

That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable. 55

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well;
We leave you now with better company.

SALARINO I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me. 60

ANTONIO Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it your own business calls on you,
And you embrace th'occasion to depart.

SALARINO Good morrow, my good lords. 65

BASSANIO Good signors both, when shall we laugh? Say, when?
You grow exceeding strange; must it be so?

SALARINO We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Exeunt Salarino and Solanio

SIDE #2 LORENZO My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio

We two will leave you, but at dinner time
I pray you have in mind where we must meet. 70

BASSANIO I will not fail you.

GRATIANO You look not well, Signor Antonio.

You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care. 75

Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

ANTONIO I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano:

57 Here] *NS*; *Sola*. Here Q1-2, F *subst*.

56 Nestor The Homeric Greek hero was as often mocked as commended for his age and gravity in the Elizabethan theatre: 'old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes' (*Tro*. 2.1.104-6).

57 kinsman This is the only time we hear of the friends being related. In *Il Pecorone*, the major source for Shakespeare's play (see p. 2 above), Ansaldo was Giannetto's godfather.

61 prevented forestalled.

64 occasion opportunity.

66 laugh i.e. meet and jest together.

67 strange distant, unfriendly.

67 must it be so? Either 'must you be so distant?' or 'must you go?'

68 We'll...yours i.e. Salarino and Solanio will make a point of being free at a time when Bassanio is at leisure too.

69-117 On the possibility of this being an inserted portion of Shakespeare's manuscript, see *Textual Analysis*, p. 183 below.

72 I...you This half-line is perhaps completed by a gesture of leavetaking between Lorenzo and Bassanio, while Gratiano is waylaying Antonio.

74 respect upon regard for.

75 They lose...care 'Those who take the world too seriously find they have lost the capacity to enjoy it' (Rosser). Some editors hear an echo of Matt. 16.25, but the thought there is really very different.

A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

GRATIANO Let me play the Fool.

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come, 80

And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.

Why should a man whose blood is warm within

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

Sleep when he wakes? And creep into the jaundice 85

By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio –

I love thee, and it is my love that speaks –

There are a sort of men whose visages

Do cream and mantle like a standing pond, 90

And do a wilful stillness entertain,

With purpose to be dressed in an opinion

Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,

As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!'

87 it is] F; tis Q1-2 93 Sir] *Pope*; sir Q1-2; sir an F

78 A stage...part This Elizabethan commonplace was to be the motto of the Globe Theatre (*Totus mundus agit histrionem*). Here, as in its expansion by Jaques (*AYLI* 2.7.139-66), it takes fresh life from its context; Antonio's friends are over-acting.

79 Let...Fool Murray J. Levith (*What's in Shakespeare's Names*, 1978, p. 79) points out that Florio's Italian dictionary (1611) defines *Gratiano* as 'a gull, a fool or clownish fellow in a play or comedy'. In the *commedia dell'arte* he was a comic doctor.

80 old Both 'typical of old age' and (the intensive use, as at 4.2.15) 'any amount of'.

82 mortifying Both 'penitential' and 'causing death'. Sighs were supposed to shorten life.

84 Sit...alabaster Be as motionless as the effigy of his grandfather sculpted in white stone. 'Sit' is probably equivalent to 'keep still', because figures on Elizabethan tombs stand, kneel, or lie, but do not sit.

85 jaundice This disease was held until well into the nineteenth century to be of psychosomatic origin. It is so described in *Tro*. 1.3.2.

88-9 whose...pond i.e. their faces are masked ('mantled') by impassivity, as milk is with cream or stagnant ('standing') pondwater with algae. The

second image recurs in *Lear* 3.4.133 and *Temp*. 4.1.182.

90-2 do...wisdom maintain an obstinate silence, in order to be adorned with a reputation for wisdom.

92 conceit concept, thought (as usual in Shakespeare).

93 As...say As if they were to say.

93 Sir Oracle F takes 'sir' to be a mode of address, and reads 'sir an oracle', thus spoiling both the metre and the joke. But Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, uses 'Sir' as a mock title: 'Sir Assurance' (*Shr*. 5.2.65), 'Sir Smile' (*WT* 1.2.196), and 'Sir Prudence' (*Temp*. 2.1.286).

94 let no dog bark Possibly figurative – 'let no inferior person interrupt me with nonsensical chatter'. However, dogs were trained to bark at anyone of beggarly appearance (so *R3* 1.1.23: 'dogs bark at me as I halt by them'); and in a play so much concerned with Jew and non-Jew Shakespeare may have remembered Exod. 11.7 (GB): 'But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move his tongue, neither against man nor beast, that ye may know that the Lord putteth a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' On the many biblical quotations and echoes in the play, see Appendix, p. 196 below.

O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; when I am very sure
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time.
But fish not with this melancholy bait
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

95

LORENZO Well, we will leave you then till dinner time.

100

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

105

GRATIANO Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

ANTONIO Farewell; I'll grow a talker for this gear.

110

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

Exeunt [Gratiano and Lorenzo]

ANTONIO It is that anything now.

110 Farewell] Q2; Far you well Q1, F 112 tongue] Q2, F; togue Q1 112 SD *Gratiano and Lorenzo*] *Theobald*
subst.; not in Q1-2, F 113 It is that anything now.] Q1-2, F; Is that any thing now? *Rowe*; Is that anything now?
conj. *Johnson*; It is that: - anything now. *Collier*; It is that. Anything now? *Delius*; Ay! is that anything now? conj.
Lettsom

95 of these i.e. some of the sort of men referred to in 88.

96-7 That...nothing A proverb (Tilley / Dent F531) originating in the Bible: 'a very fool when he holdeth his tongue is counted wise' (Prov. 17.28, BB; compare Job 13.3). In *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*, 1935, Richmond Noble has traced this and many other expressions to their scriptural source.

97 when Rowe emends to 'who', to supply a subject for 'would' in the next line. But the omission of a subject suggests rapid, colloquial speech.

98-9 damn...fools i.e. cause their hearers to call them fools, and so incur the condemnation of Matt. 5.22: 'whosoever shall say unto his brother... thou fool shall be in danger of hell fire' (BB).

101-2 fish...opinion i.e. don't use your melancholy as the bait for an easily caught reputation (of silent wisdom). Writers of the period, up to and including Izaak Walton, stress the gullibility of the gudgeon.

108 moe i.e. more in number, a different word from 'more' meaning more in size or quality. The

eighteenth-century emendation to 'more', though incorrect, is more easily understood by a modern audience.

110 Farewell Q1's 'Far you well' was probably contracted in performance to the dissyllabic 'Farwell' of Q2.

110 for this gear If 'gear' is 'discourse, talk' (*OED sb 11a*), the phrase means 'on account of all you've said'. But Antonio may be indicating that he now wants to talk privately with Bassanio, in which case 'gear' is 'matter, affair' (*OED sb 11c*) and the phrase then approximates to 'for this once'.

111-12 silence...vendible i.e. lack of activity is only proper to a sexually impotent old man or a sexually unmarketable woman. Phoebe, in *AYLI* 3.5.60, is 'not for all markets'.

112 neat's tongue dried cured ox tongue (and so a withered penis incapable of excitement).

113 It is...now If 'that anything' is Antonio's way of referring to Gratiano's haphazard and bawdy definition of silence, the sentence means 'Peace at last!' Most editors follow Rowe in dropping 'It' in order to make the sentence a question: 'What was all that about?'

BASSANIO Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them they are not worth the search.

115

ANTONIO Well, tell me now what lady is the same

To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage

That you today promised to tell me of.

120

BASSANIO 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,

How much I have disabled mine estate

By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance.

Nor do I now make moan to be abridged

From such a noble rate, but my chief care

Is to come fairly off from the great debts

Wherein my time, something too prodigal,

Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,

I owe the most in money and in love,

And from your love I have a warranty

To unburden all my plots and purposes

How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

125

130

ANTONIO I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,

And if it stand as you yourself still do

Within the eye of honour, be assured

My purse, my person, my extremest means

Lie all unlocked to your occasions.

135

BASSANIO In my schooldays, when I had lost one shaft,

I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight

140

115 reasons sensible meanings.

119 secret pilgrimage Another vestige of Shakespeare's main source, *Il Pecorone*, in which Giannetto conceals his quest of the Lady of Belmont. The lover as pilgrim was a commonplace that Shakespeare exploited fully in Romeo's first meeting with Juliet (*Rom.* 1.5.92-106).

121-33 Some of the difficulty of this speech comes from Bassanio's embarrassment, which renders his language stiff and unidiomatic.

122-4 How much I have depleted my fortune by flaunting a rather ('something') more extravagant lifestyle than my limited means would allow me to keep up.

125-6 make moan...rate complain about being forced to cut back my expenditure, which was on the grand scale.

127 come fairly off extricate myself honourably.

128 time past.

129 gaged owing.

131 And...warranty i.e. and your love authorises me.

132 unburden disclose.

135-6 And if it...honour i.e. and if it can be looked on as honourable, as you yourself have always been.

138 occasions needs. The *-ion* ending is often dissyllabic in Elizabethan verse.

139-43 The notion of shooting a second arrow as a means of recovering the first was proverbial (Tilley A325), though this is the first recorded use of it in English. Elizabethan writers found it laughably ingenious; it is possible that the play's first audience did too.

140 flight i.e. the arrow's weight, size, and power of flight.

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 #2 End here
Exeunt

[I.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 I.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

o 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.