

The Merchant of Venice

2.6

Enter the masquers, Graziano and Salerio, [with torchbearers]

GRAZIANO

This is the penthouse under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

SALERIO

His hour is almost past.

GRAZIANO

And it is marvel he outdwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

SALERIO

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly 5
To seal love's bonds new made than they are wont
To keep obligeÁd faith unforfeited.

GRAZIANO

That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again 10
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are
Are with more spirit chaseÁd than enjoyed.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfeÁd barque puts from her native bay, 15
Hugged and embraceÁd by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weathered ribs and raggeÁd sails,
Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!

Enter Lorenzo, [with a torch]

SALERIO

Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter. 20

LORENZO

Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode.
Not I but my affairs have made you wait.
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives
I'll watch as long for you therein. Approach.
Here dwells my father Jew. *(Calling)* Ho, who's within? 25

Enter Jessica above in boy's apparel

JESSICA

Who are you? Tell me for more certainty,
 Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

LORENZO Lorenzo, and thy love.

JESSICA
 Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
 For who love I so much? And now who knows 30
 But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

LORENZO
 Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

JESSICA
 Here, catch this casket. It is worth the pains.
 I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
 For I am much ashamed of my exchange; 35
 But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
 The pretty follies that themselves commit;
 For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
 To see me thus transformeÁd to a boy.

LORENZO
 Descend, for you must be my torchbearer. 40

JESSICA
 What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
 They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
 Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love,
 And I should be obscured.

LORENZO So are you, sweet,
 Even in the lovely garnish of a boy. 45
 But come at once,
 For the close night doth play the runaway,
 And we are stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

JESSICA
 I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
 With some more ducats, and be with you straight. 50
Exit above

GRAZIANO
 Now, by my hood, a gentile, and no Jew.

LORENZO
 Beshrew me but I love her heartily,
 For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
 And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
 And true she is, as she hath proved herself; 55
 And therefore like herself, wise, fair, and true,

Shall she be placeÁd in my constant soul.

Enter Jessica below

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen, away.

Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

Exit with Jessica and Salerio

Enter Antonio

ANTONIO

Who's there?

GRAZIANO Signor Antonio?

60

ANTONIO

Fie, fie, Graziano, where are all the rest?

'Tis nine o'clock. Our friends all stay for you.

No masque tonight. The wind is come about.

Bassanio presently will go aboard.

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

65

GRAZIANO

I am glad on't. I desire no more delight

Than to be under sail and gone tonight.

Exeunt