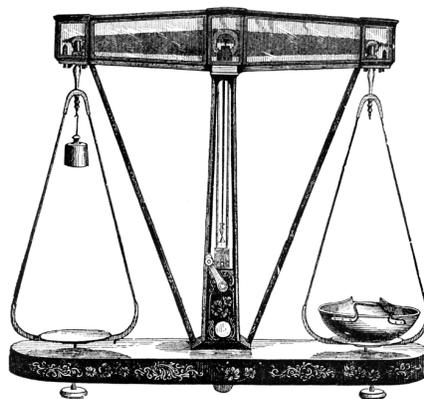


# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

By

William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene 6



SCENE. The same.

(Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued.)

GRATIANO.

This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo  
Desir'd us to make stand.

SALARINO.

His hour is almost past.

GRATIANO.

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

SALARINO.

O! ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly  
To seal love's bonds new made than they are wont  
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

GRATIANO.

That ever holds: who riseth from a feast  
With that keen appetite that he sits down?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again  
His tedious measures with the unbated fire  
That he did pace them first? All things that are  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
How like a younker or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!  
How like the prodigal doth she return,  
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!

SALARINO.

Here comes Lorenzo; more of this hereafter.

(Enter LORENZO.)

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 then. Approach;  
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

(Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes.)

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  
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 asham'd of my exchange;  
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 transformed to a boy.

LORENZO.

Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

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 obscur'd.

LORENZO.

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

JESSICA.

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some moe ducats, and be with you straight.

(Exit above.)

GRATIANO.

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 prov'd herself;  
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,  
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

(Enter JESSICA.)

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen, away!  
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

(Exit with JESSICA and SALARINO.)

(Enter ANTONIO)

ANTONIO.  
Who's there?

GRATIANO.  
Signior Antonio!

ANTONIO.  
Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?  
'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you.  
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;  
Bassanio presently will go aboard:  
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

GRATIANO.  
I am glad on't: I desire no more delight  
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

(Exeunt.)