

The selfsame way, with more advised watch  
 To find the other forth; and by adventuring both  
 I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof  
 Because what follows is pure innocence.  
 I owe you much, and like a wilful youth 145  
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
 To shoot another arrow that self way  
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both  
 Or bring your latter hazard back again 150  
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

ANTONIO You know me well, and herein spend but time  
 To wind about my love with circumstance;  
 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong  
 In making question of my uttermost 155  
 Than if you had made waste of all I have.  
 Then do but say to me what I should do  
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,  
 And I am prest unto it: therefore speak.

BASSANIO In Belmont is a lady richly left, 160  
 And she is fair, and – fairer than that word –  
 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes  
 I did receive fair speechless messages.  
 Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued  
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia. 165

141 advised careful.  
 142 find...forth i.e. find out. In *Err.* 1.2.37 a drop of water is described as falling into the ocean 'to find his fellow forth'.  
 142 adventuring risking. If the metre is intentionally irregular, Shakespeare is using it to make Bassanio sound hesitant. But the irregularity may be a sign of 'foul papers'; see Textual Analysis, p. 183 below.  
 143 proof experience; as in *Cym.* 3.3.27: 'Out of your proof you speak.'  
 144 innocence ingenuousness.  
 145 like...youth i.e. because I have behaved like a headstrong young man.  
 147 self selfsame.  
 149-50 or...Or either...Or.  
 150 hazard A key word of the play, linking the choice of caskets with Antonio's risks.  
 152 spend but time only waste time.  
 153 To wind...circumstance In going such a

roundabout way to make use of my affection for you.

155 In...uttermost By doubting that I will give you all the help I can.

159 prest ready; from Middle French *prest*, modern *prêt*, perhaps conflated with the past participle 'prest' (now 'pressed'), meaning 'driven, or incited'.

160 richly left who has been left a fortune.

161 fairer...word 'what is more to the point' (Rosser). Riches, beauty and virtue are here placed in an ascending order of desirability.

162 Sometimes At one time, formerly.

165 Portia Shakespeare was soon to stress, in *Julius Caesar*, the virtue of the historical Portia: 'Think you I am no stronger than my sex, / Being so father'd and so husbanded?' (2.1.296-7). Her father was the high-minded tribune Cato Uticensis, and her husband 'the noblest Roman of them all', Brutus.

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;  
 For the four winds blow in from every coast  
 Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks  
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,  
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand, 170  
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
 O my Antonio, had I but the means  
 To hold a rival place with one of them,  
 I have a mind presages me such thrift  
 That I should questionless be fortunate. 175

ANTONIO Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;  
 Neither have I money nor commodity  
 To raise a present sum; therefore go forth,  
 Try what my credit can in Venice do,  
 That shall be racked even to the uttermost 180  
 To furnish thee to Belmont to fair Portia.  
 Go presently enquire, and so will I,  
 Where money is, and I no question make  
 To have it of my trust or for my sake.

**SIDE #5 START HERE (Portia, Nerissa, (Servingman))** *Exeunt*

[1.2] Enter PORTIA with her waiting-woman NERISSA

PORTIA By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

NERISSA You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with 5

Act 1, Scene 2 1.2] *Rome subst.*; not in Q1-2, F

169-71 golden fleece...Colchos' strand... Jasons In one of the oldest quest stories, Jason led a party of Greek heroes called the Argonauts through many hazards in order to bring back the Golden Fleece from the shores ('strand') of Colchis on the Black Sea.

174 thrift In its two meanings of 'profit' and 'success' (the meaning 'economy' is not found at the period), this is to be another important word in the play's language.

177 commodity merchandise.

178 present sum ready money.

180 racked stretched.

182 presently at once; the word carries this meaning in its six further occurrences in this play.

184 To have...sake 'on my credit or for friendship sake' (NS).

Act 1, Scene 2

0 SD WAITING-WOMAN i.e. a companion and confidante. She should not be played as the stage version of a Victorian lady's maid.

1-2 little body...great world The antithesis is the familiar Elizabethan one between a human being as microcosm and the physical universe as macrocosm.

1 aweary Portia's melancholy matches Antonio's and so serves to link Belmont with Venice; see p. 27 above.

nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean – superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

PORTIA Good sentences, and well pronounced.

NERISSA They would be better if well followed.

PORTIA If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree – such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

NERISSA Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations. Therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, whereof who chooses

6 mean] Q1-2; smal F 14 be] F; to be Q1-2

7 **mean** F avoids the repetition of 'mean' by using 'small', and so loses the pun. The platitude was proverbial (Tilley v8o).

7-8 **superfluity...longer** Nerissa, herself probably a poor relation of Portia's, insists that 'excess of fortune and extravagance in living age us prematurely, and we live longer if we have only a sufficiency'. 'But' offsets the gain of white hairs with the gain of long life.

9 **sentences maxims.**

9 **pronounced** delivered.

11-13 **If to do...instructions** Portia tries out some 'sentences' of her own, the first modelled on 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride'; the second one, 'Practise what you preach', is used by Ophelia in reply to her brother's moralisings, *Ham.* 1.3.47-51.

15-16 **The brain...decree** Portia's recognition that her choices, like those of any young woman, are more likely to be dictated by passion than reason has the effect on the audience of making her father's scheme seem less implausible.

16 **hot temper** ardent temperament. The temper, or disposition, was due to the individual's admixture of the four fluids, or humours, in his body; the blood was a hot humour.

16-17 **such...madness** Compare the proverbial

'mad as a March hare'. The leaps performed by hares in spring are a form of sexual behaviour.

17 **meshes** i.e. of a net to catch hares; used as an image of the attempts made to restrain the natural impulses of others on the part of those who no longer feel them for themselves.

18-19 **But...husband** Portia means 'no amount of talking will find a husband for her' (Brown).

20-1 **will...will** Portia first puns on the meanings 'wishes' and 'sexual longings', and then on the meanings 'imposed control' and 'testament'.

24 **inspirations** Such as those of the dying John of Gaunt: 'Methinks I am a prophet new inspir'd' (*R2* 2.1.31).

24 **lottery** Merchant detects a pun on 'allottery' meaning 'portion' as in *AYLI* 1.1.73, 'the poor allottery my father left me'.

25 **these** This may well indicate that the caskets are on the stage, having been revealed by the drawing back of a curtain at the start of the scene.

25 **chests** The same word is used on Q1's title page, and suggests the substantial objects depicted in one of the illustrations to Hanmer's edition (illustration 5, p. 32), which may be based on early stage practice. In Elizabethan English a 'casket', as in American English today, could be sizeable.

his meaning chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

PORTIA I pray thee over-name them, and as thou namest them I will describe them – and according to my description, level at my affection.

NERISSA First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

PORTIA Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeared my lady his mother played false with a smith.

NERISSA Then is there the County Palatine.

PORTIA He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, 'And you will not have me, choose.' He hears merry tales and smiles not; I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

26 will no doubt] Q1, F; no doubt you wil Q2 27 you] Q1, F; not in Q2 33 Neapolitan] Q2; Neopolitane Q1, F 38 Palatine] Q2; Palentine Q1, F

26 **his meaning** i.e. the one he intended.

26 **will...chosen** 'Lottery' is the subject of 'chosen'. In reading 'no doubt you will never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love', Q2 attempts to break up a long, loose sentence but in so doing changes the sense. Nerissa is reassuring Portia that her father's choice and her *own* feelings will coincide.

27 **rightly...rightly** The first means 'correctly', the second 'truly'.

28, 31-2 **affection** inclination, feeling.

30 **over-name** enumerate, run through. The dialogue that follows is very similar to the scene between Julia and her waiting-woman in *TGV* 1.2, which may have been a great success on the stage.

31 **level** at take aim at. Portia asks Nerissa to guess at her state of feeling in each case – unless the phrase is used here to mean 'aim truly', and so 'infer'.

33 **Neapolitan** Portia's suitors are national stereotypes. The southern Italians were famous for their horsemanship.

34 **colt** raw and uncouth young man.

35 **a great...parts** a great addition to his own accomplishments.

38 **County Palatine** He corresponds to the

Elizabethan stereotype of the Spaniard. Shakespeare may have meant to include a Spanish suitor in Portia's survey, when he either remembered or decided that a Spanish prince was to figure in the play, and substituted this unspecific title which was held by various Hungarians, Poles, Germans, and Burgundians. 'County' may owe its second syllable to the Italian or Old French *conte*, or to confusion with the term 'county palatine' meaning a province within an empire or realm, in which a nobleman held exclusive jurisdiction and royal privileges. 'The County Paris' is a character in *Rom.*

39 **as...say** as if to say.

39 **And If;** a common Elizabethan meaning, usually clear from the context as at 73 below.

40 **choose** i.e. have it your own way. See *OED* sv 8b. In *Three Ladies of London* (1584), a play about a flesh bond (see p. 22 above), a character says 'And thou wilt do it, do it, and thou wilt not choose' (C1').

41 **weeping philosopher** Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 500 B.C.), considered a melancholy recluse because he relinquished a throne. Juvenal contrasts him with Democritus, the laughing philosopher.

42 **unmannerly** (1) impolite, (2) unbecoming (to his youth).

NERISSA How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?  
 PORTIA God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but he! – why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every man in no man. If a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.  
 NERISSA What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?  
 PORTIA You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor penny-worth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but alas who can converse with a dumbshow? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.  
 NERISSA What think you of the Scottish lord his neighbour?  
 PORTIA That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

45 Bon] *Capell*; *Boune* Q1-2, F 48 Neapolitan's] Q2; Neopolitans Q1, F 49 Palatine] Q2; Palentine Q1, F  
 49 throstle] *Pope*; *Trassell* Q1-2, F 53 shall] Q1-2; should F 63 Scottish] Q1-2; other F

45 by about, of.  
 49 is...no man imitates everyone and has no character of his own.  
 49 throstle The song thrush. Q1-2 and F have 'trassell', which might be a dialect form, or the result of the compositor reading *o* as *a*. Bottom sings about the throstle in *MND* 3.1.127.  
 52 if even if.  
 54 Falconbridge Shakespeare took this name from his own *King John*, in which Falconbridge is the quintessential Englishman.  
 58 come...swear i.e. bear witness; a catchphrase.  
 58-9 have a poor...in the i.e. speak very little; another catchphrase.  
 59 proper man's picture i.e. the very epitome of a handsome man – with a hint that he is not quite real.  
 60 suited dressed. The eclectic taste of the English was a stock joke of the age: 'I have seen an English gentleman so diffused in his suits, his doublet being for the wear of Castile, his hose for

Venice, his hat for France, his cloak for Germany' (Greene, *Farewell to Folly* (1591), quoted by Merchant).  
 61 round hose padded breeches.  
 63 Scottish Discreetly changed to 'other' in F, since under James I it was dangerous to satirise the Scots; the authors of *Eastward Ho!* were imprisoned for doing so in 1605.  
 64 neighbourly charity An echo of Rom. 13.10: 'Charity worketh no ill to his neighbour' (BB).  
 64 borrowed (1) received, (2) took as a loan (with no date set for repayment: see previous note). Brown detects a possible allusion to troubles on the Border in 1596 and 1597, after which 'pledges' of compensation were exacted from some Scots. But the image may just have arisen because Shakespeare's mind was running on the flesh-bond story.  
 66-7 I think...another i.e. the Frenchman also let the Englishman strike him, merely swearing to retaliate, much as a surety adds his seal to that of

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NERISSA How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?  
 PORTIA Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk. When he is best he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst he is little better than a beast. And the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.  
 NERISSA If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will if you should refuse to accept him.  
 PORTIA Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.  
 NERISSA You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeed to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.  
 PORTIA If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.  
 NERISSA Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

90 pray God grant] Q1-2; wish F

the principal debtor. There is unlikely to be any specific reference to the 'auld alliance' between Scots and French, which at this time was in abeyance.  
 73 fall befall, happen.  
 73 make shift contrive.  
 75 offer attempt.  
 79 Rhenish Rhineland wine was highly thought of; see 3.1.33.  
 79 contrary wrong, as in *John* 4.2.198, where slippers are 'falsely thrust upon contrary feet'.  
 85 sort means, way.  
 87 Sibylla Shakespeare would have known about the Cumaean sibyl, or prophetess, who was granted as many years of life as she could hold grains of sand in her hand, from his reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 14, 131-81. Pooler suggests that the way the word is used in the *Dies Irae*

hymn – *teste David cum Sibylla* ('both David and the sibyl bear witness') – led to its being treated as a proper name, as here and in *Shr.* 1.2.70.  
 87 Diana Goddess of chastity, as *MND* 1.1.89-90 makes clear: 'on Diana's altar to protest / For aye austerity and single life'.  
 90 pray...grant The change in F to 'wish' is in compliance with the 1606 Act against profanity in plays.  
 93 scholar and a soldier The Renaissance idea of the many-sided man.  
 93-4 Marquis of Montferrat Shakespeare could have picked up this name from the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio. Or he may have known that the contemporary holder of the title, Vicenzio Gonzaga I, Duke of Mantua, had led a campaign in Hungary against the Turks in 1595.

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PORTIA Yes, yes, it was Bassanio! — as I think so was he called.  
 NERISSA True, madam; he of all the men that ever my foolish eyes  
 looked upon was the best deserving a fair lady.  
 PORTIA I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy  
 praise.

*Enter a SERVINGMAN*

How now, what news?  
 SERVINGMAN The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their  
 leave; and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of  
 Moroccó, who brings word the prince his master will be here  
 tonight.  
 PORTIA If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid  
 the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he have  
 the condition of a saint, and the complexion of a devil, I had rather  
 he should shrive me than wive me.  
 Come, Nerissa; sirrah, go before:  
 Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at  
 the door

*Exeunt*

Side #5 End here

95 so was he] Q1, F; he was so Q2 99 SD] *As in F; follows 100 in Q1-2* 100] Q1-2; not in F 101 for] Q1-2; not in F

95 as I think Portia attempts to cover up her eagerness. In substituting a smoother wording, 'as I think he was so called', Q2 loses the naturalness of her confusion.

100 How...news F's omission of this is probably an error, but some editors think the question too peremptory for Portia.

101 four But we have been told about six suitors. Joseph Hunter, *New Illustrations...of Shakespeare*, 1845, suggested that the scene had been revised to include the Englishman and the Scot. But such inconsistency is characteristic of 'foul papers'. See Textual Analysis, p. 183 below.

107 condition character, disposition; as in *LLL* 5.2.20: 'A light condition in a beauty dark'.

107 devil Devils traditionally were black. Portia seems about to make some pious remark about virtue mattering more than looks.

107-8 I had...wive me I would rather have him for a confessor than a husband. To shrive was to give absolution.

109-11 Come...door Not printed as verse in Q1-2 and F, but most editors feel it to be a rough closing couplet.

[1.3] *Enter BASSANIO with SHYLOCK the Jew*

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats, well.  
 BASSANIO Ay, sir, for three months.  
 SHYLOCK For three months, well.  
 BASSANIO For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.  
 SHYLOCK Antonio shall become bound, well. 5  
 BASSANIO May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know  
 your answer?  
 SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio  
 bound.  
 BASSANIO Your answer to that? 10  
 SHYLOCK Antonio is a good man —  
 BASSANIO Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?  
 SHYLOCK Ho no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man  
 is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means  
 are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to 15  
 the Indies; I understand moreover upon the Rialto he hath a third  
 at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath  
 squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men;

Act 1, Scene 3 1.3] *Rowe subst.; not in Q1-2, F* 1, 3, 5 well.] Q1-2, F; well? *Pooler, conj. Hudson* 4] *As prose, Pope; as two lines divided after you, Q1-2, F* 6-7] *As prose, Pope; as two lines divided before* Shall Q1-2, F 8-9] *As prose, Pope; as two lines divided after* months, Q1-2, F

Act 1, Scene 3

0 SD SHYLOCK This is not known to occur as a Jewish name in Shakespeare's day. The nearest biblical approximation is 'Shiloh' (Gen. 49.10), which incongruously means 'Messiah'. A possible source is Joseph Ben Gurion's *History...of the Jews' Commonwealth*, translated in 1595, which records that when a Roman captain called Antonius was defending Askalon one of the Jewish leaders who went to parley with him was called Shiloh (p. 85). See 44 n. below.

1 SHYLOCK The variations in speech headings between 'Shylock' and 'Jew' are part of the evidence for the play having been printed from Shakespeare's manuscript: see Textual Analysis, p. 170 below. In this scene the variations do not appear to have any substantive significance.

1 ducats Gold ducats, literally coins 'of the duke', were first struck in Venice in the thirteenth century. The name was evocative of great wealth, like Swiss francs or Krugerrands today.

1, 3, 5 well. Some editors and many actors have made these lines interrogative. But Shylock is more likely to respond to Bassanio's eagerness with a studied deliberation.

4 bound compelled to repay by a written under-

taking. There is a sinister undertone of the meaning 'captive'.

6 May you stead me? Can you help me?

6 pleasure oblige.

11 good Shylock means 'financially sound', but in a conflict of values typical of the play Bassanio takes the word to mean 'honourable'.

14 sufficient i.e. security enough in normal circumstances.

15 in supposition to be assumed, hypothetical.

15-17 Tripolis...England On this range of ventures, impossible for a real Venetian merchant of the time, see p. 13 above. Tripoli (Tarabulus esh Sham) in Lebanon was a major port for the trade in oriental goods.

16 Rialto The Exchange of Venice, and its adjoining piazza. Florio's Italian dictionary (1611) defines it as 'An eminent place in Venice where merchants commonly meet'.

18 squandered This may simply mean 'scattered', without any hint of contempt (*OED v* 1a); but Shakespeare's only other use of the verb, 'squand'ring glances of the fool' in *AYLI* 2.7.57, implies folly; so Shylock may, from the viewpoint of a prudent financier, be glancing at the want of prudence in Antonio's undertakings.