

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE Act IV(i)

Original version

- DUKE Came you from Bellario?
- PORTIA. I did, my lord.
- DUKE Give me your hand. Are you acquainted with the difference that holds this question in the court?
- PORTIA. I am informed thoroughly of the cause. Which is the merchant here? And which the Jew?
- DUKE. Antonio and Shylock, both 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 law must allow you to proceed. [*To Antonio.*] You stand within his danger, do you not?
- ANTONIO. I do.
- 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.
- PORTIA. The quality of mercy is not strain'd, 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 the monarch better than his crown. It is an attribute to God himself; And earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew, consider this, we do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to mercy. I have spoke thus to mitigate the justice of thy plea.
- SHYLOCK. My deeds upon my head! I crave the penalty and forfeit of my bond.
- PORTIA. Is he not able to discharge the money?
- BASSANIO. Yes, here I tender it for him in court! Twice the sum, and if that will not suffice, I will be pay it ten times over. [*to Duke*] To do a great right, do a little wrong and curb this cruel devil of his will.

PORTIA. It must not be, no power can alter a decree established.

SHYLOCK.: A Daniel come to judgment! A Daniel!

PORTIA. I pray you let me look upon the bond.

SHYLOCK. Here 'tis.

PORTIA. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered.

SHYLOCK. An oath! Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

PORTIA. This bond is forfeit so lawfully the Jew may claim a pound of flesh. Be merciful, take thrice thy money and bid me tear the bond.

SHYLOCK. When it is paid according to the tenour. I swear there is no power to alter me.

ANTONIO. Most heartily I do beseech the court to give judgment.

PORTIA. Thus it is: You must prepare 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.

SHYLOCK. O wise and upright judge,

PORTIA. Are there balance here to weigh The flesh?

SHYLOCK. I have them ready.

PORTIA. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, to stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

SHYLOCK. Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA. It is not so expressed, but what of that?

SHYLOCK. Tis not in the bond.

PORTIA. You, merchant, have you anything to say?

ANTONIO. But little. Give me your hand, Bassanio, fare you well. Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you. Commend me to your honourable wife, Say how I lov'd you. Repent not that I pay your debt, for if the Jew cut but deep enough, I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

BASSANIO. Antonio, I am married to a wife as dear to me as life itself, But I would sacrifice her to deliver you.

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

GRATIANO. And I have a wife I love. I would she were in heaven, so she could beg some power to change this currish Jew.

NERISSA. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back.

SHYLOCK. We trifle time! I pray thee, pursue sentence.

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. You must cut this flesh from his breast. The law allows it and the court awards it.

SHYLOCK. Most learned judge! 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 pound of flesh but, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed one drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods are confiscate unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO. O upright judge!. O learned judge!

SHYLOCK. Is that the law?

PORTIA. Thy shalt see the act. As thou urgest justice, be assured thou shalt have justice.

GRATIANO. O learned judge! Mark, Jew, a learned judge!

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 nothing but the penalty.

GRATIANO. O Jew, an upright judge, a learned judge!

PORTIA. 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 takest more or less in the estimation of a hair, thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRATIANO. A second Daniel, a Daniel!

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, He shall have merely justice and his bond.

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

SHYLOCK. Shall I not have my principal?

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

SHYLOCK. Why, then the devil of it! I'll stay no longer.

PORTIA. Tarry, Jew. The law hath another hold on you. In the laws of Venice, If it be proved against an alien that He seek the life of any citizen, then his life lies in the mercy of the Duke. In which predicament I say thou stand. Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

DUKE. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit, I pardon thy life before thou ask it. Half thy wealth is now Antonio's; The other half comes to the general state,

SHYLOCK. Nay, take my life and all when you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

ANTONIO. So please the court I am content to render one half of his goods upon his death unto the gentleman That lately stole his daughter. One other thing: He presently become a Christian.

DUKE. He shall do this, or else I do recant the pardon that I pronounced.

PORTIA. Art thou contented, Jew?

SHYLOCK. I am content.

PORTIA. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK. I pray you give me leave to go; I am not well; send the deed after me And I will sign it.

DUKE. Get thee gone, but do it. **[Exit SHYLOCK.]**

Antonio, gratify this gentleman, for in my mind you are much bound to him.

[Exeunt DUKE.]

BASSANIO. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend are by your wisdom acquitted of grievous penalties, in lieu we render you 3000 ducats due unto the Jew.

PORTIA. He is well paid that is well satisfied, And I delivering you, am satisfied, And therein I account myself well paid. I pray you know me when we meet again. I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

[Final Curtain]