

HANDOUT for *Merchant of Venice* PRESENTATION
The Rogue Theatre
25 April 2015
Dr. Peter Medine

Plot Outline of *The Merchant of Venice*

Romantic Plot

- 1.1. Antonio and Bassanio and the venture for Portia
- 1.2. Portia and the casket contest; reviewing of her suitors

- 2.1. Morocco vowing to enter the contest

- 2.3. Jessica and Launcelot
- 2.4. Gratiano, Lorenzo, and friends
- 2.6. Gratiano, Bassanio, and friends
- *2.7. Morocco choosing gold casket

- *2.9. Arragon choosing silver casket

- *3.2. Bassanio choosing lead casket and three couples united; acceptance of ring; news of Shylock's pressing for pound of flesh

- 3.4. Portia and Nerissa planning their device
- 3.5. Jessica and Lorenzo

- 4.1. Trial in which Portia prevails over Shylock; surrender of rings

- 4.2. Portia and Nerissa accepting rings from Bassanio and Gratiano

- 5.1. Nocturnal episode, homecoming, and returning of the rings.

Financial Plot

- 1.3. Shylock and Antonio; the bond

- 2.2. Launcelot leaving Shylock and joining Bassanio

- 2.5. Shylock, Jessica, and Launcelot

- 2.8. Report of Shylock's reaction to Jessica's eloping

- 3.1. Shylock's railing against Antonio

- 3.3. Shylock's pressing of his suit

1. from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* 1.3.41ff

[Aside] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

2. from 3.1.51ff

Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

SHYLOCK

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

3. from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* 3.1.83ff

SHYLOCK

Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no in luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

TUBAL

Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,--.....

SHYLOCK

I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

TUBAL

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

SHYLOCK

Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

TUBAL

There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

SHYLOCK

I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

TUBAL

One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

SHYLOCK

Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

4. from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* 4.1

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 throned 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;
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,
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;
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.