

LIST OF CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF VENICE

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *a suitor to Portia*

THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, *suitor also to Portia*

BASSANIO, *an Italian lord, suitor likewise to Portia*

ANTONIO, *a merchant of Venice*

SOLANIO,

SALARINO,

GRATIANO,

LORENZO,

} *gentlemen of Venice, and companions with Bassanio*

SHYLOCK, *the rich Jew, and father of Jessica*

TUBAL, *a Jew, Shylock's friend*

PORTIA, *the rich Italian lady*

NERISSA, *her waiting-gentlewoman*

JESSICA, *daughter to Shylock*

GOBBO, *an old man, father to Lancelot*

LANCELOT GOBBO, *the Clown*

STEPHANO, *a messenger*

JAILER

SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice*

LEONARDO, *one of Bassanio's servants*

BALTHAZAR,

SERVINGMAN,

MESSINGER,

} *members of Portia's household*

A SERVINGMAN *employed by Antonio*

ATTENDANTS

MAGNIFICOES OF VENICE

COURT OFFICIALS

Notes

This is substantially the list given in Q3 (1637). The definite articles in the Shylock and Portia references suggest that these characters were already known by hearsay to the seventeenth-century reader. After JAILER the Q3 list adds 'and Attendants' and ends. Except for the magnificoes and court officials, the names which complete the list correspond to speech headings in the copy text, Q1.

SALARINO He may very probably be the same character as 'Salerio'. See Textual Analysis, p. 191 below.

LANCELOT For the possible variants of this name, see note at 2.2.0 SD below.

members of Portia's household The Messenger of 2.9.86 may be identical with Stephano who appears at 5.1.24, but Balthazar is unlikely to be the servingman addressed as 'sirrah' at 1.2.109.

ATTENDANTS ... OFFICIALS These are walking-on parts.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

SIDE #1 START HERE (Antonio, Salarino, Solanio)

1.[1] *Enter* ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO

ANTONIO In sooth I know not why I am so sad.

It wearies me, you say it wearies you;

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

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

I am to learn.

And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,

That I have much ado to know myself.

SALARINO Your mind is tossing on the ocean,

There where your argosies with portly sail

Like signors and rich burghers on the flood,

Or as it were the pageants of the sea,

Title] F; The comickall History of the Merchant of Venice Q1, Q2 subst. Act 1, Scene 1 1.1] Rowe subst.; not in Q1-2; Actus Primus. F 5-6] As two lines Q3; as one line Q1-2, F

Title Only one other play before 1600, Greene's *Alphonso of Aragon*, is called a comical history (i.e. story). Most comedies were described as 'a pleasant comedy' or 'a conceited [i.e. witty] comedy'. 'History' may be used here to emphasise the romance nature of the play.

Act 1, Scene 1

1.1 There are no act and scene divisions in the quartos, though F divides the play into acts. Scene divisions were introduced by eighteenth-century editors.

0 SD SALARINO Most recent editors follow NS in changing this to Salerio. See Textual Analysis, p. 191 below.

0 SD SOLANIO He is at first called Salanio, and Q2 keeps this form throughout. See Textual Analysis, p. 183 below.

1 In sooth Truly. We are to suppose Antonio is replying to a question that has just been put to him.

1 sad Antonio's sadness, making him taciturn in contrast to the volubility of his friends, is often theatrically expressed as a contrast between his stillness and their movement and gestures

5 I...learn I have yet to learn. The short line suggests a moment's pensiveness, perhaps a sigh.

6-7 And...myself Probably 'sadness has made me so absent-minded that I hardly know who I am'; otherwise, 'sadness has so deadened me that I find it difficult to understand the cause of my melancholy'. *Nosce teipsum*, 'know thyself', was a familiar adage.

9 argosies Privately-owned cargo vessels, also called carracks or round ships, which in the sixteenth century replaced the state-owned trading galleys of Venice. The name derives from Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) where many of them were built. See OED sv.

9 portly stately; perhaps with the additional meaning 'bellying'.

10 signors The word has a specifically Venetian flavour, as the *Signoria* was a small group of hereditary noblemen who had an important part in the government of Venice.

11 pageants Either floats in street processions or decorated barges in water processions such as were a feature of Venetian festivals (see illustration 3, p. 26). See Alice Venezky, *Pageantry on the Shakespearean Stage*, 1951, p. 102.

Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That curtesy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

SOLANIO Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth, 15
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,
Piring in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;
And every object that might make me fear 20
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALARINO My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hourglass run 25
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,
Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church

13 curtesy] F; cursie Q1-2 19 Piring] Q1; Piering Q2; Peering F; Prying Q3 27 Andrew docked] Rowe subst.; Andrew docks Q1-2, F; Andrew's decks conj. Collier; Andrew, decks Delius²

12 overpeer look down upon; used both literally and figuratively.

13 curtesy Q1's 'cursie' is a sixteenth-century variant. The small cargo ships lower their topsails as a mark of respect (A. F. Falconer, *Shakespeare and the Sea*, 1965, p. 22); or, they bob about in the wash of the argosies. Either way they resemble humble tradesmen bowing to passing dignitaries.

14 they the argosies; they are likened to flying birds for their speed and to rich burghers for the billowing splendour of their appearance.

15 venture forth i.e. goods and ships at sea in an uncertain commercial enterprise. 'Venture' is a key word of the play.

16 The better part Most.

16 affections feelings, concern (the usual meaning in Shakespeare).

17 still constantly; as often in Shakespeare, e.g. I.I.135.

18 Plucking i.e. in order to toss it in the air, and so discover the direction of the wind.

19 Piring Looking closely. A different word from 'Peering' (Q2), which makes a jingle with 'piers', so the actor may prefer to use Q3's 'prying'.

19 roads anchorages.

20 object Used in its etymological sense of 'something thrown in one's way'. See *OED* sv *sb* 2.

21 out of doubt certainly; or, less probably, 'because of my uncertainty'.

23 blow...ague bring on a shivering fever; used as a metaphor of anxiety. Malaria, as its name implies, was thought to be caused by bad air.

26 But...think Without thinking. 'But' often means 'except' in Elizabethan English.

26 flats shoals.

27 wealthy Andrew i.e. a ship as richly laden as the San Andrés, or Andrew, captured in Cadiz harbour in 1596. See p. 1 above.

27 docked Rowe's emendation of 'docks' (Q1-2), which is a probable misreading of 'dockt' in Elizabethan handwriting. A ship could be deliberately docked in ooze or soft sand (see *OED* sv *v*² 2), but the oddity of the term for a ship that has run aground and capsized led Delius to prefer the emendation 'decks'. This, however, assumes an improbable misreading, and requires the further intervention of a comma after 'Andrew'. The image foreshadows the disaster related by Salarino at 3.1.2-5.

28 Vailing Bowing down. Salarino imagines the ship lowering her topsail or top mast, to kiss the ground.

28 ribs i.e. the timbers curving between the keel and the decks.

And see the holy edifice of stone 30
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And (in a word) but even now worth this, 35
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise. 40

ANTONIO Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad. 45

SOLANIO Why then, you are in love.

ANTONIO Fie, fie!

SOLANIO Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now by two-headed Janus, 50
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper;
And other of such vinegar aspect,

32 gentle Both 'delicate' and 'noble'.

33-4 spices...silks For centuries these had been brought from the Levant and from Alexandria in Venetian trading ships and re-exported to western Europe. See, for example, F. C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 1973, pp. 285-94.

35 but even now only just now.

35 this i.e. the wealth represented by silks and spices.

42 bottom ship's hull; hence, a ship. The proverb 'Venture not all in one bottom' is also echoed in *1H6* 4.6.33: 'To hazard all our lives in one small boat' (Tilley A209).

46, 47 SH SOLANIO Q2 gives these speeches to Salarino as the more talkative of the pair. See *Textual Analysis*, p. 188 below.

46 Fie, fie! The break in the metre possibly but not necessarily represents an embarrassed pause. NS suggests that Shakespeare wrote 'o no. Fie, fie'

and that 'o no' was read as the last part of Antonio's name in the speech heading.

47-8 sad...merry A catchphrase to brush off enquiries, as in *TGV* 4.2.28-9.

49 laugh and leap A catchphrase (Tilley / Dent L92a.1).

50 Janus The Roman god of openings faced both ways at once. Shakespeare associates these two faces with the sad and merry masks of tragedy and comedy.

52 peep...eyes i.e. because their eyes are narrowed by laughter.

53 laugh...bagpiper A parrot might pick up a laugh and then reproduce it when sad music was playing. Falstaff claims to be as melancholy as 'a Lincolnshire bagpipe' in *1H4* 1.2.76.

54 other others. This old plural continued in use into the seventeenth century.

54 vinegar aspect sour looks.

That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile 55
 Side #1 End here Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

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, 60
 If worthier friends had not prevented me.

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

LORENZO My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio 70
 We two will leave you, but at dinner time
 I pray you have in mind where we must meet.

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,

And do a wilful stillness entertain, 90

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.