

## Scene-Wise Analysis of the Play

### ***Act I, Scene I***

Antonio, the great merchant, is sad, but he cannot tell his friends the reason for his sadness. They suggest various possible causes for anxiety, and try to make him laugh, Antonio is waiting to meet his best friend, Bassanio, who confesses to Antonio that he has spent a great deal of money, and also that he is in love with Portia, a rich heiress. Antonio has no more money to lend to Bassanio at present, but promised to help him to borrow from the money-lenders so that he can visit Portia.

### ***Act I, Scene 2***

Portia and Nerissa talk about the test which Portia's suitors must take. Some men have already come to Belmont in the hope of marrying her, but when Portia describes them she makes fun of them and shows her dislike. Finally Nerissa reminds her of Bassanio.

### ***Act I, Scene 3***

Shylock is able to lend money to Bassanio, but he makes it clear that he hates Antonio. Shylock and Antonio argue about the morality of making a profit from the money-lending, and Shylock reminds Antonio of his past insults. However, he agrees to lend the money but he asks for unusual bond.

### ***Act 2, Scene I***

Portia meets the Prince of Morocco, who wants to marry her. He chooses to try his luck with the caskets, although she warns him of the penalty he must pay if he makes the wrong choice.

### ***Act 2, Scene 2***

Launcelot Gobbo, Shylock's servant, is wondering whether ought to run away from his master. Old Gobbo, his father, comes on to the stage in search of his son. Because he is blind he does not recognize Launcelot, who plays a rather cruel trick on him. Old Gobbo asks Bassanio to give employment to Launcelot; which Bassanio agrees to do. Gratiano also asks a favour from Bassanio : he wants to accompany his to Belmont, Bassanio agrees, but he warns Gratiano that he must behave properly.

### ***Act 2, Scene 3***

Launcelot says goodbye to Shylock's daughter, Jessica, who is sorry to see him go.

### ***Act 2, Scene 4***

Bassanio's friends have planned some kind of entertainment to amuse the guests at dinner . Launcelot gives, Lorenzo the letter from Jessica, and Lorenzo explains his intentions to the audience.

**Act 2, Scene 5**

Shylock instructs Jessica to lock up the house carefully ; he then goes off to have dinner with Bassanio.

**Act 2, Scene 6**

Lorenzo and his friends meet outside Shylock's house. Jessica appears on the balcony, rather embarrassed because she is dressed as a boy.

**Act 3, Scene 1**

Salerio has heard bad news about one of Antonio's ships. Shylock threatens Antonio, when Shylock and Tubal are left on the stage together he gloats over Antonio's danger, Shylock's pleasure over this matter is equal to the pain he suffers in the loss of his daughter.

**Act 3, Scene 2**

Portia has fallen in love with Bassanio and wants him to wait a few days before making his choice of the caskets. But Bassanio refuses to wait. He meditates a loud on the difference between appearance and reality and then chooses the leaden casket and wins Portia for his wife. Nerissa and Gratiano congratulate him, and Gratiano declares his own marriage plans. Lorenzo and Jessica arrive at Belmont, together with Salerio, who has brought a letter from Antonio. Antonio has written to say he is in Shylock's power.

**Act 3, Scene 4**

Portia asks Lorenzo to look after her until she and Nerissa return. They are going to Venice and plan to dress as men to play a trick on their husbands.

**Act 4, Scene 5**

Launcelot Gobbo teases Jessica about her Jewish nationality. Her husband Lorenzo joins in the fun.

**Act 4, Scene 1**

The Duke Shylock to show mercy to Antonio, but Shylock refuses and insists on having his pound of flesh. A young lawyer comes into the court—it is Portia in disguise with Nerissa as the lawyer's clerk. Portia makes a speech in praise of mercy but Shylock is unmoved. Portia agrees that he is legally entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh, and Antonio prepares to die. At the last moment Portia finds a way of escape for Antonio, Bassanio very grateful because his friend's life has been saved, and he offer to reward the young lawyer. Portia asks for a ring.

**Act 4, Scene 2**

Gratiano gives Bassanio's ring to Portia, who is still disguised as the young lawyer and accompanied by Nerissa as her 'clerk' Nerissa plans to get her own ring from Gratiano.

**Act 5, Scene 1**

Lorenzo and Jessica talk lovingly in the moonlight. Messages are brought, telling them that Portia and Bassanio are (separately) on their way home. After a short time, Portia and Nerissa arrive at Belmont, a little later, as day breaks, Bassanio and Gratiano also appear. The wives ask their husbands for the rings, and pretend to be angry ; at last they reveal the truth.

