



CHARACTERS

DUKE OF VENICE

PRINCE OF MOROCCO

PRINCE OF ARAGON

ANTONIO, a Venetian merchant

BASSANIO, Antonio's friend

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew

PORTIA, a rich heiress

NERISSA, Portia's maid

SALARINO

SALANIO

LORENZO

GRAZIANO

SERVANT

GROUP

Scene I

A street in Venice.

ANTONIO I'm sad and I don't know why.

SALARINO Your thoughts are not here, they are in the sea, with your ships.

SALANIO Believe me my lord. If I had so much money in my ships, I would be worried too.

SALARINO Yes, it's really terrible to think that you can lose your money because of a horrible storm. I'm sure I would be as sad as you, my lord.

ANTONIO No. My fortune is not in a single ship or a single place. So I'm not worried about my fortune's future.

SALARINO So, you are in love.

ANTONIO Bah!

SALARINO Aren't you in love? So, you are sad because you aren't happy. It's easy.

SALANIO Bassanio is coming and Graziano and Lorenzo with him.

SALARINO We are leaving, my lord.

ANTONIO Don't worry. You can go.

Bassanio, Graziano and Lorenzo enter.

SALARINO Good morning my good lords.

BASSANIO Hello, good gentlemen. I'm glad to see you.

Salarino and Salanio exit.

LORENZO Bassanio, we are leaving with your friend Antonio, but remember we are having dinner together.

BASSANIO OK, I'll be there.

GRAZIANO You don't look happy, Antonio.

ANTONIO The world is a theatre and my role there is sad.

GRAZIANO I'm not the right man to give you advice, but you shouldn't be in this condition. You are a great man.

LORENZO Come on, Graziano, leave them alone.

ANTONIO Goodbye, my friends.

Graziano and Lorenzo exit.

ANTONIO Well, my friend Bassanio, tell me about your problem.

BASSANIO You know I have spent a lot of money and now I have great debts. I have a plan to clear them.

ANTONIO Let me know it and I'll help you.

BASSANIO There's a young lady in Belmont. She's the most beautiful woman in the world. I love her and I know she loves me.

ANTONIO So, what's the problem?

BASSANIO Some of the richest men in the world want to marry her. I need money. I won't get her if I am so poor.

ANTONIO All my money is in my ships but, don't worry, we'll try to find money in Venice. Someone will lend me the money you need.

BASSANIO Thank you very much, my friend. And...

ANTONIO Tell me, Bassanio.

BASSANIO I know someone who might lend us the money.

ANTONIO Who?

BASSANIO Shylock, the Jew.

ANTONIO Shylock! I hate him.

BASSANIO I know. Well, it was an idea.

ANTONIO You are my best friend, so bring him and I'll talk to him.

BASSANIO I'll be back in a minute. *(He leaves.)*

ANTONIO *(To himself.)* I don't like that Jew, he just thinks about money. But, maybe he will lend me the money. I want to help Bassanio.

Bassanio and Shylock enter.

BASSANIO This is my friend Antonio.

SHYLOCK How do you do, Antonio?

ANTONIO Shylock, you know I don't like you. Will you lend me the money?

SHYLOCK *(To himself.)* I hate Antonio for being Christian and lending money free. It's time for revenge. *(To Bassanio.)* How much do you need?

BASSANIO Three thousand ducats for three months.

SHYLOCK Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio will pay... I agree.

ANTONIO And how much will I have to repay?

SHYLOCK This is my offer: if you don't repay the money in three months, I want a pound of your flesh to be cut off.

ANTONIO All right.

BASSANIO No, you can't do that for me.

ANTONIO Don't worry my friend, in two months my ships will have returned and I'll have three times the value of this money.

Scene II

Portia's Castle in Belmont.

PORTIA How sad I feel! It's terrible not to be able to choose a husband. A large number of gentlemen have come to marry me but I don't like any of them.

NERISSA Don't be afraid. They decided to return home. They don't want you to be a lottery prize.

PORTIA Do you remember a Venetian called Bassanio? I think he was the best man for a lady.

NERISSA Yes, I think so. But remember your father's will: there are three boxes of gold, silver and lead, and if a man wants to marry you, he has to choose the right box.

PORTIA I'll never find a good husband.

NERISSA You will, my lady. The prince of Morocco is waiting to see you.

PORTIA Tell him to come.

Nerissa leaves and the prince of Morocco enters.

P. MOROC It's a great honour.

PORTIA A great pleasure to meet you.

P. MOROC Don't say no to my proposal of marriage just because of my colour. Make a cut on my arm and you'll see my blood is as red as yours.

PORTIA I don't care your colour but, as you know, I can't choose my husband. Do you know about the three boxes?

P. MOROC Yes, I do. Please, show me the boxes to try my fortune.

PORTIA But remember... if you choose wrong, you'll never speak to a lady about marriage.

P. MOROC I know and agree with it.

PORTIA *(Showing him the boxes.)* Noble Prince, here you have the three boxes. Now make your choice.

P. MOROC Three boxes... one of gold, one of silver and the third of lead...

PORTIA The right box has my picture.

P. MOROC Lead is nothing, silver is less valuable than gold, so I'll choose the golden box. Such a beautiful girl just can be compared with gold. Give me the key.

PORTIA Take it, Prince, and if my picture is there, I'll be yours. *(He opens the box.)*

P. MOROC Oh, hell! What have we got here? It's a horrible skull! Goodbye Portia.

The prince of Morocco leaves angrily and Nerissa enters.

NERISSA Be quick, the prince of Aragon is coming to make his election.

The prince of Aragon enters and Nerissa leaves.

P. ARAGON My sweet Portia, I dream about you every day.

PORTIA Noble Prince, here you have the three boxes. I suppose you know the rules.

P. ARAGON I know and accept them. I won't choose what many men desire, so I won't choose the box of gold... The silver box says: "Who chooses me will get as much as he deserves". I like it. Give me the key. *(He opens the silver box.)*

What's this? The picture of an idiot! Goodbye, sweet Portia.

The prince of Aragon leaves and Nerissa enters.

NERISSA Madam, there is a young Venetian at the door. He says his lord wants to try the boxes.

PORTIA I'm sure he is Bassanio. Tell him to come in.

Nerissa leaves and Bassanio enters.

PORTIA Bassanio!

BASSANIO My dear Portia! My love!

PORTIA I beg you to wait a day or two before you choose the box. I don't want to lose your company.

BASSANIO Let me choose. I can't wait.

PORTIA As you like. My picture is in one of these boxes. If you love me, you will find it.

BASSANIO The most beautiful appearances can hide the most vulgar things. So, I'll say no to gold and silver. However, I like the simplicity of lead and I'll choose it.

PORTIA How happy I am!

He opens the box.

BASSANIO Oh my God! It's beautiful Portia's picture.

PORTIA Myself and what is mine is now yours. This house and my servants are yours. This ring is a present for you. If you lose or give it away, it will mean the end of our love.

BASSANIO When this ring parts from this finger, it will be said that Bassanio is dead.

Nerissa enters.

NERISSA There is a letter from Venice. It's from Antonio.

BASSANIO My good friend Antonio! Let me read that letter. *(He reads.)* Oh, sweet Portia! Terrible news! Antonio's ships are sunk and he has no money. A Jew lent him a lot of money and now he can't give it back.

PORTIA How much is it?

BASSANIO Three thousand ducats.

PORTIA What, no more? Here you have six thousand. Return to Venice and help your friend. *(Bassanio leaves.)*
(To herself.) I'll dress up as a doctor and go to Venice. I'll help Bassanio and his friend.

Scene III

The Duke's Palace in Venice.

SERVANT Ladies and gentlemen, the Duke of Venice.

DUKE Shylock, I think you will show your mercy and forgive Antonio.

GROUP Yes, show your mercy, please.

SHYLOCK Never, I just want a pound of Antonio's flesh.

BASSANIO You are a cruel man. I'll give you six thousand ducats for your three thousand.

SHYLOCK No, I'll have Antonio's flesh.

DUKE Don't you know the meaning of mercy?

GROUP No, he doesn't.

SHYLOCK This is not a matter of mercy. I just want what he promised.

ANTONIO But the money is here.

SHYLOCK Late, too late.

GROUP Oh no, he is so cruel!

DUKE Well, I have sent for Belario to determine this.

Portia enters wearing as a man.

PORTIA My lord. Belario is very sick and he sends me to determine this cause.

DUKE OK! Let's start!

PORTIA Antonio, do you confess the debt?

ANTONIO Yes, I do.

PORTIA Then Shylock should be merciful.

SHYLOCK Never!

BASSANIO I offered him six thousand ducats but he is such a cruel man that refused the money.

SHYLOCK This paper says I must receive a pound of his flesh.

PORTIA The Law is the Law. Antonio, you must be ready to have your flesh cut off.

BASSANIO But...

SHYLOCK Oh, excellent young man!

ANTONIO I'm ready to die.

GROUP Poor Antonio!

PORTIA There's something else... You must cut just a pound of his flesh nor less nor more.

SHYLOCK What?

BASSANIO He's great!

PORTIA If you cut less or more than a pound, you'll die.

SHYLOCK Give me the money and let me go.

BASSANIO Here it is.

PORTIA Stop! He will have justice.

SHYLOCK Will I not have my money?

PORTIA It's written in the Laws of Venice that if someone tries to kill a Venetian citizen, he will lose all his possessions and life.

SHYLOCK Oh no! *(He cries.)*

GROUP Cry, villain, cry!

ANTONIO *(To the duke.)* Please, my lord, show your mercies. Take just half of his possessions and ask him to become a Christian.

DUKE What do you say, Shylock?

SHYLOCK I agree.

DUKE So, you can go.

GROUP Go away, Shylock, go away.

BASSANIO *(To Portia.)* Sir, my friend and I are very grateful, what would you like?

PORTIA Nothing, thank you very much.

BASSANIO Please, take something from us as a present.

PORTIA OK, I'll take this ring from you.

BASSANIO This ring, good sir? That's not possible... I'll give you the most expensive ring in Venice.

PORTIA That's simply an excuse.

ANTONIO Let him have the ring, Bassanio.

BASSANIO Right then, here you have.

Scene IV

Belmont. Antonio and Bassanio return from Venice and meet Portia.

BASSANIO My love, you are the sun in the dark.

PORTIA You are welcome home, my lord.

BASSANIO This is my friend Antonio.

PORTIA You are very welcome to our house.

ANTONIO It's a pleasure to meet you.

PORTIA What's this? Where is the ring I gave you?

BASSANIO Sweet Portia, if you knew who I gave the ring to, you would understand.

PORTIA There is nothing to understand. I'm sure a woman has the ring.

BASSANIO No woman has it, but a doctor. He had saved my friend's life and asked me the ring. What could I do?

ANTONIO He's telling the truth.

PORTIA Then, take this ring and keep it better. *(She hands Bassanio the ring.)*

BASSANIO By heaven, it's the same ring!

PORTIA I was the doctor in Venice.

BASSANIO Impossible!

PORTIA I dressed up as a man.

BASSANIO Were you the doctor and I didn't know you? My God!

PORTIA And I have better news for you, Antonio. Three of your ships are safe.

ANTONIO I can't believe it! I haven't lost all my money. That's great!

BASSANIO Well, this is a very happy ending.