

SIDE #10 START HERE (Lancelot, Old Gobbo)

[2.2] Enter [LANCELOT GOBBO,] the Clown, alone

LANCELOT Certainly, my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me 'Gobbo, Lancelot Gobbo, good Lancelot', or 'Good Gobbo', or 'Good Lancelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says 'No: take heed, honest Lancelot, take heed, honest Gobbo' – or (as aforesaid) – 'honest Lancelot Gobbo; do not run, scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. 'Fia!' says the fiend, 'Away!' says the fiend. 'Fore the heavens, rouse up a brave mind', says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Lancelot, being an honest man's son, or rather an honest woman's son' (for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to; he had a kind of

Act 2, Scene 2 2.2] Rowe subst.; not in Q1-2, F 0 SD LANCELOT GOBBO] Capell; Launcelot | Rowe; not in Q1-2, F 1 SH LANCELOT] Rowe, throughout; Clowne Q1-2, F 3, 4, 6 Gobbo] Q2; Iobbe Q1, F; Job F3 9 'Fore] Collier; for Q1 2, F

Act 2, Scene 2

0 SD LANCELOT This name is always 'Launcelot' in Q1 (*au* being a typical Shakespearean spelling for nasalised *a*), and usually 'Lancelet' in Q2 and F. 'Lancelot' occurs only once in Q2 (2.2.70), but it is the form throughout Q3; it is adopted here as more conformable to the editorial tradition than 'Lancelet' and as possibly meant by Shakespeare to be the name of the medieval romance hero. 'Lancelet' could however mean 'a little knife', either in allusion to the Clown's cutting witticisms (Jürgen Schäfer, 'The orthography of proper names in modern-spelling editions of Shakespeare', *SB* 23 (1970), 1-19) or as a deliberate misnomer; there are signs the Clown is fat (2.2.56, 87-8; 2.5.3-4; 3.5.17-28). In the collation 'Launcelot' and 'Lancelot' are not distinguished.

0 SD the Clown i.e. the company's professional comedian who at the date the play was first performed would have been Will Kemp. His act was a broader, simpler kind of comedy than that of his successor Armin who played such roles as *Feste*.

1 serve...run 'support me in running' (Ludowyk), but with a play on the meaning 'be subservient' so that Lancelot is saying 'My conscience will do what I tell it to.' 1 Pct. 2.18-19 praises servants who 'in conscience' stay with a bad master, but the GB gloss shows that the matter was, as Lancelot makes it, debatable.

2 fiend 'Lancelot imagines himself the central character of a morality play' (Brown).

3, 4, 6 Gobbo Q1's spelling 'Iobbe', which F3

turns into 'Job', may reflect Shakespeare's initial uncertainty about what he wanted Lancelot to be called. A famous Venetian church is dedicated to S. Giobbe, i.e. Job. The name 'Gobbo' may derive from *il Gobbo di Rialto* (see p. 13 above, and illustration 2, p. 14) or, Merchant thinks, from the companies of performing dwarfs popular at the Medici court (Jacques Callot, *Varie figure gobbi* (Florence, 1616)). *Gobbo* means 'hunchback'; nothing in the play implies that either Gobbo is thus deformed, but compare note above on 0 SD LANCELOT.

7 scorn despise; with a play on the meaning 'kick aside', from the phrase 'scorn with thy heels'. In *Ado* 3.4.50-1 the dancing Margaret says 'I scorn that with my heels.'

7 courageous encouraging.

8 pack be gone.

8 Fia Go on; from Italian *via*. 'Fia', possibly an English dialect form, was used as an exhortation to horses and oarsmen.

10 hanging...heart An audience that believed it had outgrown the personifications of the morality plays would have enjoyed this anatomical mix-up.

13-14 smack...grow to...taste All three verbs are used for their sexual overtones. The verb 'smack' meant 'to kiss noisily' (*OED* smack *v* 2), while as a noun 'smack' meant 'flavour' or 'trait' and, by extension, 'a way with women'. In *Venus and Adonis* 540 'face grows to face', and *The Rape of Lucrece* 699 speaks of Tarquin's 'taste delicious'.

taste): well, my conscience says 'Lancelot, 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 bless the mark! – is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who – saving your reverence – is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation, and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend, my heels are at your commandment, I will run.

Enter OLD GOBBO with a basket

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

LANCELOT [*Aside*] O heavens! This is my true-begotten father who being more than sand-blind, high gravel-blind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

GOBBO Master young-gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?

LANCELOT Turn upon your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all on your left. Marry, at the very next turning turn of no hand but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

GOBBO Be God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit! Can you tell me whether one Lancelot that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

16 well.' To be] Q1, F (*subst.*); ill. To be Q2 21 incarnation] Q1, F; incarnall Q2 27 SD] Johnson; not in Q1-2, F 29 confusions] Q1, F; conclusions Q2 35 Be] Q1-2, F; By F4

16 well Q2 spoils the joke by changing this to 'ill'.

19-20 saving your reverence This probably sounded affected, like its modern equivalent, 'if you'll pardon the expression'.

21 incarnation In trying to get rid of Lancelot's misuse of a word, the editor of Q2 produced his own nonce-word, 'incarnall' for 'incarnate'.

21 in my conscience An asseveration, like the modern 'in all conscience'.

22 offer presume.

27 true-begotten father Another deliberate confusion.

28 sand-blind half-blind; from the Old English prefix 'sam-'; but Lancelot, like Dr Johnson, thinks it has to do with sand-like specks before the eyes. Hence his invention 'gravel-blind' for the more extreme condition.

28 high absolutely; an intensifier.

29 confusions Once again, Q2 will not allow Shakespeare his joke and changes this to 'conclusions'. To try or prove conclusions is explained by *OED* as 'to experiment', and this appears to be the meaning in *Ham.* 3.4.195. But conclusions are also riddles, as in *Per.* 1.1.56.

32-4 Turn...house This joke, as old as Terence (compare *Adelphi* 4.2.573-83), is most effective if Lancelot turns his father about until he is immediately in front of the door to Shylock's house (from which Lancelot himself emerged at the start of the scene).

33 Marry By Mary. An asseveration which had lost its original meaning.

36 dwells...dwell The first means 'is a member of his household', the second 'lodges'.

LANCELOT Talk you of young Master Lancelot? [*Aside*] Mark me now,
now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Lancelot?
GOBBO No 'master', sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I
say't, is an honest, exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well
to live.
LANCELOT Well, let his father be what a will, we talk of young Master
Lancelot.
GOBBO Your worship's friend and Lancelot, sir.
LANCELOT But I pray you, *ergo* old man, *ergo* I beseech you, talk you
of young Master Lancelot?
GOBBO Of Lancelot, an't please your mastership.
LANCELOT *Ergo* Master Lancelot. Talk not of Master Lancelot, father,
for the young gentleman, according to fates and destinies, and such
odd sayings, the sisters three, and such branches of learning, is
indeed deceased, or as you would say in plain terms, gone to
heaven.
GOBBO Marry, God forbid! The boy was the very staff of my age, my
very prop.
LANCELOT Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop?
Do you know me, father?
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?
LANCELOT Do you not know me, father?
GOBBO Alack, sir, I am sand-blind, I know you not.
LANCELOT Nay indeed, if you had your eyes you might fail of the
knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old

38 SD] *Johnson, after now,; not in Q1-2, F* 56 Do...prop?] *As in Q1-2, F; as an aside, Collier* 59 God] *F; G O D*
Q1-2

39 raise the waters conjure up a storm; i.e. bring tears to old Gobbo's eyes.

41-2 well to live well-to-do. The phrase occurs in North's Plutarch, in the Life of Aristides (Plutarch's *Lives*, III, 108).

45 Your...sir The polite formula for repudiating a title, as we might say 'Please call me John.' Costard disowns the name of Pompey with 'Your servant, and Costard' (*LLL* 5.2.571).

46 *ergo* therefore. Latin; much used in academic disputation. Brown quotes Nashe on Gabriel Harvey: 'he was called nothing but Gabriel Ergo up and down the college' (*Works*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 1904-10, III, 66-7).

49 father Lancelot is not giving the game away. 'Father' was a courteous form of address to an older person.

51 sisters three The three sisters, in classical mythology, who spun and eventually cut the threads of people's lives. They were identical with the Fates and the Destinies, so this phrase is a tautology, twice over. By the 1590s allusions to them were felt to be comically trite, as is shown by Thisbe's apostrophe to them (*MND* 5.1.336-41).

54 God forbid! A similar joke occurs in Sir Andrew's challenge in *TN* 'God have mercy upon one of our souls! He may have mercy upon mine, but my hope is better' (3.4.166-8).

54 staff...age Young Tobias is this to his parents in *BB* (Tobit 5.23; 10.4) but the phrase is not used in *GB*.

56 hovel-post A post to hold up a shelter.

63 wise father...child Proverbial (Tilley c309). Dent quotes Barnaby Riche, *Irish Hubbub*

man, I will tell you news of your son. [*Kneels*] Give me your
blessing; truth will come to light, murder cannot be hid long, a
man's son may, but in the end truth will out.
GOBBO Pray you, sir, stand up; I am sure you are not Lancelot my
boy.
LANCELOT Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me
your blessing; I am Lancelot your boy that was, your son that is,
your child that shall be.
GOBBO I cannot think you are my son.
LANCELOT I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Lancelot the
Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.
GOBBO Her name is Margery indeed. I'll be sworn if thou be Lancelot
thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be,
what a beard hast thou got! Thou has got more hair on thy chin
than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.
LANCELOT It should seem then that Dobbin's tail grows backward. I
am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when
I last saw him.
GOBBO Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master
agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?
LANCELOT Well, well; but for mine own part, as I have set up my rest
to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My
master's a very Jew. Give him a present? Give him a halter! I am

64 SD] *Collier; not in Q1-2, F* 65 murder] *F; muder Q1; Murther Q2* 80 of his] *Q1-2, F; on his Rowe*
80 of my] *Q1-2, F; on my F3* 81 last] *Q2; lost Q1, F* 83 'gree] *Q1, F (gree); agree Q2*

(1617): 'We were wont to say, it was a wise child that did know the own father, but now we may say it is a wise father that doth know his own child' (p. 16).

65 truth...long Brown notes that Kyd had already run together these two proverbs (Tilley M1315 and T591) in *The Spanish Tragedy* 2.6.58-60: 'The heavens are just, murder cannot be hid. / Time is the author both of truth and right, / And time will bring this treachery to light.'

69-70 give...blessing Shakespeare may have hit upon the comic 'business' that follows upon Lancelot kneeling for his father's blessing because he had made use, two scenes back, of Jacob tricking Isaac into giving him his blessing. See nn. on 1.3.63-80, and on 77 below.

71 child that shall be Possibly an echo of the liturgical formula ascribing glory to God 'as it was, is now, and ever shall be'. But Ludowyk reads it simply as Lancelot's promise to behave as a dutiful child.

75 thou Old Gobbo now shifts from the respectful 'you' to the familiar 'thou'.

76 worshipped...be This phrase is slipped in by Gobbo to avert his own profane use of 'Lord'.

77 beard Old Gobbo has grasped the hair at the back of Lancelot's head.

78 fill-horse dray horse. 'Fills', with the meaning 'shafts', is used teasingly by Pandarus to Cressida: 'and you draw backward we'll put you i'th'fills' (*Tro.* 3.2.45-6).

79 backward i.e. from long to short.

80 of...of Lancelot's deliberate use of 'of' in place of his father's 'on' suggests that 'on' is less urban or less fashionable. See Abbott 175.

84 set...rest ventured my final stake or reserve; 'rest' is a gambling term (*OED Rest sb² 7a*), but there is also a pun on the meaning 'residence, abode' (*OED sb¹ 5*).

86 very An intensifier, corresponding to the modern 'real'.

86 halter hangman's noose.

famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come; give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune, here comes the man! To him, father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.

Side #10 End here

Enter BASSANIO with [LEONARDO and] a follower or two

BASSANIO You may do so, but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered, put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[Exit one of his men]

LANCELOT To him, father.

GOBBO God bless your worship!

BASSANIO Gramercy; wouldst thou aught with me?

GOBBO Here's my son, sir, a poor boy –

LANCELOT Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man that would, sir, as my father shall specify –

GOBBO He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve –

LANCELOT Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify –

GOBBO His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins –

LANCELOT To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew having done me

92 SD LEONARDO and] Theobald subst.; not in Q1-2, F 96 SD] Q2; not in Q1, F

87-8 you...ribs The traditional stage business of Lancelot placing his father's hand on the fingers of his own hand, which he has spread out to represent his ribs, probably fulfils Shakespeare's intention. As his resolve to 'try confusions' indicates, there is often method in Lancelot's muddles, requiring such supporting business. Compare 32-4 and 77 nn.

88 me on my behalf. The ethic dative.

89 rare new liveries In *Il Pecorone*, Giannetto, living the life of a wealthy gentleman at Ansaldo's expense, equips his servants with liveries ('vestir famigli').

90 as far...ground i.e. to the ends of the earth. Like 'as far as land will let me' in *R2* 1.3.252, this sounds proverbial (Tilley / Dent G252.1).

91 a Jew i.e. someone I could not possibly be; as in the modern 'or I'm a Dutchman'.

92 SD or two The vagueness typical of an authorial manuscript. Compare 2.1.0 SD and see Textual Analysis, pp. 181-2 below.

95-6 and desire...lodging Gratiano's arrival in front of Shylock's house at 145 below may result from Shakespeare compressing this part of the action as he writes – a not unusual feature of continuous dramatic composition. NS, however, suspects a loose end resulting from revision.

99 Gramercy The conventional polite response to Gobbo's form of greeting. Like the French *merci* it derives from the Old French *grant merci*, '[God] reward you.'

103 infection Gobbo's mistake for 'affection' meaning 'desire'.

107 cater-cousins Close friends who would customarily eat together, though not cousins-german, who were blood relations.

wrong doth cause me – as my father being I hope an old man shall frutify unto you –

GOBBO I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is –

LANCELOT In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man, and though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father –

BASSANIO One speak for both. What would you?

LANCELOT Serve you, sir.

GOBBO That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

BASSANIO I know thee well, thou hast obtained thy suit.

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,

And hath preferred thee, if it be preferment

To leave a rich Jew's service to become

The follower of so poor a gentleman.

LANCELOT The old proverb is very well parted between my master

Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

BASSANIO Thou speak'st it well; go, father, with thy son;

Take leave of thy old master, and enquire

My lodging out. [*To a follower*] Give him a livery

More guarded than his fellows'; see it done.

LANCELOT Father, in. I cannot get a service, no, I have ne'er a tongue in my head! [*Looks at palm of his hand*] Well, if any man in Italy

124, 131 SH LANCELOT] Q2; Clowne Q1, F 129 SD] Johnson subst., after livery; not in Q1-2, F 132 SD] Hanmer subst., after Well; not in Q1-2, F

110 frutify Probably used for 'fructify', since old Gobbo takes this as his cue to produce his gift.

111 dish of doves Not, as has been claimed, Italian local colour. Doves were bred for food in sixteenth-century England.

113 impertinent For 'pertinent'.

118 defect For 'effect' meaning 'purpose'.

121 preferred recommended. The question of when this took place troubles no one in the theatre. The reader may presume it to have happened at the notary's, when Bassanio would have again invited Shylock to his house.

124 old proverb The proverb 'The grace of God is gear enough' (Tilley G393) is based upon 2 Cor. 12.9: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

124 parted divided.

130 guarded braided or frogged. In *When You See Me, You Know Me*, a play acted about 1605,

the actor playing Henry VIII's jester wore a long coat with yellow braid trimmings. But the reference to the livery of Lancelot's fellows suggests that what he reappears in resplendently at 2.4 is an exaggerated version of the uniform worn by Bassanio's servants, rather than a Fool's garb. This would not preclude his acting as a jester (indeed the exaggeration would sanction it) and Bassanio's praise in 127 seems to acknowledge his possibilities as the sententious type of Fool.

131-40 Father...twinkling Lancelot and his father move upstage towards the door of Shylock's house, while Bassanio and Leonardo confer downstage. This blocking helps establish an association of two localities, house and street, which will persist until the end of 2.6.

132-4 Well...fortune Like the rest of us, Shakespeare's characters sometimes start a sentence with one construction and end it with another.