

# The Merchant of Venice

## 2.4

*Enter Graziano, Lorenzo, Salerio, and Salanio*

**LORENZO**

Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,  
Disguise us at my lodging, and return  
All in an hour.

**GRAZIANO**

We have not made good preparation.

**SALERIO**

We have not spoke as yet of torchbearers.

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**SOLANIO**

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered,  
And better in my mind not undertook.

**LORENZO**

'Tis now but four o'clock. We have two hours  
To furnish us.

*Enter Lancelot with a letter*

Friend Lancelot, what's the news?

**LANCELOT** *(presenting the letter)* An it shall please you to 10  
break up this, it shall seem to signify.

**LORENZO** *(taking the letter)*

I know the hand. In faith, 'tis a fair hand,  
And whiter than the paper it writ on  
Is the fair hand that writ.

**GRAZIANO**

Love-news, in faith.

**LANCELOT** *[to Lorenzo]* By your leave, sir. 15

**LORENZO** Whither goest thou?

**LANCELOT** Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup  
tonight with my new master the Christian.

**LORENZO**

Hold, here, take this. *(Giving money)* Tell gentle Jessica  
I will not fail her. Speak it privately. 20  
Go.

*Exit Lancelot*

Gentlemen,

Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?

I am provided of a torchbearer.

**SALERIO**

Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

**SOLANIO**

And so will I.

**LORENZO** Meet me and Graziano

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At Graziano's lodging some hour hence.

**SALERIO** 'Tis good we do so.

*Exit with Solanio*

**GRAZIANO**

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,

30

What gold and jewels she is furnished with,

What page's suit she hath in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;

And never dare misfortune cross her foot

35

Unless she do it under this excuse:

That she is issue to a faithless Jew.

Come, go with me. Peruse this as thou goest.

*He gives Graziano the letter*

Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.

*Exeunt*