

# The Merchant of Venice

## 4.1

*Enter the Duke, the magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Graziano, and Salerio*

**DUKE**

What, is Antonio here?

**ANTONIO**

Ready, so please your grace.

**DUKE**

I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer  
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch  
Uncapable of pity, void and empty  
From any dram of mercy.

**ANTONIO**

I have heard

5

Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify  
His rigorous course, but since he stands obdurate,  
And that no lawful means can carry me  
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose  
My patience to his fury, and am armed  
To suffer with a quietness of spirit  
The very tyranny and rage of his.

10

**DUKE**

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

**SALERIO**

He is ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

*Enter Shylock*

**DUKE**

Make room, and let him stand before our face.  
Shylock, the world thinks±±and I think so too±±  
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice  
To the last hour of act, and then 'tis thought  
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange  
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty,  
And where thou now exacts the penalty±±  
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh±±  
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,  
But, touched with human gentleness and love,  
Forgive a moiety of the principal,  
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,

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25

That have of late so huddled on his back  
Enough to press a royal merchant down  
And pluck commiseration of his state  
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint, 30  
From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained  
To offices of tender courtesy.  
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

**SHYLOCK**

I have possessed your grace of what I purpose,  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn 35  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.  
If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.  
You'll ask me why I rather choose to have  
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive 40  
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,  
But say it is my humour. Is it answered?  
What if my house be troubled with a rat,  
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats  
To have it baned? What, are you answered yet? 45  
Some men there are love not a gaping pig,  
Some that are mad if they behold a cat,  
And others when the bagpipe sings i'th' nose  
Cannot contain their urine; for affection,  
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood 50  
Of what it likes or loathes. Now for your answer:  
As there is no firm reason to be rendered  
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,  
Why he a harmless necessary cat,  
Why he a woollen bagpipe, but of force 55  
Must yield to such inevitable shame  
As to offend himself being offended,  
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,  
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing  
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus 60  
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

**BASSANIO**

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,  
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

**SHYLOCK**

I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

**BASSANIO**  
Do all men kill the things they do not love? 65

**SHYLOCK**  
Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

**BASSANIO**  
Every offence is not a hate at first.

**SHYLOCK**  
What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

**ANTONIO**  
I pray you think you question with the Jew.  
You may as well go stand upon the beach 70  
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;  
You may as well use question with the wolf  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;  
You may as well forbid the mountain pines  
To wag their high tops and to make no noise 75  
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven,  
You may as well do anything most hard  
As seek to soften that $\pm\pm$ than which what's harder? $\pm\pm$   
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,  
Make no more offers, use no farther means, 80  
But with all brief and plain conveniency  
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

**BASSANIO** *(to Shylock)*  
For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

**SHYLOCK**  
If every ducat in six thousand ducats  
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat, 85  
I would not draw them. I would have my bond.

**DUKE**  
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?

**SHYLOCK**  
What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
You have among you many a purchased slave  
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules, 90  
You use in abject and in slavish parts  
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you  
`Let them be free, marry them to your heirs.  
Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds  
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates 95

Be seasoned with such viands.' You will answer  
`The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you.  
The pound of flesh which I demand of him  
Is dearly bought. 'Tis mine, and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law: 100  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgement. Answer: shall I have it?

**DUKE**

Upon my power I may dismiss this court  
Unless Bellario, a learneÁd doctor  
Whom I have sent for to determine this, 105  
Come here today.

**SALERIO** My lord, here stays without  
A messenger with letters from the doctor,  
New come from Padua.

**DUKE**

Bring us the letters. Call the messenger.  
*[Exit Salerio]*

**BASSANIO**

Good cheer, Antonio. What, man, courage yet! 110  
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all  
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

**ANTONIO**

I am a tainted wether of the flock,  
Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit  
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me. 115  
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,  
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

*Enter [Salerio, with] Nerissa appparelled as a judge's clerk*

**DUKE**

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

**NERISSA**

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.  
*She gives a letter to the Duke.*  
*Shylock whets his knife on his shoe*

**BASSANIO** *(to Shylock)*

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly? 120

**SHYLOCK**

To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.

**GRAZIANO**

Not on thy sole but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou mak'st thy knife keen. But no metal can,  
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness  
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

125

**SHYLOCK**

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

**GRAZIANO**

O, be thou damned, inexorable dog,  
And for thy life let justice be accused!  
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith  
To hold opinion with Pythagoras  
That souls of animals infuse themselves  
Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit  
Governed a wolf who, hanged for human slaughter,  
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,  
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,  
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires  
Are wolvis, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

130

135

**SHYLOCK**

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond  
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.  
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall  
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

140

**DUKE**

This letter from Bellario doth commend  
A young and learneÁd doctor to our court.  
Where is he?

**NERISSA** He attendeth here hard by

To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

145

**DUKE**

With all my heart. Some three or four of you  
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

*Exeunt three or four*

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

(*Reads*) `Your grace shall understand that at the receipt  
of your letter I am very sick, but in the instant that  
your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me  
a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I  
acquainted him with the cause in controversy between  
the Jew and Antonio, the merchant. We turned o'er

150

many books together. He is furnished with my opinion 155  
which, bettered with his own learning±±the greatness  
whereof I cannot enough commend±±comes with him  
at my importunity to fill up your grace's request in my  
stead. I beseech you let his lack of years be no  
impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation, for 160  
I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I  
leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial  
shall better publish his commendation.'

*Enter [three or four with] Portia as Balthasar*

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes;  
And here, I take it, is the doctor come. 165  
(*To Portia*) Give me your hand. Come you from old  
Bellario?

**PORTIA**

I did, my lord.

**DUKE**

You are welcome. Take your place.  
Are you acquainted with the difference  
That holds this present question in the court?

**PORTIA**

I am inform'd throughly of the cause. 170  
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

**DUKE**

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.  
*Antonio and Shylock stand forth*

**PORTIA**

Is your name Shylock?

**SHYLOCK**

Shylock is my name.

**PORTIA**

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,  
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law 175  
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.  
(*To Antonio*) You stand within his danger, do you not?

**ANTONIO**

Ay, so he says.

**PORTIA**

Do you confess the bond?

**ANTONIO**

I do.

**PORTIA**

Then must the Jew be merciful.

**SHYLOCK**

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that. 180

**PORTIA**

The quality of mercy is not strained.  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes 185  
The throne—Ad monarch better than his crown.  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway. 190  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;  
It is an attribute to God himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this: 195  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea, 200  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

**SHYLOCK**

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

**PORTIA**

Is he not able to discharge the money? 205

**BASSANIO**

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court,  
Yea, twice the sum. If that will not suffice  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er  
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.  
If this will not suffice, it must appear 210  
That malice bears down truth. And, I beseech you,  
Wrest once the law to your authority.  
To do a great right, do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

**PORTIA**

It must not be. There is no power in Venice 215

Can alter a decree establish'd.  
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,  
And many an error by the same example  
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

**SHYLOCK**

A Daniel come to judgement, yea, a Daniel! 220  
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

**PORTIA**

I pray you let me look upon the bond.

**SHYLOCK**

Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

**PORTIA**

Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

**SHYLOCK**

An oath, an oath! I have an oath in heaven. 225  
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?  
No, not for Venice.

**PORTIA**

Why, this bond is forfeit,  
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim  
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off  
Nearest the merchant's heart. (*To Shylock*) Be merciful. 230  
Take thrice thy money. Bid me tear the bond.

**SHYLOCK**

When it is paid according to the tenor.  
It doth appear you are a worthy judge.  
You know the law. Your exposition  
Hath been most sound. I charge you, by the law 235  
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,  
Proceed to judgement. By my soul I swear  
There is no power in the tongue of man  
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

**ANTONIO**

Most heartily I do beseech the court 240  
To give the judgement.

**PORTIA**

Why, then thus it is:  
You must prepare your bosom for his knife±±

**SHYLOCK**

O noble judge, O excellent young man!

**PORTIA**

For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty 245



Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

**SHYLOCK**  
'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge!  
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

**PORTIA** *(to Antonio)*  
Therefore lay bare your bosom.

**SHYLOCK** Ay, his breast.  
So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge? 250  
`Nearest his heart'±±those are the very words.

**PORTIA**  
It is so. Are there balance here to weigh the flesh?

**SHYLOCK** I have them ready.

**PORTIA**  
Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge  
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death. 255

**SHYLOCK**  
Is it so nominated in the bond?

**PORTIA**  
It is not so expressed, but what of that?  
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

**SHYLOCK**  
I cannot find it. 'Tis not in the bond.

**PORTIA** *(to Antonio)*  
You, merchant, have you anything to say? 260

**ANTONIO**  
But little. I am armed and well prepared.  
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well.  
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,  
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom; it is still her use 265  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow  
An age of poverty, from which ling'ring penance  
Of such misery doth she cut me off.  
Commend me to your honourable wife. 270  
Tell her the process of Antonio's end.  
Say how I loved you. Speak me fair in death,  
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge  
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.  
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend, 275  
And he repents not that he pays your debt;

For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,  
I'll pay it instantly, with all my heart.

**BASSANIO**

Antonio, I am married to a wife  
Which is as dear to me as life itself, 280  
But life itself, my wife, and all the world  
Are not with me esteemed above thy life.  
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all  
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

**PORTIA** *[aside]*

Your wife would give you little thanks for that 285  
If she were by to hear you make the offer.

**GRAZIANO**

I have a wife who, I protest, I love.  
I would she were in heaven so she could  
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

**NERISSA** *[aside]*

'Tis well you offer it behind her back; 290  
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

**SHYLOCK** *[aside]*

These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter.  
Would any of the stock of Barabbas  
Had been her husband rather than a Christian.  
(*Aloud*) We trifle time. I pray thee pursue sentence. 295

**PORTIA**

A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine.  
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

**SHYLOCK** Most rightful judge!

**PORTIA**

And you must cut this flesh from off his breast.  
The law allows it, and the court awards it. 300

**SHYLOCK**

Most learned judge! A sentence: (*to Antonio*) come,  
prepare.

**PORTIA**

Tarry a little. There is something else.  
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood.  
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh'.  
Take then thy bond. Take thou thy pound of flesh. 305  
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed  
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods

Are by the laws of Venice confiscate  
Unto the state of Venice.

**GRAZIANO** O upright judge!  
Mark, Jew! O learneÁd judge! 310

**SHYLOCK** Is that the law?

**PORTIA** Thyself shalt see the act;  
For as thou urgest justice, be assured  
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st.

**GRAZIANO**  
O learneÁd judge! Mark, Jew±±a learneÁd judge! 315

**SHYLOCK**  
I take this offer, then. Pay the bond thrice,  
And let the Christian go.

**BASSANIO** Here is the money.

**PORTIA**  
Soft, the Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste.  
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

**GRAZIANO**  
O Jew, an upright judge, a learneÁd judge! 320

**PORTIA** (*to Shylock*)  
Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.  
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more  
But just a pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more  
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much  
As makes it light or heavy in the substance 325  
Or the division of the twentieth part  
Of one poor scruple±±nay, if the scale do turn  
But in the estimation of a hair,  
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

**GRAZIANO**  
A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew! 330  
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

**PORTIA**  
Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

**SHYLOCK**  
Give me my principal, and let me go.

**BASSANIO**  
I have it ready for thee. Here it is.

**PORTIA**  
He hath refused it in the open court. 335  
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

**GRAZIANO**

A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!  
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

**SHYLOCK**

Shall I not have barely my principal?

**PORTIA**

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture 340  
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

**SHYLOCK**

Why then, the devil give him good of it.  
I'll stay no longer question.

**PORTIA**

Tarry, Jew.

The law hath yet another hold on you.  
It is enacted in the laws of Venice, 345  
If it be proved against an alien  
That by direct or indirect attempts  
He seek the life of any citizen,  
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive  
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half 350  
Comes to the privy coffer of the state,  
And the offender's life lies in the mercy  
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice±±  
In which predicament I say thou stand'st,  
For it appears by manifest proceeding 355  
That indirectly, and directly too,  
Thou hast contrived against the very life  
Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred  
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.  
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke. 360

**GRAZIANO** (to Shylock)

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself±±  
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,  
Thou hast not left the value of a cord.  
Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge.

**DUKE** (to Shylock)

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit, 365  
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.  
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's.  
The other half comes to the general state,  
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

**PORTIA**

Ay, for the state, not for Antonio. 370

**SHYLOCK**

Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.  
You take my house when you do take the prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my life  
When you do take the means whereby I live.

**PORTIA**

What mercy can you render him, Antonio? 375

**GRAZIANO**

A halter, gratis. Nothing else, for God's sake.

**ANTONIO**

So please my lord the Duke and all the court  
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,  
I am content, so he will let me have  
The other half in use, to render it 380  
Upon his death unto the gentleman  
That lately stole his daughter.  
Two things provided more: that for this favour  
He presently become a Christian;  
The other, that he do record a gift 385  
Here in the court of all he dies possessed  
Unto his son, Lorenzo, and his daughter.

**DUKE**

He shall do this, or else I do recant  
The pardon that I late pronounceÂd here.

**PORTIA**

Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say? 390

**SHYLOCK**

I am content.

**PORTIA** (to Nerissa) Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

**SHYLOCK**

I pray you give me leave to go from hence.  
I am not well. Send the deed after me,  
And I will sign it.

**DUKE**

Get thee gone, but do it.

**GRAZIANO** (to Shylock)

In christ'ning shalt thou have two godfathers. 395  
Had I been judge thou shouldst have had ten more,  
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

*Exit Shylock*

**DUKE** *(to Portia)*

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

**PORTIA**

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.

I must away this night toward Padua,

400

And it is meet I presently set forth.

**DUKE**

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify this gentleman,

For in my mind you are much bound to him.

*Exit Duke and his train*

**BASSANIO** *(to Portia)*

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend

405

Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted

Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof

Three thousand ducats due unto the Jew

We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

**ANTONIO**

And stand indebted over and above

410

In love and service to you evermore.

**PORTIA**

He is well paid that is well satisfied,

And I, delivering you, am satisfied,

And therein do account myself well paid.

My mind was never yet more mercenary.

415

I pray you know me when we meet again.

I wish you well; and so I take my leave.

**BASSANIO**

Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.

Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,

Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you:

420

Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

**PORTIA**

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

*[To Antonio]* Give me your gloves. I'll wear them for  
your sake.

*(To Bassanio)* And for your love I'll take this ring from  
you.

Do not draw back your hand. I'll take no more,

425

And you in love shall not deny me this.

**BASSANIO**

This ring, good sir? Alas, it is a trifle.  
I will not shame myself to give you this.

**PORTIA**

I will have nothing else, but only this;  
And now, methinks, I have a mind to it.

430

**BASSANIO**

There's more depends on this than on the value.  
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,  
And find it out by proclamation.  
Only for this, I pray you pardon me.

**PORTIA**

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.  
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks  
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

435

**BASSANIO**

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife,  
And when she put it on she made me vow  
That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.

440

**PORTIA**

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.  
An if your wife be not a madwoman,  
And know how well I have deserved this ring,  
She would not hold out enemy for ever  
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.

445

*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa*

**ANTONIO**

My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.  
Let his deservings and my love withal  
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

**BASSANIO**

Go, Graziano, run and overtake him.  
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,  
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste.

450

*Exit Graziano*

Come, you and I will thither presently,  
And in the morning early will we both  
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

*Exeunt*