slightly earlier in the play—this scene would take place right after Bassanio leaves for Venice. Thus, earlier in the scene, Bassanio, Gratiano, and Salerio would exit while Portia, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar would remain on stage. (If Balthazar was not present in the previous scene he could enter here.) Alternatively, everyone could exit in the previous scene, with Portia, Lorenzo, and Jessica, and Balthazar entering again, after some kind of pause or interlude.

3 / Although I pause to say it in your presence | You have a true and noble understanding
The sentiment may be that it is impolite to praise a person in his/her own presence—as this might cause embarrassment (for those who would be modest) or self-aggrandizement (for those inclined in this direction).

4 {But if you knew to whom you show this honor}

5 / How dear he is unto your husband's heart / How dear a comrade of my lord, your husband

6 / You'd be more honored by this virtuous work^o / kindly act / generous deed

7 {Than customary bounty can enforce you}

customary: ususal, regular, standard

bounty: goodness, benevolence, generosity, overflowing kindness, etc.

enforce you: prompt, impel, incline you; make you feel

Various editors interpret this line as follows: 'Than ordinary acts of kindness allow you to feel' (Appl); 'Than ordinary acts of kindness can incline you to be' (Ar); 'Than your usual acts of benevolence make you perform' (Ox).

8 / Than your gen'rous nature moves to perform / Than that afforded by usual custom

9 / Whose souls unite by the same yoke of love

10 There must be likeness in their disposition

11 / a like proportion of | Characteristics, mannerism, and spirit / a like proportion | Of character, sentiment, and of spirit

Being the dearest most friend^o of my lord ¹² {bosom lover} / bosom buddy
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
 How little is the cost I have bestowed^o / put forth / tendered
 In rescuing^o the semblance^o of my soul ¹³ {purchasing} // likeness
 From out the state^o of hellish cruelty. / From this affront
 This comes too near the praising of myself, ^o / to mine own self-endorsement!
 Therefore, no more of it. ¹⁴ Hear^o other things: / Now
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands,
 The oversight^o and manage of my house ¹⁵ {husbandry}
 Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation, ¹⁶
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's^o return. / lord
 There is a monastery two miles off,
 And there we will abide. I do desire you ^o / I ask of you
 Not to deny this sudden^o imposition, ¹⁷ / heavy
 The which my love and some necessity^o / more pressing needs
 Now lays upon you.

—Lorenzo Madam, with all my heart
 I shall obey you in all fair commands.^o / you request

—Portia
 My people do already know my mind^o / wish
 And will acknowledge^o you and Jessica / recognize / accept both
 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! ^o / happiness all be with you!

—Jessica
 I wish your ladyship all^o heart's content. / you, dear lady, all / your lady every

—Portia
 I thank you for your wish and am well-pleased
 To wish the same for you.^o Fare you well, Jessica. ¹⁸ {it back on you}

12 / Being the dearest friend of my Bassanio
 13 / It is so small a price I pay to save | One, so like one with whom I share a soul
 14 The previous six lines (If it be so ... therefore no more of it) is repetitive and uninspired. Consider deleting.
 15 / The management and care of my estate / The running and management of my house
 16 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.
 17 {Not to deny this imposition} To fulfill the meter *imposition* would be pronounced as: IMpoZIseeOWN
 18 Portia's farewell is directed to Jessica alone, which seems a bit awkward. To make this fit, Jessica and Lorenzo could be exiting and then Jessica turns around, almost as an afterthought, to bid Portia farewell. Portia then returns the gesture.

Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo

Now, Balthazar, I've found thee^o true and honest,¹⁹ / you've been so
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all thy endeavor and skill^o {th'endeavour of a man} / acumen and skill
In speed^o to Padua. See thou render^o this / haste / giveth
Into the hands of my cousin, Bellario,
<Who is a learned doctor of the law.>^o / One of Italia's greatest legal minds
And look^o what notes and garments he doth give thee. / take
Bring them, I pray, with all imagined speed
Unto the landing^o of the common ferry {traject}
Which trades^o to Venice.
Now waste no time in words but get thee gone;
I shall be there before evening falls.^{20 21}

—Balthazar

Madam, I'll go with all availing^o speed. {convenient} / available

Exit

—Portia

Come on, Nerissa, I have work in hand
That you have yet to know.^o We'll see our husbands {That you yet know not of}
Before they think of us.

—Nerissa Shall they see us?

—Portia

They shall, Nerissa, but in such a manner^o {habit} / garb
That they shall think we are accomplished^o / but well-equipped / but well-endowed
With what we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,^o / I'll be thee any sum
When we are both accoutered^o like young men / attired
I'll prove the prettier fellow^o of the two, / more convincing
And wear my dagger with the braver grace.²²

19 The original lines read: {Now, Balthazar | As I have always found thee honest-true} The first line is short and contains only two iambs. Some commentators hold that this was done in order to give time for Lorenzo and Jessica to exit and for Balthazar to come downstage; however, as we do not see this pause employed in other scenes, and as Balthazar is already on stage, we can dismiss this idea. Here the lines are revised so as to conform to the proper meter. (Note that Portia uses the name *Balthazar* when she enters the court, dressed as a man, in 4.1.)

20 Portia's plan to preside over the court case in Venice, in Bellario's stead, is contingent upon her knowing that Bellario was called on to preside over the case, that he was too ill to comply, and also in her confidence that she would be able to credibly take his place. The idea that she could rule over the matter without direct instruction from Bellario is far-fetched. Thus, a more likely plan (and one less susceptible to error) would be for Portia to visit Bellario that evening, get fully acquainted with the case, and receive legal advice on how to proceed. This scenario would be consistent with Bellario's letter to the Duke, wherein he says: 'We turned o'er many books together.' In addition, Portia making such a journey to Padua would take the same amount of time as Balthazar, who was instructed to go to Padua, find Bellario, get the items (and wait for Bellario to write out his opinion), and then meet Portia at the ferry landing. [See Additional Notes, 3.4.55]

21 As mentioned, the plan outlined in the original is ill-conceived. A more likely plan would be for Portia to send a letter to Bellario, telling him that she will be visiting him later that night, and that he should come up with a legal strategy by which she, acting in his stead, could save Antonio. This new plan is enacted by deleting four lines from the original and emending the last two lines to accommodate the new plan.

22 The brave wearing of one's dagger (or sword) can be seen as a symbol of one's manhood.

I will be bold²³ and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride; and speak of brawls^o { 'frays }
 Like a fine, bragging youth; and tell quaint lies
 How honorable ladies sought my love,^o / How noble ladies sought my manly love
 Which when denied, they soon^o fell sick and died.²⁴ { Which I denying, they }
 I could not *do* them all.^{o25} Then I'll repent { do withal } / help them all
 And wish for all that, that I^o had not killed them.²⁶ / And wish my good looks had not killed them so
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell
 That men shall swear I was expelled from^o school { have discontinued } / I had dropped out of
 After a year.^o I have within my mind { Above a twelvemonth }
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging jacks^o / youths
 Which I will practice.²⁷

—Nerissa Why, shall we turn to men? ²⁸

—Portia
 Fie, what a question that is!^o Shall we turn / lewd question!
 To men for carnal pleasure?—I think not! ²⁹ / No we shant!
 But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device^o / of my good plan
 When we are in my coach, which stays^o for us / waits
 At the main^o gate; and therefore haste away,^o { park }
 For we must journey^o twenty³⁰ miles today.³¹ { measure }/ travel

Exeunt

23 The original { And speak between the change of man and boy | With a reed voice } is somewhat unclear: It has been replaced with: *I will be bold*.

24 [For an alternative rendering of the previous six lines, See Additional Notes, 3.4.26]

25 { 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 women he could not make love with, fell sick and died of heartbreak.

26 / And wish my good looks had not killed them so

for all that: for having refused them; “in spite of that — that I could not prevent their dying.” (Kit)

27 The lines uttered by Portia show the total embrace of her assumed role as a man but what she portrays here has nothing to do with the legal garb or sober manner she intends to show in court. We can see Portia’s willingness to embrace this male role (and come out of her docile romantic princess mode) as 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 contrast to Jessica’s embarrassment and ‘shame’ at having to simply dress up as a boy (to help her make a clandestine escape).

28 *turn to men*: Nerissa surmises that they plan to ‘turn into men’ (disguise themselves as men); Portia plays upon another meaning, chastising Nerissa’s lewd suggestion that they turn to men for sexual gratification.

29 { Fie, what a question’s that? | If thou wert near a lewd interpreter! }

/ Fie, fie—why such a lewd interpretation? | We shall not turn to me for carnal pleasure!

[See Additional Notes, 3.4.80]

30 Twenty seems to be the preferred number used throughout the play to indicate some large amount. Twenty others could be taught how to be good by Portia (rather than actually being good); twenty men would be needed to get one husband for Portia (if she married the French lord); twenty men were sent out in search of Gratiano; twenty merchants tried to dissuade Shylock from his bond; Portia would treble herself twenty times for the sake of Bassanio; Portia would tell twenty puny lies (when she played the part of a bragging youth); Shylock would not accept twenty times the amount of the bond (as he would rather have his pound of flesh), a twenty mile journey, etc.

31 From this account we come to know that Venice is twenty miles from Belmont. Padua is also twenty miles from Venice. As Portia is going to visit Bellario before the trial we can hold that Padua is also twenty miles from Belmont when, geographically—as Padua is twenty miles inland and Belmont is on the coast—it is more likely to be about 30 miles.

[Optional Scene—replaces 3.5 in the original]

Venice. Shylock is distraught by his daughter's betrayal. He picks up the bond, glances over it, and tucks it away. He readies his bag, placing the scales in it. He picks up a one-pound weight, gauges its weight, and places it in the bag. He goes to his knife collection and ponders which knife to use; he selects an ominous-looking one and places it in his bag. ^{3 4}

Enter Tubal

—Tubal

Hear me Shylock! How far do you intend to go with this?

—Shylock

Until the very end.⁶

—Tubal

This course you take is odd and self-defeating. Get your principal, or twice the amount, and be done with it.

—Shylock

I will torment him as he has tormented me. They have pleaded with me. Antonio, the Duke, and all the magnificoes have tried to dissuade me from my course but I cannot hear them. I have my bond. I cannot hear them, I have my bond.

—Tubal

I fear that *this* will bring a curse upon our nation. I say, stop this madness now; retrieve your principle, or twice the amount, and be done with it.

Shylock and Tubal exit in opposite directions

1. Act 3, Scene 5, as found in the original, is a 'filler' scene involving Lancelot, Lorenzo, and Jessica. It provides a light-hearted distraction and some psychological time between the previous scene in Belmont and the next scene in Venice. The quality of this scene is poor as it is both tiresome and lacking. Due to the weakness of the scene, some scholars have doubted its authenticity and virtually all productions simply delete it.

Though the original is unacceptable some scene is needed here. In this emendation, a scene involving Shylock and Tubal is put forth. [See Additional Notes, 3.5.0] Another possibility would be to import some portions of 5.1, which involve Lorenzo and Jessica, specifically, 5.1.1-21 and 5.1.54-109, or some portion thereof.

3. To include an element of black humor, Shylock could be made to test the sharpness of his blade on a tomato. In his first try, he finds the blade to be hopelessly dull. He discards the knife and tries another then another until he finally finds one sharp enough. 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.

4. The scene could end here, without any words spoken. Ending the scene here would accentuate Shylock's sense of aloneness. This speechless scene could be used in a production that 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 text. The general rule, however, allows for a character to say the name of another character 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 does not appear in the original text.

6. [See Additional Notes, 3.5.02]

ACT FOUR — Scene One 4.1.1

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

—Duke

What,° is Antonio here? / Well

—Antonio Ready your grace.¹ {Ready, so please your grace}

—Duke

I am sorry for thee. You've° come to answer {Thou art}
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Incapable of pity; void and empty
From any hint° of mercy. {dram}

—Antonio I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to mollify° {qualify} / modify
His savage° course; but since he stands unshaken° {rigorous} {obdurate} / unmoved
And, since° no lawful means can carry° me {that} / as // render / deliver
Beyond° his envy's reach, I do oppose {Out of}
My patience to his fury, and am armed² / braced / ready
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The utter brutality of his rage. {The very tyranny and rage of his}

—Duke

Go one and call the Jew into the court.

—Salerio

He's ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

*Enter Shylock*³

—Duke

Make room, and let him stand before us now.° {our face} / our eyes
Shylock,⁴ the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but leadest° this fashion of thy malice / lead / forward
To the last hour of act° and then, 'tis thought, / Until the final hour
That thou will show thy mercy and remorse.

1 The first two lines of the original contain six iambs each, which are herein corrected.

2 / His fury with my patience; I am braced

patience: forbearance. Renaissance virtue advocates that this is the best way to deal with adversity. [*Lear* 1.4.240, 2.2.445]. More deeply, it refers to faith in God and the short-term corporeal suffering that is often needed to bring about long-term and divine gain.

3 The stage heading in Q1 reads, *Enter Shylocke*, yet the speech headings throughout this scene shift, without any clear reason, between *Jew* and *Shy*. [See Additional Notes: 4.1.1]

4 Though the Duke is partial to Antonio's plight (as evidenced in the opening lines of the scene) he is showing deference to Shylock by asking others to make room for him and by calling him by his name.

(And yet this course of action is) more strange⁵ / (Yet such a course is even) more bizarre
 Then is thy strange apparent⁶ cruelty. / purported / appearance of
 And where thou now demands⁶ the penalty, {exact'st} / exacts
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only waive⁶ the forfeiture {loose}
 But, touched with human⁶ gentleness and love,⁶ {humane} // kindness and compassion
 Forgive a portion⁶ of the principal, {moiety}
 Glancing⁷ an eye of pity on his losses / Showing / And glance
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enough to press a royal merchant down.⁸ / burden a royal merchant
 For such a loss⁹ should pluck a strain of pathos / A loss so great
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn⁹ brutes and warriors⁹ never trained¹⁰ / faithless {Turks and Tartars}
 In such demeanors that were kind or tender. {To offices of tender courtesy}
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

—Shylock

I have informed¹¹ your grace of my intention, {possessed}
 And by our holy God of Hosts¹² I swore {Sabaoth}
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond.¹³
 If you deny it, disaster will fall¹³ {let the danger light}
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom.¹⁴
 You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
 A pound¹⁴ of carrion¹⁴ flesh than to receive {weight} // lifeless
 Three thousand ducats? I'll not answer that,

5 {Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange}
 / (And yet this course conceived) is e'er more strange
 / (and yet | This baffling course of action is) more strange

6 *apparent*: a) what appears to be

7 / And looking on his losses with some pity

8 It may seem odd that the Duke is calling for Shylock to take pity on Antonio and forgive some portion of the principal. Having the Duke call on Shylock to forgive the forfeiture (and then have Antonio pay him back when he was able) would be a more likely appeal. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.28]

9 {And pluck commiseration of his state}

> And bring about some pity as a result of his (unfortunate) condition

10 {From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained | To offices of tender courtesy}

Turks: generally classed with Jews, infidels, and heretics—i.e., those in need of redemption

Tartars: the brutal and bellicose warriors who made up the hordes of Ghengis Khan

11 {I have possessed your grace of what I purpose}

12 {And by our holy Sabaoth have I sworn}

Most 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, 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 (one of God's commandment: "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy") in order to break another of God's commandments: "thou shall not kill." Hence, Shylock has sworn himself into a predicament. What this shows, moreover, is Shylock's imperfect brand of Judaism and his corrupt understanding of his own tradition. Here he is making claim of an oath to God simply as a device to further his own personal and ungodly aims. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.35]

13 {To have the due and forfeit of my bond}

The contract that usurers enter 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 may have 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 some other great expense. Here the forfeit is one pound of flesh. Present usury laws in most countries render contracts that charge exorbitant interest, or disproportionately high penalties, illegal. An inclusion of such a provision can render the entire contract null and void, thus releasing the borrowing party from any obligation to repay the money borrowed.

14 / If you deny it, let all doubt descend | Upon the charter that affords your city | It's reputation of fair trade and commerce

But say it is my nature. Is it answered? ¹⁵
 What if my house be troubled with a rat
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it banned?° Well,° are you answered yet? / killed {What}
 Some men are sickened by a gaping pig.¹⁶
 Some will° go mad if they behold a cat.¹⁷ {that}
 And others, when the bagpipe sings a note,° {sings i`th`nose}
 Cannot control their weeping.¹⁸ Thus our nature°
 Master° of passion, ever sways our mood° ¹⁹ / Dictates
 To what it likes or loathes.²⁰ Now, for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be rendered° / given
 Why he can't tolerate° a gaping pig,²¹ {cannot abide}
 Why he° is crazed to see° a harmless cat,^{22 23} / one / fearful of
 Why he, when hearing the sound of bagpipe,²⁴
 Must yield to grief° with melancholy tears,²⁵ / Must needs repond
 So can I give no reason, more than to say° {nor I will not}
 There is a lodged hate and a certain loathing ° / There is a long-acquired hate and loathing
 I bear Antonio, that I follow° thus° / pursue // this
 A suit of loss against him. Are you answered? ²⁶ {A losing suit against him} ²⁷

15 {But say it is my humour. It is answered?}

Shylock is saying that a person cannot give a reason as to why he acts a certain way, only to say that it's his nature.
my humour: my disposition or nature. This refers to one's character or disposition that is determined by the balance of the four main humours of the body—i.e., blood, phlegm, clear or yellow bile [choler], and dark bile.
 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.42]

16 {Some men there are love not a gaping pig}

Refers to someone who may be like or be sickened by the sight of a gaping pig—i.e., a pig with an apple in its mouth—which may sit in prominent display at a feast. Could be a reference to someone who has a dislike for pork.

17 {Some that are mad if they behold a cat} The reference is unclear but it suggests someone who has an irrational fear of cats, and who goes crazy at the sight of a cat.

18 {And others when the bag-pipes sings i`th`nose | Cannot contain their urine}

sings i`th`nose: sings in the nose: a) sings its sad song through its nose (horn). Bagpipes were known to play mournful tunes. Crying could be the natural response when hearing the bagpipe whereas peeing in one's own pants (out of fear) would not be. Here, Shylock is describing someone overtaken by fear, so much so that he would pee in his pants. Since this example is confusing and amiss it has been rectified by properly associating the bagpipe with melancholia rather than with fear; thus, by replacing 'urine' with 'weeping,' the reference would be to a person besieged by sadness (and tears) by the sound of a bagpipe rather than by fright (and urine).

19 {For affection | Masters of passion, sways it to the mood}

affection: a) one's affect; one's disposition or inherent temperament; b) affections, such as likes and desires.

passion: emotion, feeling, sentiment. The sense here is that one's nature (one's inherent disposition) rules over all one's emotions and sways them to how one's nature is so inclined. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.49]

Masters of passion: That which rules over our emotions and feelings (passion). *Masters of passion* is often emended to read, *Mistress of passion* (Oxford, Norton, Applause, Bevington, etc.), suggesting that affection is the cohort of (the mistress of) our emotions (passion). It is likely that the intended passage was simply: 'Masters our passion' which is in keeping with the general idea that our inherent nature rules over or controls (masters) our feelings and emotions.

20 / Dictates our passion, swaying it toward | That which it likes or loathes

21 {Why he cannot abide a gaping pig} / cannot endure

abide: tolerate, bear, be unaffected by, stand the sight of

22 / Why he is superstitious of a cat See Note 18 xx.

23 {Why he a harmless, necessary cat}

necessary: useful, needed to perform the function of catching mice

24 / Why he who hears the playing of a bagpipe

25 {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.

26 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.62]

27 *losing suit*: an unprofitable action (where Shylock gains a worthless pound of flesh as as opposed to a monetary gain)

—Bassanio

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

/ To justify thy rage and 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?²⁸

—Bassanio

Every offense is not a hate at first.

— Shylock

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

—Antonio

I pray you, think, you argue^o with the Jew.²⁹

{question}

You may as well³⁰ go stand upon the beach

And bid the tide to^o bate its usual height;

{main flood}

You may as well use question with the wolf^o

/ begin to ask the wolf

Why he hath eaten the ewe's baby lamb.

{made the ewe bleat for the lamb}³¹

You may as well forbid the mountain pines

To wag their high tops and to make no noise

When they are fretted^o with the gusts^o of heaven.

{fretten} / winds

You may as well do anything most hard

As seek to soften^o that which none is harder—³²

/ To try an' soften

The Jew's heart.^o³³ Therefore, I do beseech you,

His godless heart

Make no more offers, use no further means,

But with all brief^o and plain efficiency^o

/ speed {conveniency}

Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

—Bassanio [*to Shylock*]

For thy three thousand ducats, here is six.

—Shylock

If every ducat in six thousand ducats

28 {Hates any man the thing he would not kill?}

29 {I pray you, think, you question with the Jew.} Antonio refers to Shylock as “the Jew.” This is a specific reference to Shylock and not to Jews in general, else Antonio would have said, ‘you question with a Jew.’

30 *You may as well*: Antonio repeats this phrase four times.

31 *bleat*: cry loudly. Q1 has *bleake*, which is likely an error for *bleat* or a particular dialect used instead of *bleake*.

32 {As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?} / To try and soften the hardest thing of all—

33 {His Jewish heart} This, like the previous line that refers to Shylock as “the Jew,” is a reference to Shylock's heart, not the heart of a Jew, per se. Thus, this line means “The Jew's heart” or “Shylock's heart.”

Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw^o them. I would have my bond.³⁴ / take

—Duke
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring^o none? / giving

—Shylock
What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?³⁵
You have among you^o many a purchased slave / acquired
Which, like your donkeys^o and your dogs and mules, {asses}
You use in abject^o and in slavish roles^o / You use for wretched and for slavish work
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
‘Let them be free. Marry them to your heirs.
Why sweat them^o under burdens?^o Let their beds {they} // {burthens}
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates^o / mouths / meals
Be seasoned with your spices.’^o You will answer, {such viands}
‘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.³⁶
I stand^o for judgment.^o Answer—shall I have it? / wait // justice

—Duke
Upon my power I may dismiss this court,^o³⁷ / case
Unless Bellario, a learned judge,^o {a learned doctor} / a doctor of law
Whom I have sent for to determine this,³⁸
Come here today.

—Salerio My lord, here stays^o without³⁹ / there waits
A messenger with letters from the judge,^o {doctor}
New^o come from Padua. / Just

—Duke
Bring us the letters. Call the messenger.

34 Shylock is seeking the forfeiture of his bond, saying, “I would have my pound of flesh.” [See Additional Notes, 4.1.86]

35 / What fate should I dread, having done no wrong? / Why hope for mercy, having done no wrong?

Here is the problem with Shylock’s position—he *is* doing a great wrong. His position is unjust in every respect and violates the spirit of every law, including Jewish law.

36 / There is no power in the laws of Venice.

37 {Upon my power I may dismiss this court}

The Duke states that he has the power to dismiss this case, contrary to the assertions made by various characters that he does not have that power, and must honor the contract. [Antonio: 3.4.26-31; Portia: 4.1.215-219]. The Duke is hesitant to do so because he thinks (perhaps incorrectly so) that it will harm the reputation and free trade of Venice. 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 (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]

38 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.105]

39 / My Lord, there’s waiting outside

Exit Salerio

—Bassanio

Be strong,^o Antonio. What man, courage yet.⁴⁰
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all
Ere thou shall lose for me one drop of blood.

{ Good cheer } / Hold fast

—Antonio

I am a feeble creature^o of the flock,
Meetest^o for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.
You cannot be better employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

{ tainted wether }⁴¹
/ Most fit / Destined

Enter 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.

—Gratziano

Not on thy sole,⁴² but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen. But no metal can,
No, not the hoodman's axe,^o bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce^o thee?

{ hangman's axe }⁴³
/ reach

—Shylock

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

40 / Hold fast man, have courage!

41 *wether*: weak or castrated ram. From *bellwether*: a ram with a bell hung round its neck.

42 *sole*: Shylock sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe

43 *hangman's axe*: executioner's axe. Here the term *hangman's* is emended with *hoodman'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 executioner's sharpest axe | Bear half the keenness of thy sharp envy. | Can nothing get through? Can no prayer pierce thee?

—Gratziano

O, be thou damned, inexorable^o dog! {F4: inexorable}
And for thy life let justice be accused!
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith, / sight
To^o hold the same opinion as the Greeks^o 44 {with Pythagoras}
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men. Thy beastly^o spirit {currish}/ brutal
Lived in^o a wolf who hanged for killing humans.^o 45 {Governed} // {human slaughter}
Then^o from the gallows did his^o fell soul flee, 46 {Even}/ Thus / its
And whilst thou lay in thy unhallowed womb,^o {dam}
Infused itself in thee, for thy desires
Are wolvis, blood-thirsty,^o and ravenous. 47 {bloody, starved}

—Shylock

Till thou canst rail^o the seal from off my bond > remove
Thou but offend'st^o thy lungs to speak so loud.^o / only harm // with all thy shouting
Repair⁴⁸ thy wit, good youth,^o or it will fall / young man
To cureless^o ruin. I stand here for law. / hopeless

—Duke

This letter from Ballario doth commend^o / recommends
A learned doctor of law^o to our court. 49 / A young and learned scholar
Where is he?

—Nerissa He attendeth here, nearby^o 50 / He is waiting here
To know your answer, whether you'll admit^o him. / receive

—Duke

With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct^o to this place. /escort / passage

Exeunt officials

Meanwhile,^o the court shall hear Bellario's letter: 51 {Meantime}

44 {To hold the opinion with Pythagoras} / 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.

45 {Governed a wolf, who hanged for human slaughter}

46 {did his fell soul fleet} *fell*: deadly, cruel, savage *fleet*: pass on, leave (flee) the body

47 [See Additional Notes: 4.1.137]

48 *repair*: use to good end, put to good use, rectify, set in order

49 {A young and learned doctor to our court} The word 'doctor' refers to a doctor of law, or a judge, not a medical doctor. However, upon hearing the word 'doctor,' the audience will associate it with a medical doctor. Thus, the term should be replaced with 'judge' or 'scholar' or 'doctor of law,' at least for the first few uses, to 'lock in' the true meaning of the word.

50 {He attendeth here hard by} / He is eagerly awaiting

51 Q1 offers no stage direction here; and since no character is designated to read the letter every production has the Duke read it. However, it may be preferred to have a court official read the letter (such as Salerio). Had the Duke said, 'Meantime, I will read Bellario's letter' the direction for him to read it would have been clearer.

‘Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I was very sick but in the instant that your messenger came, a young doctor (of law) from Rome, named Balthazar, was paying me a kindly visit.⁵² I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio, the merchant. We turned o’er many books together. He is furnished with my opinion which is bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend; and he comes at my entreaty to fill up your grace’s request in my stead.⁵³ I beseech you, let his lack of years not impede your reverend estimation of him, for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose conduct^o shall, better than my words, commend^o his worthiness.^o ⁵⁴

*Enter Portia*⁵⁵ *as Balthazar, Doctor of Law, with others*

You hear the learn’d Bellario, what he writes?

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.^o

Give me your hand. Come you from old^o Bellario? / wise

—Portia

I did my lord.

—Duke You are welcome. Take your place.

Are you acquainted with the different views^o {difference} / disagreement / grave conflict

That holds this present question^o in the court?⁵⁶ / matter / issue

—Portia

I am informèd throughly of the matter.^o ⁵⁷ {cause} / case

Which is the merchant here and which the Jew?⁵⁸

—Duke

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.^o ⁵⁹ / step forward

52 {in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar} In the original, no visitation is made between Portia and Bellario; in the rectified version, Portia visits Bellario the night before the trial.

[See Additional Notes, 4.1.151]

53 / and, in response to your grace’s request, I have asked him to rule on this matter in my stead.

[See Additional Note, 4.1.159]

54 {I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.}

55 In the preferred staging, Portia enters the court with an impressive walking stick which she uses as a conspicuous prop throughout the scene.

56 / That occupies the question now in court?

57 Portia, being well-informed about the present matter (and how to preside over it) could have only come about had she met with Bellario and gone over the case.

58 Although 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 assumption, prejudice, or preconception. 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 some productions, Shylock gives a mocking glance at Portia when she asks this question because the answer is obvious and need not be asked.

59 It also may This statement by the Duke could shed some light on Portia’s previous question: “Which is the merchant here, and which is the Jew?” If the two were already standing forward, she might not have asked this question since the answer was obvious. However, if Shylock and Antonio were among their people, she would not know which was the merchant, in question, and which was the Jew, in question. Interestingly, one could read this as part of a stage direction rather than as a directive from the Duke.

—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
Cannot impugn^o you as you do proceed.⁶⁰ / oppose
 [to Antonio]
You stand within his danger,⁶¹ do you not?

—Antonio
Ay, so he says.

—Portia Do you confess the bond?

—Antonio
I do.

—Portia Then must the Jew be merciful.

—Shylock
On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

—Portia
The quality of mercy is not strained^o ⁶² / can't be forced
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the earth below.^o It is twice blessed: {the place beneath}
It blesseth him^o who gives and him who takes.^o ⁶³ / It blesses both the giver and receiver
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes ⁶⁴ ⁶⁵

60 / Cannot oppose the course you choose to follow

In terms of reasoning, what possible interest could Portia have in preserving Venetian law over the life of her husband's dear friend? And 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). Thus, her knowledge and defense of the Venetian law—which bodes ill against Antonio's position—must be seen as part of her overall stratagem. To play this card we must assume that Portia is in total control of the case (and its outcome) from the onset, and is well aware of the law by which she can stop Shylock, at any time she chooses to do so. All of this, then, can be seen as a test of Shylock (and Bassanio.)

61 *within his danger*: within his power to harm you; within the reaches of his bond and the danger of its consequence

62 *strained*: forced, compelled. Shylock asks “On what compulsion must I be merciful?” and Portia answers this by saying that the quality of mercy is not something that must be compelled, or forced, but something that comes as a natural expression of the heart. It droppeth like rain; it does not have to be ‘squeezed’ out of a person.

63 {It blesseth him that gives and him that takes} / It blesseth one who gives and who receives

that takes: the notion of *him that takes* is somewhat inferior to that of *him who receives*, as the former suggest a willful action rather than a passive receptivity. *Taking* implies the acquisition of some benefit from personal action, whereas *receiving* implies a benefit bestowed by a giver. One need not take rain, it falls from the sky—all one need do is receive it.

64 { 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes }

This single line could be expanded into two lines:

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest when rendered | (Upon the weak and helpless). It becomes

The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
His scepter shows the force of temporal⁶⁶ power,
The attribute of^o awe and majesty⁶⁷ {to} / That which commandeth
Wherein doth sit^o the dread and fear of kings.⁶⁸ / Which brings about
But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of^o God himself; {to}
And earthly power doth show likest God's^o / shares kinship with God
When mercy seasons^o justice.⁶⁹ Therefore, Jew,^o ⁷⁰ / tempers / placates
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should^o see^o salvation.⁷¹ We do pray for mercy⁷² / Would // find
And that same prayer⁷³ doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ I have spoken thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea⁷⁶ ⁷⁷
Which, if thou follow, this strict⁷⁸ court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst^o the merchant there. / rule against

—Shylock

65 Portia is telling Shylock that mercy is *mightiest in the mighty*—a lesson that does not match Shylock's station in life as a dehumanized Jew. However, Shylock is now in the position of power, and in a position to grant mercy unto Antonio, so she is hoping her appeal will reach him.

66 *temporal*: worldly, material, assigned; temporary and passing

Portia is suggesting that the king's power is temporal, whereas the quality of mercy, which reflects God's attributes, is ever-lasting—it is *above this sceptered sway*. “By the greatest fate a powerful king may rule the earth for a hundred years; but through the power of love, he may rule the earth forever.” (Adopted from the Tao Te Ching)

67 *attribute to*: a) the claim or entitlement to; b) having the attributes, quality, or character of

/ The given claim to awe and majesty / That which confers to him reverence and awe

68 / Wherein he rules the state with fear and dread / Where kings do rule ...

69 / And earthly power holds the most kinship | With God's, when justice is balanced with mercy

70 { 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, as she is making a direct appeal to Shylock. That said, the entire appeal, which involves sentiments relating to kingly power, awe, and majesty is alien to 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's mercy.

71 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).

72 *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.

73 { And that same prayer }

This is an overt reference to the Lord's Prayer. In the previous line Portia says, *we do pray for mercy* but the ‘we’ refers to those Christians who recite the Lord's Prayer—not Jews. Again, Portia's plea is made from the vantage of her own world and not from that of Shylock's.

74 *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.”

75 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 *ex post facto* stretch. Neither of these passages refer to prayers that are known or recited by Jews. In addition, most Hebrew interpretations—including that of, ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’—hold the term *neighbor* to mean one's Jewish neighbor. Thus, to ‘forgive thy neighbor’ would not apply to Antonio, a Christian.

76 / staunch appeal / stern appeal

77 { To mitigate the justice of thy plea }

78 *strict*: bound, inflexible, rigid (in that it is bound to follow the letter of the law)

My deeds upon my head!⁷⁹ I crave the law,^o / seek // demand justice
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.^{80 81 82}

—Portia

Is he not able to discharge the money?

—Bassanio

Yes, here I tender^o it for him in the court / have / offer
Yea, thrice^o the sum. If that will not suffice, {twice}⁸³
I will be bound to pay it ten times over,^o / more
On forfeit of^o my hands, my head, my heart. / And put as bond
If this will not suffice, it must appear ^o / be such
That malice outweighs^o truth.⁸⁴ And I beseech you, {bears down}
Wrest^o once the law to your authority. / Bend
To do a great right, do a little wrong
And curb^o this cruel devil of his will.^o / And curb this devil of his hellish will

—Portia

It must not^o be. There is no power in Venice / cannot
That can alter^o a decree establishèd. / reverse / o'erturn // an established decree
'Twill be recorded as a precedent
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.^{o 85} / must not

—Shylock

A Daniel come to judgment, yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

—Portia

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

79 *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 I need not fear because I am blameless). Not true. Shylock mistakenly believes his action to be sinless (because, in his mind, he is following some law); 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, let my own deeds fall upon my head.' Shylock, blinded by hatred, and holding fast to the letter of the written law, is unable to see the divine discord of his own actions. Shylock may be "a Jew" but he is a faulty Jew, a Jew who corrupts the laws of God to serve his own selfish needs.

80 *the penalty and forfeit of my bond*: that part of the bond (above and beyond the principal and interest owed) which is due if the full sums borrowed are not repaid on 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.

81 / Let my own actions fall upon my head! | I crave the law, the forfeit of my bond.

82 [See Notes 4.1.81]

83 Later in the scene [224, 231] Portia states that an offer of *thrice* the sum has been made, whereas here, in Q1, Bassanio only offers *twice* the sum. Either Portia is mistaken in her recall, or she intentionally ups the offer, or Bassanio offered *thrice* the sum (and *twice* is a typo).

84 {malice bears down truth} 'Malice oppresses honesty' (Johnson)

bears down: overwhelms, overthrows, oppresses, defeats; is more important than
truth: 'reason,' 'honesty,' 'righteousness,' 'rule of equity,' etc.

85 Such a defense of Venetian law—over the direct concerns of her husband and her sole mission to save Antonio—is amiss. Why is Portia (who took great measures to intervene on Antonio's behalf) now taking pains to preserve precedent? What does she care about established decree or preserving the reputation of Venice? We must assume, as already stated, 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 stop Shylock at any time. See footnote for line 176. [See Additional Note, 4.1.219]

—Shylock
Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

—Portia
Shylock,⁸⁶ there's thrice the money offered thee.

—Shylock
An oath, an oath; I have^o an oath in heaven!⁸⁷ / I've made
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

—Portia [*looking over the bond*] Why^o this bond is forfeit, / Yes
And lawfully, by this, the Jew may claim
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 terms.^o {tenour}
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, and your learnèd opinion^o {exposition} / interpretation
Has been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof^o you are a well-deserving^o pillar, / Of which // unwavering / unfaltering
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man⁸⁸
To alter me. I stay here on^o my bond. / stand fast to

—Antonio
Most heartily, do I beseech the court
To give the judgment.

—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.⟩⁸⁹

86 *Shylock*: Portia is still amenable to calling Shylock by his first name. Later, she only refers to him as 'the Jew.'

87 To remind the audience that Shylock's oath refers to exacting the forfeit of his bond an additional line, could be added:
(I've sworn to have the forfeit of my bond.)

88 However, as we will soon discover, there is power in the tongue of woman!

89 There is a break in rhythm here that could suggest some type of staged action and a pause in the dialogue. The next three lines are essentially vacuous and a bland recap of what we've already heard, again suggesting a possible break.

In a preferred staging, the Duke could bid Portia to come over to him. The unheard conversation between Portia and the Duke could suggest that the Duke is not convinced about Portia's course of action; in that conversation, Portia could reassure the Duke (perhaps with a subtle hand motion) that she is in total control and that she has no intention of letting

—Portia

For the intent and purpose of the law
Grants full enforcement of the penalty⁹⁰ / forfeiture
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

—Shylock

'Tis very true, O wise and upright^o judge! righteous
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^o here to weigh the flesh? {balance}

—Shylock

I have them ready. <They are in my bag.>

—Portia

Have you^o some surgeon ready,^o on your charge,^o 91 / Is there {Shylock}
To stop his wounds lest he do bleed to death?

—Shylock [*looks at the bond*]

Is it so nominated in^o the bond? 92 / specified within

—Portia

It is not so expressed but what of that^o? / it
'Twere good you do so much for charity^o 93 / out of compassion

—Shylock

I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond. 94

Shylock carry out the deed as he intends. After her conversation with the Duke, Portia returns and repeats what has already been stated (... *for the intent and purpose of the law*) as a way to regain her bearings.

90 {Hath full relation to the penalty}

/ Fully supports the given penalty / Deems to fulfill the terms of penalty

91 {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

92 / Is that condition listed in the bond?

93 Portia puts one last test Shylock, trying to gauge if there is any humanity left in him, yet he fails.

94 Here we see a shift in Portia's position and attitude towards Shylock; rather than continuing to address him she shifts her attention and focus away from him. She does not address Shylock again til after she has thwarted his attempt to kill Antonio, and thereafter only addresses him as 'Jew.' Perhaps her sensitivity now gives way to disgust at what appears to a singular lack of charity and humanity in Shylock.

—Portia

You, merchant,⁹⁵ have you anything to say?

—Antonio

But little. I am braced^o and well-prepared. {armed}
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 still her way^o {use}
To let the wretched^o man outlive his wealth, / des'late
To view with hollow^o eye and wrinkled brow / sunken
His final years of pain and^o poverty.^o / painful {An age of poverty}
But from the mis'ry of this ling'ring penance
I am, by her compassion, now released.^{o 96} / She has, by her compassion, now released me
Commend me to your honourable wife.
Tell her the story^o of Antonio's end. {process}
Say how I loved you; speak me fair in death,^o / even at my death
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once been loved.^{o 97} {a love}
Do not regret^o that you shall lose your friend; {Repent but you} // Hold one regret—⁹⁸
And he regrets^o not that he pays your debt. {repents}
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.^{o 99}

—Bassanio

Antonio, I am married to a wife
Who^o is as dear to me as life itself; {Which}
But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not, with me, esteemed above thy life.^{o 100} / more dear than is thy life
I would lose^o all, ay, sacrifice them all, / give
Here, to this devil, to deliver you.

—Portia

Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by^o to hear you make the offer. / Were she nearby

95 Portia calls Shylock by name on many occasions, but herein refers to Antonio as, 'you, merchant.' After the turning point [259], when Portia gives up all hope to try and dissuade Shylock from his inhumane course, she never again refers to him by name, but only as the 'Jew.' During the trial, Portia refers to Antonio as 'the merchant,' [260, 296]; after Shylock is thwarted, she calls Antonio by his proper name [369, 374].

96 {An age of poverty, from which ling'ring peance | Of such misery doth she cut me off}
The original two lines are herein replaced by the previous three lines.

97 {Whether Bassanio had not once a love}
love: a dear friend, friend who loved him
/ Whether or not Bassanio had been loved.

98 / Have one regret— / Regret one thing—

99 *with all my heart*: wholeheartedly; with total embrace; implies something done with total love and willingness.

/ I will most willingly give up my life / I will—with all my heart—give up my life

100 {Are not with me esteemed above thy life} / Are not so dear to me as is thy life

—Gratziano

I have a wife who I declare° I love. {protest}
I wish° she were in heaven, so she could {would}
Entreat some power to change this dogged° Jew.¹⁰¹ {currish}

—Nerissa

‘Tis well you offer it behind her back;
Your wish would make for an unquiet house.¹⁰²

—Shylock

These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;¹⁰³
I’d prefer° any kin° of Barabbas¹⁰⁴ / rather {stock}
Had been° her husband, rather than a Christian.¹⁰⁵ / Would be / To be
We trifle° time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.¹⁰⁶ / squander / waste but

—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! / righteous > correct in judgement

—Portia

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

—Shylock

Most learnèd judge! A sentence! [*To Antonio*] Come, prepare!^{107 108 109}

Antonio is strapped to a chair

Shylock prepares his blade and approaches Antonio

101 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 giving away of rings).

102 *unquiet*: a) noisy—from all the screaming; b) restless, anxious, troubled

/ Else the wish ‘twould make an unquiet house.

103 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).

104 *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 marry his daughter rather than a Christian (as was the case in her marrying Lorenzo).

105 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.294]

106 / I pray, proceed to sentence

107 This line is haunting in that Shylock is addressing Antonio directly, right before he is about to kill him. Even more haunting would be where Shylock calls Antonio by name, such as: ‘A learnèd judge. Come, Antonio, prepare.’

108 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.300 Also see Additional Notes, 4.1.301a and 4.1.301b]

109 There is an energetic break after this line, which suggests a pause or some interim action. During this pause Portia could be summoned to confer with the Duke, again, while Shylock is preparing. In their conversation the Duke tells Portia that this has gone on long enough and that she should put an end to it. Alternatively, the Duke could catch Portia eye and motion his head indicating that she should now put an end to this. Other action takes place during this time as well, such as Antonio being held down in a chair, Shylock approaching, and perhaps, some hesitancy in Shylock’s action.

—Portia

Tarry a little;^{o110} there is something else.^o

/ Tarry a little longer, there's something more

This bond doth give thee here no drop^o of blood.

{jot}

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, confiscated^o

/ forfeited

Unto the state of Venice.

—Gratziano O upright judge!

Mark Jew, the ruling of a second Daniel.^{o 111}

{Mark Jew. O learnèd judge!}

—Shylock

Is that the law?

—Portia Thyself shall see the act.

<'Tis thine own deeds that fall upon thy head.>

For as thou urgest justice, be assured,

Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st.^{o 112}

/ demanded / requested

110 / Tarry a bit longer; there's one more thing

Tarry a little: hold on, wait a minute, tarry a little longer

Most productions, in an attempt to be dramatic, have Portia urgently yell out this line in order to stop Shylock right before he is about to stab his knife into Antonio. However, using this casual, lingering line—especially when yelled out—never works and the scene always has the feel of being underwhelming and anti-climactic. Such a casual line would best be delivered *after* Shylock has been thwarted or *before* he takes action but not *to stop* his action. Shouting out *stop!* or *wait!* would be the more fitting way stop to an imminent action if one does it with a verbal command.

Some productions have this line come after Portia suddenly finds something in the books (or perhaps while looking at the bond) in an *aha* moment. However, this notion should be dismissed outright as it certain that Portia, with the help of Bellario, knew the law and the outcome of the case before she entered the courtroom. She would not have entered the court otherwise. (This prior knowledge is also evidenced when she cites two Venetian laws, one here and one later in the scene.) She could, however, *feign* having just discovered something new as part of her ploy but this might be a stretch. As such, all staging should be done under the assumption that Portia knew the outcome of the case before entering the court; all the prior interactions were simply her way to test the characters and gauge their merit or worthiness, or lack thereof.

Another staging, more convincing than yelling out a word to stop the action, would be for Portia to *physically stop* Shylock by blocking his knife-thrust with her cane. To set this up, Portia would enter the courtroom with a finely-crafted cane. She would use this cane repeatedly throughout the scene. For instance, when she urges Shylock to take three times the principle, she could tap her cane on the box of ducats or stick it into the box of coins. In this part of the scene, with Antonio strapped to a chair, Portia would be standing between Shylock and Antonio; and when Shylock is about to plunge his knife into Antonio, Portia could suddenly block his arm with her cane to stop him. Only after Shylock's action is thwarted would she deliver this line. (In terms of Freudian symbolism Portia, pretending to be as a man, enters the court with 'biggest stick' and puts a stop to Shylock's knife thrust with it.)

The original text does not indicate that Portia stops Shylock's action by a verbal or physical directive. More likely, Portia would stop Shylock *before* he is in the act of stabbing Antonio (which would then leave us in question as to whether or not Shylock would have gone through with the act after all). In this staging, Shylock approaches Antonio and is hesitant, takes a deep breath, tries to drum up his resolve. And just when he seems to have overcome his hesitation and is ready, Portia casually taps her cane on his arm (or his hand or his knife), or pushes it into his chest, or casually rests it on his shoulder, and again being one-up and in total control, says, *Tarry a little*. Shylock is already tarrying, so what Portia is actually saying is, 'Tarry a little more.'

Why does Portia carry this act to the very end and only stop Shylock when he is about to, or seems about to, kill Antonio? It could be part of her test, to gauge the character of Shylock; or as she explains later, when she asks Shylock to tarry for a second time, she could have prolonged things in order to incriminate Shylock, to have his own actions prove that he "directly or indirectly sought to take the life of a citizen." [See Additional Notes, 4.1.302]

111 { Mark Jew, O learned Judge }

The original line contains six iambs, which is herein corrected. Later in the scene Gratziano refers to Portia as 'a second Daniel' two times; one of those references to a second Daniel has been transposed here.

This is the first of Gratziano's mocking of Shylock's praise of the judge. Gratziano turns the tables on the 'Jew' here [310] and also in lines 314, 319, 329, and 336. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.x]

—Gratziano

O learnèd judge! Mark,^o Jew—a learnèd judge!

/ Hear > ‘mark my words’

—Shylock

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

/ Pay thrice the bond

—Bassanio Here is the money.¹¹³

—Portia

But wait. The Jew shall have justice, all justice.¹¹⁴
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

/ That course is gone. The Jew shall have all justice

—Gratziano

O Jew! An upright judge, a learnèd judge!¹¹⁵

—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^o so much
As makes it light or heavy by the weight^o ¹¹⁶
Or the division of a twentieth part
Of one poor scruple^o—nay, if the scale do turn^o
But in^o the measure of a single hair,^o ¹¹⁸
Thou diest,^o and all thy goods are forfeited.^o ¹¹⁹

{but}

{in the substance}

/ gram / ounce ¹¹⁷ // tip / move

/ Upon {But in the estimation of a hair}

/ You’ll die {are confiscate}

—Gratziano

A second Daniel. Here, O Jew, a Daniel!¹²⁰

112 *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. She repeats this same charge for strict justice a few lines later, saying: ‘The Jew shall have all justice’ [317]; ‘He shall have merely justice and the bond.’ [335].

113 Bassanio is liberally offering his (and Portia’s) money even though the case has already been settled against Shylock. Bassanio has no concern about the 3000 ducats, only that Antonio be delivered without another moment’s delay.

114 {Soft! The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste} *soft, no haste*: hold on, don’t rush things.

The line, as it appears in Q1 and F, contains 11 syllables and, thus, does not conform to the standard meter. Most editions break the single line of the original into two lines, with one word (*Soft!*) on the first line and the additional five iambs on the second line. This, however, offers no improvement.

115 Gratziano’s insertion into the matter, with the same basic line, over and over again, may get tiresome. Thus, this line could be deleted.

116 / As that which makes it heavier or lighter | By the

117 *a scruple*: a very small weight, equal to 1/24 oz.

118 *estimation*: refers to a measure or value, most likely the distance that the center indicator of the scale moves. Thus, if the just pound of flesh that Shylock exacts, when measured against a one-pound weight, tips the scale in either direction, by the distance of a hair, Shylock dies. The *estimation* of a hair could also refer to the weight of one hair.

119 / Of but one twentieth part of an ounce— | Nay, if the scales do tip upon the weight | Óf but a single hair, then thou will die | And all thy goods will go unto the state.

120 {A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew}

Earlier in the scene, Shylock likened Portia’s judgement (when it sided with him) to that of Daniel. Here, when the tables have turned, Gratziano uses that same praise, calling Portia *a second 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

Now, infidel, I have you in my grip.^o {on the hip}¹²¹

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

—Shylock
Give me my principle^o and let me go. / the sum I'm owed

—Bassanio
I have it ready for thee, here it is.¹²²

—Portia [*to Bassanio*]
He hath refused it in the open court.^o
He shall have merely^o justice and his bond.¹²³ / only
¹²⁴

—Shylock
Shall I not have barely^o my principle? ¹²⁵ / even

—Portia
Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.¹²⁶

—Shylock
Well then, the devil give him^o good of it! ¹²⁷ / has made
I'll stay no more to argue.^o ¹²⁸ {I'll stay no longer question}

—Portia Tarry Jew,
The law hath yet another hold on you.¹²⁹

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*).

121 *on the hip*: Refers to a wrestling term where one opponent has the other by the hip, and thus commands a position of advantage. The same expression was used by Shylock when first referring to Antonio [1.3.43-44]: 'If I can catch him once upon the hip | I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.'

122 {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 destroy Shylock—his only interest is Antonio. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.333]

123 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. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335]

124 Two lines of Gratziano have herein been deleted. {A Daniel! Still say I, a second Daniel! | I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.} Gratziano already said this and the repetition does not add anything of value; rather it only distracts from the exchange between Portia and Shylock.

125 When Shylock is thwarted from getting his pound of flesh he accepts the prior offer of thrice the principal. When getting this triple sum seems unlikely, and he accepts defeat, he is ready to be done with the matter. Thus, he only asks for the minimum amount he can expect, which is the return of his principle, yet Portia refuses even this.

126 / Which thou must take at thine own peril, Jew.

127 {Why then, the devil give him good of it!} / Why then, the devil's work has well been done.

128 {I'll stay no longer question} *question*: to argue, protest, or debate the case, etc.

Shylock gives up, accepts defeat, and is trying to make a quick exit, before Portia catches hold of his again. But alas, he once again hears those ominous words, *Tarry, Jew*.

129 In the source novella (*Il Perecone*), upon which the story of *The Merchant of Venice* is based, the Jewish usurer is defeated by the wits of the female judge, the merchant is saved, and the Jew leaves the court with nothing, not even his principal. Here, the Author departs from the source story by adding proceedings where the Jew is not only defeated but

It is enacted^o in the laws of Venice,
 If it be proved against a foreigner,^o
 That by direct or indirect attempts
 He seek the life of any citizen
 The party 'gainst the which he doth conspire^o
 Shall seize^o one half his goods; the other half
 Goes^o to the privy^o coffer of the state,
 And the offender's life lies in the mercy^o
 Of the Duke alone, 'gainst all other voice.^o 131
 In this^o predicament I say thou stand'st.
 For it appears by all recent proceedings^o 132
 That indirectly, and directly too,^o
 Thou hast contrived against the very life
 Of the defendant,^o and thou hast incurred^o
 The punishment that I have just now stated.^o 133
 Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke. 134

/ It is here written
 {an alien} 130
 {contrive}
 / get
 {Comes} / private
 {mercy}
 / and his word is final
 {which}
 / by all that has transpired
 / That both directly, and indirectly
 / this same merchant // committed
 {The danger formally by me rehearsed}

—Gratziano 135

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself!
 And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 Thou hast not sums enough to buy the rope.^o
 Therefore, thou must be hanged at the state's charge. 136

{not left the value of the cord}

—Duke

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,

destroyed—both in terms of his wealth and his Judaism (through his forced conversion to Christianity). [See Additional Note, 4.1.342]

130 *alien*: refers to foreigners and non-Venetians. Jews, at the time, were not allowed to own property in Venice and were held as 'aliens.'

131 ... lies in the hands of | The Duke alone, above all other voice.

132 {In which predicament I say thou stand'st; | For it appears by manifest proceeding} / as all those here have witnessed / And this predicament, I say, is one | In which thou stand. As everyone has witnessed

133 {The danger formally by me rehearsed} ... and thou hast committed | The very crime that I have herein mentioned.

134 Portia's actions go beyond the call of what is needed to free Antonio. Perhaps her intention changed, midstream, after she encountered Shylock, whose vengefulness and complete lack of mercy was alien and offensive to Portia's sentiments. Is she being cruel by stripping Shylock of his wealth (when such a course of action is not needed to free Antonio) or is she dispensing moral justice by having Shylock give half his wealth to Antonio?

A very interesting change takes place in Portia when she comes across the unflinching adversary of Shylock. According to the theory of Character Types (a full explanation of which can be found on the website), Portia comes into the courtroom as a Type 3 (which is her natural Type) and tries to solve her problem in a Type 3 way—which is through shrewdness, ingenuity, reasoning, and trickery (if needed). However, she fails. So, she steps up her game and tries to be even more persuasive, more ingenious, more Type 3, but fails again. According to the theory of Character Types, when a person fails, or runs up against a wall, using the means that are natural to his Character Type, his first response is to increase the intensity of the same action. If that effort fails—and he comes to realize that that same kind of action will keep on failing—he abandons that course of action and switches to the opposite Type, which is not natural to him but is available to him during times of crisis or impasse. In this case, Portia employs a Type 3 approach; after she “hits a wall” and realizes that her present course of action will not move Shylock, she shifts from Type 3 to its opposite, which is Type 9. The Type 9 approach is straight-forward, hard-hitting, and uncompromising; it is based on a guileless, frontal assault that can come across as being merciless or brutal. Type 3 presents the spirit of the law whereas Type 9 is all law, all justice. Portia comes into the courtroom with her persuasive Type 3 approach but she switches to Type 9 and proceeds to “throw the book” at Shylock. After the court scene is over she reverts back to her Type 3 way of doing things (using charm, strategem, trickery, etc.) and sets about to test Bassanio's love and loyalty. (However, after he gives away his ring, her Type 9 tendencies surface again.)

135 As part of the staging, Gratziano could run over to 'help' Shylock get down on his knees.

136 For some dialogue that could be included here, see Additional Notes: 4.1.363

I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth—it is Antonio’s.
The other half goes^o to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.¹³⁷

/ As for thy wealth, one half goes to Antonio.
{ comes }

—Portia
Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.¹³⁸

—Shylock
Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house.¹³⁹ You take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.¹⁴⁰

⟨Nay, show your Christian mercy—kill me now!⟩

—Portia
What mercy can you render him, Antonio?¹⁴¹

—Gratziano
A noose, for free^o—and nothing else for God’s sake!¹⁴²

{ A halter, gratis }

—Antonio
So please my lord, the Duke, and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods—
I am content with that, so long as he
Will let me have the other half in trust
⟨And use that money to try and restore
The many lives he hath so sadly ruined.⟩^{143 144}

/ To give, upon his death, unto the Christian
/ Who, as of late, did steal away his daughter

137 / Lest humbleness reduce it to a fine.

138 Why is Portia so keen on 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 debt—or simply drive both “unto a fine”? [See Additional Notes, 4.1.335, 4.1.369]

139 *house*: in the first instance, it is used in the biblical sense of one’s 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) that sustains or supports it.

140 This passage is loosely based on Marlow’s, *The Jew of Malta*. Marlow’s Barabas uttered similar words after losing all his money. He says that the injury is far less to take a man’s life than be the cause of his misery. (To express this same idea, an additional line could be added to Shylock’s passage, as suggested above.)

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.

141 In the original version of the play, Antonio shows his Christian brand of mercy by forcing Shylock to convert to Christianity (and thus saving his soul). Shylock already lost half his wealth, which was not catastrophic since Shylock was a rich man, but this forced conversion to Christianity deprived him of the open practice of his faith and the camaraderie of his fellow Jews. Ironically, this conversion did not prevent him from continuing his practice of usury, the very thing about Shylock that Antonio deplored.

142 For additional lines, see Additional Notes, 4.1.379

143 { I am content, so he will let me have | The other half in use, to render it | Upon his death, unto the gentleman | That lately stole his daughter }

In the original, Antonio asks to “have the other half in use.” It is clear that he will render the principle to Lorenzo and Jessica upon Shylock’s death but this “use” is unclear. It could mean: a) Antonio will have use of the money for his business (especially since he is now a “bankrupt,” having lost all his ships) and take all the profit gained from the use of the money, and render the initial amount (the principal) to Lorenzo and Jessica upon Shylock’s death, or b) give the principle and all profits gained from “use” to Lorenzo and Jessica upon Shylock’s death.

144 In the original, Antonio half in use, and Shylock’s remaining half all go to Lorenzo and Jessica upon Shylock’s death. Thus, in the end, *all* of Shylock’s money will go to Lorenzo and Jessica. Rather than giving everything to Lorenzo and

And two conditions more:° that for this favour°
He presently forswear° all acts of usury°¹⁴⁵
<That he may garner a more Christian spirit.°>
The other, that he do record a gift,
That leaves, upon his death, all his possessions¹⁴⁷
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

{Two things provided more} / kindness
/ renounce {become a Christian}¹⁴⁶
/ kindness

—Duke
He shall do this or else I do recant
The pardon that I just° pronouncèd here.

/ withdraw / retract
{late}

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

—Shylock
I am content.

—Duke We'll write the deed of gift.¹⁴⁸

—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 wouldst not walk from court.
Though would be dead and hanging from the gallows.¹⁴⁹

Jessica—including Antonio's share of half—a more Christian approach would be for Antonio to use his half to repay all the people who's lives were ruined by Shylock's usury. Antonio seems to know something about karma or divine retribution and will not take any of Shylock's ill-gained money; for money that is stolen from others, or gained at the expense of others, can never bring benefit to the one who possesses it.

145 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 is not found in any of the source stories used by the Author (such as the play's primary source, *Il Perecone*). In those versions the Jewish money-lender is foiled, the bond is forfeit, the merchant is saved, and the Jew loses his principal—and storms out of court in defeat. This forced conversion fails on many levels and is replaced with a sanction barring Shylock from practicing usury. Just as the quality of mercy cannot be strained (forced) so, too, the soul of man cannot be forced.

Antonio's dispute with Shylock is founded upon his "ungodly" usury not his Jewishness. Thus, Antonio forcing Shylock to convert to Christianity obscures and corrupts the real issue of contention and, ironically, does not prevent Shylock from continuing his practice of usury. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.383]

146 [See Additional Notes, 4.1.382]

147 [Here in the court, of all he dies possessed]

148 In the original, Portia tells the clerk (Nerissa) to draw up a deed of gift for Lorenzo. {*Por*: Clerk, draw the deed of gift} Soon thereafter Nerissa sets out to deliver the deed to Shylock (which, however, she never has time to write). In this rectification, Nerissa does not write up the deed nor is she asked to deliver it and so this line could be re-assigned to the Duke, who says: "We'll write the deed of gift," where someone from the court will write up the deed (and not Nerissa).

149 The original lines read:

{In christ'ning shalt thou have two godfathers. | Had I been the judge, thou shouldst have had ten more |
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font}

In the original, where Shylock is converted to Christianity, Gratziano refers to the two godfathers that Shylock will have at his christening. He then says that instead of having two godfathers he would have had ten more men to make up a jury of twelve, who would then find Shylock guilty and bring him to the gallows instead of the font. Jurors were often referred to,

Exit Shylock

—Duke [*to Portia*]

Sir, I entreat you home with me for dinner.

—Portia

I humbly do request^o your grace of pardon. {desire}

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is best^o I presently set forth.^o {meet} / that I set forth at once

—Duke

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, fully thank^o this gentleman {Antonio, gratify}

For, in my mind, you are much in his debt.^o 150 {bound to him}

Exeunt Duke and his attendants

—Bassanio [*to Portia*]

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend

Have, by your wisdom been this day acquitted^o / delivered / relieved

Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof, / From

Three thousand ducats, due^o unto the Jew, / owed

We freely give for all your pains withal.^o 151 / for all your courteous pains

—Antonio

And stand indebted, over and above,

In love and service to you evermore.^o / In love and gratitude for all you've done

—Portia

He is well-paid who^o is well-satisfied {that}

And I, in helping you,^o am satisfied, {delivering you}

And therein do account myself well paid.

It ne'er did cross my mind to ask for payment. 152

[*to Bassanio*] I pray you, 'know' me when we meet again. 153

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

—Bassanio

Dear sir, perforce^o I must entreat^o you further: 154 {of force} {attempt} / beseech

in jest, as 'godfathers' because when issuing the sentence of death they would be sending the condemned man to God. If retaining the reference to twelve men, these lines could be rectified as follows:

/ I would have found twelve men to make a jury / Who find you guilty—then off to the gallows!

However, since the notion of two men (for christening) does not apply in this version the change to twelve men does not carry any meaning either. Hence, the reference to two and then twelve men has been emended with a more direct statement.

150 / Antonio, give your fullest gratitude | Unto this man; methinks you're in his debt

151 {We freely cope your courteous pains withal} cope: match, give in exchange for

/ We freely give as payment for your pains / We freely compensate your pains withal.

152 {My mind was never yet more mercenary} / My mind was never bent on compensation

153 *know me*: a) recognize me, b) "know me" in the Biblical sense.

154 / Dear sir, please wait, I must insist again—

Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:
To not deny my genuine^o request,
And but^o to pardon me for my insistence.^o 155

/ my most sincere
/ Also // persistence

—Portia

You press me far, and therefore I will yield:
Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;^o 156
And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you. 157
Do not draw back your hand—I'll take no more. 158
And you, in love, shall not deny me this! 159

/ to oblige you
/ And, as a token of your love, this ring

/ And in the name of love do not say 'no'

—Bassanio

This ring, good sir—alas, it is a trifle.
I will not shame myself to give you this.

—Portia

I will have nothing else but only this;
And now, methinks, my mind is set on it.^o

{I have a mind to 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 a public announcement.^o 160
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

{proclamation} / searching through the city

—Portia

I see, sir, you are liberal^o in offers. 161
You taught^o me first to beg and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

/ generous
/ urged

—Bassanio

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife.
And when she put it on she made me vow
That I should^o neither^o sell, nor give, nor lose it.

/ would // never

155 {Not to deny me, and to pardon me.}

156 Many editions indicate that Portia is requesting Antonio's gloves. This is an odd tribute; and Antonio is unlikely to be sporting gloves. Preferably, Portia could request the gloves from Bassanio; then Portia's request would have a purpose—to reveal Bassanio's ring so she could then ask for that. [See Additional Notes, 4.1.422]

157 *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.'

158 *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 defending it) in order to avert Portia's anger at him for giving away the ring. [5.1.177-8]

159 *in love*: in kindness. It carries the meaning, 'in the name of love.'

160 {And find it out by proclamation} / And go in search of it both near and far

Bassanio offers to find the most valuable ring in Venice by 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 to give away.

161 *liberal in your offers*: generous in what you offer but not in what you are willing to give

—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,
She would not bear you enmity° forever ¹⁶²
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.

/ ploy

{hold out enemy} / hold you with contempt

Exeunt Portia and Nerissa

—Antonio

My lord° Bassanio, let him have the ring.
Let his deservings and my love withal°
Be valued 'gainst° the vow made to your wife. ¹⁶³

/ My dear

/ for you

/ Be weighed against

—Bassanio [*giving 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!

/ and bid him dine with us

Exit Gratiano

Come now my friend for we shall celebrate. ¹⁶⁴
When comes the morning, early, off we go°
And fly toward Belmont, come Antonio. ^{165 166}

Exeunt

162 {She would not hold out enemy for ever} *hold out enemy*: hold you as an enemy; hate you; be angry with you

163 {Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment}

164 A rhyming line could be added here: (It's time to welcome love and banish hate.)

165 Q1 concludes this scene with three, non-rhyming lines:

{Come, you and I will go thither presently. | And in the morning, early, we will both | Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.}

166 / When morning comes, unto Belmont we go | In blessed freedom, come Antonio.

—Nerissa [*to Gratziano*]

Come, good sir, will you show me to this shop?°

{house}

Exeunt

ACT FIVE - Scene One ¹ 5.1

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

—Lorenzo

The moon shines bright, on^o such a night as this, {in}
When the sweet^o wind did gently kiss the trees— / soft
And they did make no noise. On such a night
Troilus methinks mounted^o the Trojan walls / Did young prince Troilus mount
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night. / Where his beloved lay

—Jessica On^o such a night, {In}²
Did Thisbe go to meet with Pyramus^o / her beloved
But saw the lion's form and not her love,^o / shadow, not her love
And ran away in fright.^o {And ran dismayed away}

—Lorenzo On such a night,
Queen Dido stood upon the wild shore^o {wild sea banks}
With a willow in hand,^o wafting her love³ / Holding a willow, and
To come again to Carthage.⁴

—Jessica On such a night,
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs / Medea gathered herbs that brought new life
That did renew old Jason.^{5 6} / To Jason's dying father.

—Lorenzo On such a night,
Did Jessica steal from her wealthy father^o {the wealthy Jew}
And with a poor belov'd^o did run from Venice {an unthrift love}⁷ / a wasteful love
As far as Belmont.

—Jessica Yes, on such a night,

1 As it stands, the length of Act Five is too long and needs to be significantly reduced; after the finale of the court scene the play should tie up loose ends and come to a quick conclusion. However Act Five, rather than being short is protracted with a lot of meandering and philosophical discourse that is burdensome and taxing. (Before 1900 it was a common practice to simply delete the whole of Act Five, which is unacceptable and leaves the play unresolved.) The length of this scene could be reduced by removing most of the Lorenzo-Jessica dialogue, which includes all the lines marked in purple. Further editing could be accomplished by removing most or all of the subsequent lines marked in purple. In sum, anything done to reduce the length of Act Five, without compromising the text, should be considered.

[For editing suggestions See Additional Notes 5.1.1]

2 Every verse in the original begins with 'In such a night' rather than 'On such a night.'

3 {Stood Dido with a willow in her hand | Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love | To come again to Carthage}

4 To complete the legend an additional line could be added: (But alas, | Aeneas ne'er returned). However, that would change the romanticized versions of the legends that the two lovers are recalling.

5 An additional line could be added to complete the legend: (Yet Jason still left her for Creon's daughter) but that would change the romantic recall.

6 The four legends recalled by the lovers only tell of the romanticized aspects; however, when the full scope of these stories is revealed we see that they all tell of betrayal, abandonment, and tragedy, and all end with death. This may suggest that the outer appearance of harmony the two lovers belie an underlying turmoil. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.13] [See Appendix: "Night Game" for summaries of the four legends].

7 *unthrift love*: a) a poor or wasteful lover, or b) a wasteful, carefree (or extravagant) kind of love.

Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And not a one was true.^o

{And ne'er a true one}

—Lorenzo On such a night,
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and yet he did forgive her.^o

{and he forgave it her}

—Jessica
I would outplay^o you had nobody come
But hark, I hear the footing^o of a man.⁸

{out-night}
/ stepping / footsteps

Enter Stephano, a messenger

—Lorenzo
Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

—Stephano
A friend.

—Lorenzo What friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?⁹

—Stephano
Stephano is my name, and I bring word:
My mistress will, before the break of day,
Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about^o
By holy crosses where^o she kneels and prays
For her husband's return.^o

/ pause nearby / stop beside
/ Each holy cross, and there
{For happy wedlock hours}¹⁰

—Lorenzo Who comes with her?

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

—Lorenzo
He has not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in,^o I pray thee, Jessica
And, with good graciousness,^o let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

/ But let's go in
{ceremoniously}

8 / I would outplay you at this night game—but | Listen, I hear the stepping of a man.

9 The original has a stray iamb in the form of 'a friend.' This can be rectified by deleting that iamb.

Mess: A friend! || *Lor:* A friend, what friend? Your name I pray you friend?

Mess: A friend! || *Lor:* What friend? Your name I pray you friend?

10 The original line, *For happy wedlock hours*, could be used here if the timeline in 3.3 is not corrected. Later in the scene Portia says, *We have been praying for our husbands' welfare* and this could also be reflected here with the line: *For her husband's well-fare*.

Enter Launcelet

—Launcelet [*mimicking a trumpet*]

Sola, sola! ° Do-ta-da-do-to-doooo! ¹¹ / Da-doo, da-doo

—Lorenzo
Who calls?

—Launcelet
Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? [*calling*] Master Lorenzo! Sola, sola!

—Lorenzo
Leave° hollering° man: I am here! ¹² / Stop {halloaing}

—Launcelet Sola. Where, where? ¹³

—Lorenzo Here!

—Launcelet
Tell him there's a post come from my master with his horn full of good news. My master will be here, ere morning. ¹⁴

Exit

—Lorenzo
Sweet soul, let's in and there await° their coming. {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,° / is nearby
And bring some music forth into the air. / And have the players fill the air with music

Exit Stephano

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank.
Here we will sit and let the sounds of music

11 {Sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!}

Some commentators hold that this is an imitation of a post horn and that Launcelet is mouthing this tune to announce the arrival of himself, as a messenger who has come to deliver a post. *Sola* is used as a hunting cry in *Love's Labor Lost* and Launcelet could be imitating this cry. *Wo ha, ho* is used as a falconer's call. It may be that Launcelet is parodying a tucket, which is 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 newfound tucket (which may be seen as a pretentious self-assignment of status) is here mocking it with his own, self-styled tucket. In this rectification, Launcelet mouths more familiar words that most people would recognize as a trumpet melody. More effective than mouthing the entry found in the original or in this rectification would be for Launcelet to form a mouthpiece with his fingers and actually blow out the sound of a mock trumpet.

12 {Leave hollowing man, here.}

leave hollowing: a) *leave hollering*—stop hollering, b) *leave halloaing*—stop making hunting calls. Editors emend this word differently: *hollering* (Oxford, Applause); *holloaing* (Cambridge, Kittredge Norton); *holloing* (Bevington)

13 Launcelet continues with his mocking; he clearly knows the whereabouts of Lorenzo but continues to overlook him.

This mockery continues in the next line when he is delivering a message to Lorenzo yet referring to him in the third person.

14 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.

Creep in° our ears. Soft stillness and the night / Enter
 Become the touches° of sweet harmony.¹⁵ / echoes
 Sit, Jessica. Look how the dome° of heaven {floor} / vault
 Is thick inlaid with patterns° of bright gold. {patens}¹⁶
 In but the smallest orb° which thou can see / star
 We hear° the voice of an angel. Behold / There sings an angel. With wonder behold
 The wondrous° sound of this e'rlasting choir.^{17 18} / beauteous / lum'nous
 Such harmony is in immortal souls
 But while this muddy vesture of decay° / the body / our spirit
 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.¹⁹

Enter musicians

Come ho, and wake Diana° with a hymn;²⁰ / the moonlight
 With sweetest touches²¹ find° your mistress' ear {pierce} / reach
 And draw her home with music.²²

Music plays

—Jessica
 I'm never made merry when I hear music.^{23 24} {I am never merry when I hear sweet music}

—Lorenzo
 You have to listen, dear, with all your heart.²⁵ {The reason is your spirits are attentive}
 For do but note a wild and wanton herd
 Or the racing about of youthful colts
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud—

15 *touches*: notes produced by the fingers touching the strings of an instrument, especially a harp
 16 *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.
 17 {There's not the smallest orb which though behold'st | But in his motion like an angel sings | Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins.}
still choiring: eternally singing, always singing in perfect harmony. Q1: still quiring
cherubins: This is an irregular plural form that 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 or eternally clear-sighted, but it could also 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]
 18 These five lines, though not marked in purple, could easily be deleted.
 19 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 is not keen or refined enough to hear the divine music. This philosophical exposition coming out of Lorenzo's mouth is misplaced. Such a discourse does not compare in sentiment to the single line: 'If music be the food of love, play on.'
 20 Diana is the goddess of the moon. Lorenzo is asking the musicians to play so as to coax out Diana (the moon) out from behind a cloud.
 21 *touches*: strains, chords. Refers to notes played by the fingers touching or plucking, a string
 22 Since word of Portia's imminent arrival has been deleted (see above) the idea that the musicians should play to help guide her home does not apply.
 23 To be understood as: "Hearing sweet music does not make me merry." Jessica says that she is never merry when hearing sweet music which suggests that even the most beautiful music does not bring her joy; or, she does not enjoy listening to music, which may be due to her harsh upbringing under the watchful eye of her father. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.69]
 24 Lorenzo's discordant and long-winded reply is lost on Jessica (and certainly does not provide her with any comfort).
 25 / All you need do is listen with your heart / Why then, my love, just listen with your heart
 This single line should replace the whole of Lorenzo's discordant discourse that follows.

Which is the hot condition of their blood—
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 They shall stand in muted and calm repose,^o
 Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze,
 By the sweet power of music. Therefore, the poet
 Did write^o that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods,
 And was so stubborn,^o hard, and full of rage
 But music, for the time, doth change his nature.
 The man that hath no music in himself
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night
 And his affect as dark as the neth' world.
 Let no such man be trusted. Hear^o the music.

{They shall perceive them make a mutual stand}

{feign}

{Since naught so stockish}

{And his affections dark as Erebus}

{Mark}

Enter Portia and Nerissa

—Portia

That light we see is burning in my hall.
 How far that little candle throws his beams!
 So shines a good deed in a wicked^o world.

{naughty} / darkened

—Nerissa

When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

—Portia

So doth the greater glory dim the lesser.^o
 A substitute shines brightly as a king
 Until the king arrives^o and then his status^o
 Empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
 Into the vaster ocean.^o Music, listen.^o

{less}

{be by} / returns // {state} / rank

{main of waters} {hark}

—Nerissa

It is your music, madam, from the house.

—Portia

Nothing is good without the proper setting:^o ²⁶
 Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.^o

/ right context

/ with the night

—Nerissa

Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

26 {Nothing is good, I see, without respect} *respect*: a) context, the support of a beneficial context, mood, etc.
 Portia is saying: Things are made good by the proper 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]

—Portia

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither one is heard;° and yet, I think, {is attended}
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling,° would be thought {honking} / bird is crowing
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things, just by the proper season {season}
Come to their rightful place and true perfection.²⁷ {To their right praise and true perfection.}
Peace, how° the moon sleeps with her secret love²⁸ Peace ho! / Look how
And would not be awakened.

Music stops

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

—Portia
He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo—
By the bad voice. ° / No, you are true > replaces both lines

—Lorenzo Dear lady, welcome home!

—Portia
We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
And hope our words have helped them both to prosper.²⁹
Have° they returned? {Are}

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

—Portia Go, Lorenzo, {Go Nerissa}
Give order to my servants that they take° / speak
No note at all° of our being absent hence,° / Neither a word // our recent absence
Nor you Lorenzo, Jessica, nor you.

27 {How many things by season seasoned are}
/ All things, by right occasion, come upon | Their highest place and find their true perfection.
/ How many things by their appointed season | Are thus delivered to their true perfection.

28 Q1 reads: {Peace, how the moon sleeps with Endymion}
Many editions (including Oxford, Cambridge, Bevington, etc.) punctuate the verse as: *Peace ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion. Peace, ho!* Indicates a surprise (such as 'Oh look!' or 'Wait now!').

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 the moon—now hidden behind a cloud—has gone into a cave to sleep with Endymion.

This scene can be staged in two ways: a) *Peace. How the moon sleeps with Endymion*: Portia refers to the moon behind a cloud, or b) *Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion*: Portia, in surprise, comes upon Lorenzo and Jessica, who are asleep in each other's arms, likening them to Diana and Endymion. [See Additional Note, 5.1.109]

29 {Which speed, we hope, the better for our words} > Whose success, we hope, has been supported by our prayers
which speed: a) who succeed, who prosper, b) who quickly come to a beneficial result

A tucket sounds ³⁰

—Lorenzo

Your husband is at hand, I hear his trumpet.
We are no tell-tales, madam, fear you not.

[*Exit Lorenzo and Jessica*] ³¹

—Portia ³²

This night methinks is but the daylight sick.^o
It looks a little paler, like^o a day
As when the sun is hidden by a cloud.

/ a sickly day
{ 'its }
{ Such as the day is when the sun is hid }

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers

—Bassanio

We should hold day with those who dwell at night
If you would walk in absence of the sun.³⁴

{ Antipodes } ³³ / all the night-dwellers

—Portia

So let me give light^o but let me not be light: ³⁵
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband.³⁶

{ Let me give light }

And never shall Bassanio be for me.^o
But God will^o all.³⁷ And welcome home, my lord.³⁸

/ my lord be so for me
{ sort }

—Bassanio

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,

30 A tucket is a distinctive 'signature tune' played on a trumpet to announce the arrival of those of high or royal standing. The tucket we hear is to signify the arrival of Bassanio. It is not likely that any of the parties have yet heard this tucket but, by knowing of Bassanio's imminent arrival, they surmise that it is Bassanio's tucket.

31 Lorenzo and Jessica could exit here and re-enter shortly before 266 (when Portia mentions him as a witness to her absence.) Having Lorenzo and Jessica exit here (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, which she cannot do since she's involved in the subsequent action; and b) since none of the subsequent dialogue [123-287] involves Lorenzo or Jessica their presence is moot and may even diffuse the focus. In support of this emendation we find that Lorenzo does not greet any of his friends when they enter. This would be odd and somewhat awkward were he still on the stage.

32 What follows are three uninspired lines. One could keep the first line (to indicate Portia's negative tone, as these are the first words she utters when she hears about Bassanio's arrival) or delete all three. [See Notes, 5.1.126]

33 { We should hold day with the Antipodes }

Antipodes: (lit. 'opposite feet'); those who walk on the opposite side of the globe; those who walk during the day when most people walk during the night (and vice versa).

34 Herein Portia is likened to the brightness of the sun and her walking to the sun's movement. Notice the complete opposite sentiment in Portia's first comments toward Bassanio, as *daylight sick*.

35 The meter has been changed from the original by shifting the line by one syllable: "So let me give light but let me not be light" with the accentuated syllable shifting from *light* to *give* and *be*.

be light: be unchaste; be light (and not heavy or solid) in the keeping of one's vows; *Light* in this context is in contrast to *heavy*. *Be light* refers to Portia being unfaithful which would cause Bassanio to be *heavy* (sad). As these are Portia's first words upon Bassanio's return, the implication is that neither wife nor husband should be light in keeping their vows.

36 { For a light wife doth make a heavy husband }

a light wife: a wife who is light in keeping her vows, a wife who easily breaks her vows

a heavy husband: a husband who is sad, who is weighed down with grief

This line could be expanded into two: For when a wife is light in keeping vows | It maketh for a heavy-hearted husband.

37 { But God sort all } God works everything according to His plan; God will work it all out and put things in order.

38 This is an impersonal and somewhat distant welcome. Portia never truly welcomes Bassanio nor does she even address him except when she is 'exclaiming on him' for having given away her ring.

To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Gratziano and Nerissa converse

—Portia

You should, in all sense, be much bound to him^o 39 / You should, in every way, be bound to him
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

—Antonio

The bounds of which I'm well-acquitted of. 40

—Portia

Sir, you are very welcome to our house. / We are most honored, sir, to have you here
It must be shown^o in other ways than words; {It must appear}
Thus I'll make short of a long-winded welcome.^o 41 {Therefore I'll scant this breathing courtesy}

—Gratziano [*to Nerissa*]

By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong! 42 43
In faith,^o I gave it to the judge's clerk. / In truth
Would he were castrated, for all I care 44
Since you do take it, love, so much to heart. / Since you, my love, take it so much to heart

—Portia

A quarrel, ho, already? What about?^o 45 {What's the matter?}

—Gratziano

About a hoop of gold, a paltry^o ring / petty
That she did give me, whose inscription^o was, {poesy} / lettering
For all the world,^o like a trite poem^o inscribed^o 46 / For all to see / By all accounts
Upon a knife: 'Love me and leave me not.' 47

—Nerissa

Why talk you of the poem^o or the value? {poesy} / wording
You swore to me when I did give it you^o / I presented it

39 {You should, in all sense, be much bound to him}

in all sense: in every sense, in every way

40 {No more than I am well acquitted of} / And from such bounds I have been fully freed

41 / Thus I'll skip over / Therefore I'll spare you

42 Gratziano swears by yonder moon, which is fickle and inconsistent, and which, at this point in the play, has been obscured by clouds.

43 The episode concerning the rings is repetitious and many of the lines could be deleted, especially those marked in purple. Anything that shortens Act Five without compromising the substance of the play should be considered.

44 {Would he were gelt that had it, for my part} *gelt*: gelded or castrated

45 Portia knows exactly what this is about. Just as in the court scene—where Portia is one-up on Shylock, knowing full well the law and the likely outcome before she enters the court—here, again, she is one-up, now on Bassanio, knowing full well that he gave away her ring to the judge.

46 {For all the world like cutler's poetry}

47 It was common for a trite poem to be inscribed on a knife blade and such a motto, or poesy, was put on the blade by the knife-maker, not a poet. Gratziano is trying to lessen the value of Nerissa's ring by saying its inscription was like a poem one would find on a knife. The irony is that Gratziano, whose words are often crude and unpoetic, is now placing some kind of value on poetry. To his credit, however, he did remember the inscription.

That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it would^o lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me,^o yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been more respectful^o and have kept it.
Gave to a judge's clerk?! No, God's my judge,^o
That clerk will never grow hair upon *her* face!^o 48

{should}
> on my account
{respective} / reverent
F1: {But well I know}

—Gratziano
He will, and if he live to be a man.

—Nerissa
Ay, if a *woman* live to be a man.

—Gratziano
Now, by this hand,^o I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbèd boy,^o
No higher^o than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, who begged it as a fee.
I could not, for my heart, deny it him.

/ by my word / do I swear
/ scrub-brushed little boy
/ taller

/ hold him from it / stay his request

—Portia
I must be plain^o with you: you are to blame 49
To part so slightly^o with your wife's first gift,
A thing put^o on with oaths upon your finger,
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it, and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. In faith, Gratziano,^o
You give your wife too unkind a cause for grief.⁵⁰
And 'twere to me, I would be fuming mad.^o 51

/ frank
/ lightly
{stuck}

/ That all the world could master. Gratziano
/ Your shameful act is cause for all her grief

—Bassanio [*aside*]
Why, I were best to cut off^o my left hand,^o
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

/ sunder

—Gratziano
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,⁵² begged for mine,^o

/ Who was deserving of it. Then his clerk
{he begged mine}

48 {The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it}

49 {You were to blame, I must be plain with you}

50 / Your callous act brings much grief to your wife / Your blund'ring act is cause for all her grief.

51 {And 'twere to me I should be mad at it} 'twere to me: if this were done to me

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

/ And man nor master would take nothing else

—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
And ever gone° is your false heart of truth.⁵³
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed°
Until I see the ring!

{Even so void}

/ I swear, by heaven, I'll not lay with you

—Nerissa Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

—Bassanio Sweet Portia,
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,°
You° would abate the strength of your displeasure.

{conceive}

/ When nothing would be had except the ring

/ It

—Portia
If you had known the virtue° of the ring,
Or half her worthiness who gave the ring,
Or your own honour to keep safe° the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so deficient in reason,°
So wont of modesty, as to demand°
A thing made sacred in a ceremony? ⁵⁴
The ring would still be yours if 'twere defended
With any terms of zeal. <A judge you say?
But now methinks° there is no judge at all!> ⁵⁵

/ value

{contain}

{so much unreasonable}

/ so as to urge

/ 'Twould still be yours had you defended it

/ I'm sure

52 Gratziano says he gave away his ring to the clerk who “took some pains in writing.” This refers to the deed she wrote up for Shylock (which she neither had time to write nor the legal skill to accomplish). In the emendation, Nerissa (the judge’s clerk) does not write up the deed or deliver it to Shylock’s house. This line, however, is vague enough and could mean that she helped the judge with some kind of writing in preparation for the case.

53 This is the first of Portia’s strong attacks on Bassanio. When Portia gave Bassanio her ring she warned: *Which when you part from, lose, or give away / Let it presage the ruin of your love / And be my vantage to exclaim on you.* Here, and til the end of the play, she makes good on her word.

54 [See Additional Notes, 5.1.206]

55 The passage marked in purple could be included but anything that reduces the length of Act Five, without compromising the text, should be considered.

Nerissa teaches me what to believe:^o
Upon^o my life some woman has the ring.^{o56}

/ the right idea
/ I'll bet

—Bassanio

No, by my honor, madam, by my soul,
No woman has^o it, but a civil doctor
Who did refuse three thousand ducats from me;
And begged the ring, the which I did deny him,
And suffered him to go away displeased,
Even he who had saved^o the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him.

{had} > was given

{held up} / upheld

I was o'erwhelmed^o with shame and obligation;^{o 57}
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it.^o Pardon me, good lady,⁵⁸
For by these blessed candles of the night^{o 59}
Had you been there I think you would have begged
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

/ o'ercome
a. / And I could not let such ingratitude
b. / Besmear my honor.
/ stars that stud the night

—Portia

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved⁶⁰
And that^o which you did swear to keep for me.
I will become as generous^o as you.^o
I'll not deny him anything I have—^o
No, not my body, nor my husband's^o bed.
'Know'⁶¹ him I shall, I am well sure of it.^o
Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus,⁶²
<Who guarded Io with a hundred eyes.>
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honor, which is still^o mine own,^{o 63}
I'll have that doctor^o for my bedfellow.^o

/ The one
{liberal} / giving, as were you
/ hold back anything he desires
/ marital
/ I shall in every way

{yet} // intact
/ I'll share my bed with such a worthy doctor

—Nerissa

56 {I'll die for't, but some woman had the ring!}

57 {I was beset with shame and courtesy}

shame: a sense of dishonor, disgrace

courtesy: a sense of moral obligation, feeling that giving the ring was the right thing to do.

58 [See Additional Notes 5.1. 208]

59 {For by these blessed candles of the night} This oath—to the stars of the night sky—carries the same weight as Gratiano's swearing by yonder moon: both the light of the moon and the stars (on this overcast night) are inconsistent and obscured; and are soon to fade away as morning is swift approaching.

60 *he*: Portia now accepts that Bassanio gave the ring to a man but says that she, too, will give herself to this man.

61 *know him*: have sexual relations with him. Compare Portia's parting words to Bassanio in the previous scene: 'I pray you, know me when we meet again.'

62 *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 note the Indian 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.

63 *by mine honor, which is yet mine own*: a) by my vows, which I have not broken; unlike Bassanio's honor which is not his own, as he has given it away when he broke his vow to keep the ring.

And I his clerk. Therefore, be well-advised^o / more than careful
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

—Gratziano
Do as you will.^o Let not me catch him, then, {Well, do you so}
For if I do, I'll break^o the young clerk's pen. {mar} / ruin

—Antonio
I'm the unfortunate cause ^o of these quarrels. {th'unhappy subject}

—Portia
Sir, grieve not you; for this is not your doing.^o 64 / you are most welcome here

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

—Portia Mark you but that?!^o / Take heed of that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself.
And then he swears upon his two-faced^o self—⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ {doubled}
Now there's an oath to count on!^o ⁶⁷ / bank on

—Bassanio Nay, but hear me.⁶⁸
Pardon this fault and, by my soul I swear,
I nevermore will break an oath with thee.

—Antonio
I once did lend my body for his wealth,^o / welfare
Which, but for him who has^o your husband's ring, {that had}
Would have been lost.^o I dare be bound again, {Had quite miscarried}
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord,
Assuredly, will ne'er break faith again. {Will never more break faith advisedly}

—Portia
Then you shall be his surety.^o Give him this, / you shall guarantee it
And bid him keep it better than the other.⁶⁹

64 {Sir, grieve not you, you are welcome notwithstanding}

65 {In each eye one. Swear by your double self}

66 Portia's strong, frontal attack continues. She is making good on her promise (3.2.174) "to exclaim on" Bassanio if he ever lost or gave away the ring.

67 {And there's an oath of credit} This line is delivered with sarcasm. Portia is saying that Bassanio's oath is not something she can count on, not something good enough to be used as credit or backing for a loan.

68 Portia does not hear Bassanio. Later, she does not even answer his direct questions [280]. This 'not hearing' is a clear sign of her power over him where she is not required to hear, listen to, or even give a response. Shylock expressed this same kind of power over Antonio by not hearing him, by not responding to him [3.3.3, 11, 17].

69 Here Portia, being one-up on Bassanio, is 'playing him like a fiddle.' As with Shylock in the court scene, she plays from the position of advantage, of knowing the outcome before she even begins. Here she escalates the confrontation: First she

—Antonio
Here, Lord Bassanio, swear to keep this ring.

—Bassanio
By heaven, 'tis the same I gave the doctor! {it is}

—Portia
I had it of him.° Pardon me, Bassanio,⁷⁰ / I got it from him
But for this ring the doctor lay with me.°⁷¹ / I lay with the young doctor.

—Nerissa
And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbèd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of° this [*showing her ring*] last night did lay with me. / In 'change for

—Gratiano
Why this is like the digging up° of highways {mending}
In summertime, which surely ruins the road.°⁷² / Which makes the road unfit for all to travel
You have cheated us° ere we have deserved it!⁷³

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica

—Portia
Speak not so grossly; there is much confusion.°⁷⁴ {you are all amazed}
<There neither was a doctor nor his clerk.>
Thus you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you

accuses Bassanio of giving the ring to a woman; then she accepts that he gave the ring to a man (the doctor) and she says that she will be as liberal in giving herself to the doctor as was Bassanio; and finally she says that she already gave herself to the doctor—a devastating lie that must have made Bassanio's heart sink. The end result of this 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. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.255]

70 {I had it of him. Pardon Bassanio}

Portia is using Bassanio's words against him. Earlier [247-8] Bassanio asks for Portia's pardon in regards to his giving away the ring (*Pardon this fault*); here she is asking him to *pardon* her for laying with the doctor.

71 Portia telling Bassanio that she 'lay' with the doctor is a shocking lie—and perhaps, in her mind, deservedly so. This is mitigated by the fact that she only lets him squirm for a few seconds.

72 {Why this is like the mending of highways | In summer where the ways are fair enough}

The jist of this metaphor, which compares Nerissa to a road, is that the road has been dug up for repair—when no repair was needed—and is, thus, ruined and unfit for travel.

Instead of comparing Nerissa to a ruined road she could be compared to a rotten or worm-infested piece of fruit that can no longer be eaten. Thus, both lines about ruined highways could be replaced with one line about fruit: *But worm-infested fruit cannot be eaten or Alas, the fruit's been plucked and can't be eaten*. If keeping with the original notion that Bassanio and Gratiano left for Venice before their wedding night, the two highway lines could be replaced with two fruit lines: *Alas the fruit has already been plucked | Before we even had the chance to eat it!*

73 {What, we are cuckolds ere we have deserved it?} / We've been betrayed before our wedding night!

74 The two lines that follow, as found in the original, have been deleted: {Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure. | It comes from Padua, from Bellario.} There is no reason or purpose as to why Bellario would write such a letter, and no reason as to why Portia would need to produce it. Portia's simple telling of how she was the doctor would clear up all confusion. It was probably added to complete the triplicate letter scheme: one letter to Antonio, one to Lorenzo, and one to Bassanio. [See Additional Notes, 5.1.267]

And just but now returned. I have not yet^o / I will explain
 Entered my house.^o 75 And now for you Antonio, / The whole event
 I come with much better news than expected.
 When you unseal this letter you will find
 That suddenly, three of your argosies
 Have come to port, their^o hulls replete with^o riches. 76 77 / with / amassed / abound with
 You shall not know by what strange accident^o / the circumstance by which 78
 I chancèd upon this letter.^o 79 {I chancèd on}

—Antonio I am speechless!^o {dumb}

—Bassanio
 Were you the doctor and I knew you not? 80

—Gratziano
 Were you the clerk who dared to cheat on me?^o {that is to make me cuckold}

—Nerissa
 Ay, but the clerk who never means to do it / who'd ne'er do such a thing
 Unless he live until he be a man.^o / and turn 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,
 For here I read for certain that my ships
 Have safely come to port.⁸¹

—Portia And^o now, Lorenzo, {How}
 My clerk hath some good comforts, too, for you.

—Nerissa

75 As mentioned, the production of an explanatory letter by Portia is not needed; in lieu of offering a letter she could offer to explain the whole event or affair. The original line {I have not yet | Entered my house} is repetitive and should be replaced with, *I will explain / The whole affair.*

76 { . . . Unseal this letter soon. | There you shall find three of your argosies | Are richly come to harbor suddenly. }

77 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]

78 {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

79 Replace last three lines with two:

/ Have richly come to port. You shall not know^o / you'd never guess

How strange it was I chanced upon this letter.

80 Portia never answers this question. When Gratziano asks the same question of Nerissa, she immediately reassures him with a positive response. Bassanio asks Portia a direct question; Gratziano asks Nerissa a direct question; Nerissa responds to Gratziano's question; Portia could answer, to complete the symmetry, however she 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.

81 {Are safely come to road} *come to road*: come to dry land

Ay, and I'll give him them without a fee.
Here° do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,⁸²
Who wills you all his wealth upon his death.⁸³

{There}

—Lorenzo
Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way⁸⁴
Of starving people.

—Portia It is almost morning⁸⁵
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
With this account so brief.° Let us go in
And charge° us there with cross-examination,°⁸⁶
And we will answer all things faithfully.°

{Of these events at full}

/ probe {upon inter'gatories}

/ truthfully

—Gratziano
Let it be so. And my first line of question°
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is:
If to the next night she had rather lay
Or bed it now with two hours till day.⁸⁷
But were the day come, I should wish it night
Till I were couching° in my clerk's delight.⁸⁸
And while I live, I'll fear no other thing—
So sore as keeping safe° Nerissa's ring.⁸⁹

/ inquiry {the first inter'gatories}

/ If she prefers on the next night to lay

/ laying / rolling

/ But the sore keeping of

Exeunt, Couples first, then Antonio

82 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.'

In the original play, in 4.2, Nerissa secures the special deed of gift from Shylock, by preparing the document, going to his house, and having him sign the document. In the rectified version, Nerissa does not go to Shylock's house. Thus, it appears that she got this letter from the court before departing from Venice.

83 {After his death, of all he dies possessed of} / Whom, upon death, bequeaths you all he owns

84 *manna*: heavenly food that was dropped upon the Israelites in the desert and which sustained them.

85 The fairy tale is about to end. There is no sunset; nothing but a gloomy pre-dawn. Here, also, the roles of prince and princess are reversed, with the prince now shown to be anything but a prince; and the princess, showing her superiority over her lord, is hardly a princess in need of rescue. The couples do not ride off into the sunset; it ends with the pairs somewhat distant and estranged, with Antonio as the odd man out.

86 / So you can probe us with all your questions / And charge us there with your cross-examining

87 {Whether till the next night she had rather stay | Or go to bed now, being two hours to day}

88 {But were the day come, I should wish it night | Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk}

89 This bawdy kind of pun is commonly found at the end of a romantic comedy. Herein the term *ring* is usually taken as a reference to 'vulva' and Gratziano's 'sore keeping' of it—well we need not comment on that!

ACT SIX - Scene One

Enter Shylock and Tubal

—Tubal

I think our business is done for the day.
And here, the messenger has brought a gift.

—Shylock

A gift from whom? I beseech you to open it.

Tubal opens the box and takes out a ring

—Tubal

A gift from Jessica. It's Layla's ring.
And what you thought was lost has now come back.
I think it must be that she still loves you.

—Shylock [*holding the ring*]

When comes the end all our treasures are dust
Destiny gives and then takes what it must.
My life, my deeds, and my ducats suffice,^o
I gained a fortune at so^o high a price^o
And now my friend, I must bid you good-bye,
'Tis not a sight to see 'ol Shylock cry.

a. / are lost
b. / cost

Tubal exits

Shylock stands alone with ring and letter in hand

END
