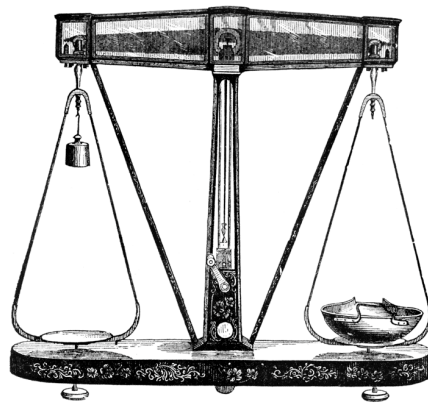


# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

By

William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene 4



SCENE. The same. A street

(Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.)

LORENZO.

Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,  
Disguise us at my lodging, and return  
All in an hour.

GRATIANO.

We have not made good preparation.

SALARINO.

We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

SALANIO.

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,  
And better in my mind not undertook.

LORENZO.

'Tis now but four o'clock; we have two hours  
To furnish us.

(Enter LAUNCELOT, With a letter.)

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

LAUNCELOT.

An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem  
to signify.

LORENZO.

I know the hand; in faith, 'tis a fair hand,  
And whiter than the paper it writ on  
Is the fair hand that writ.

GRATIANO.

Love news, in faith.

LAUNCELOT.

By your leave, sir.

LORENZO.

Whither goest thou?

LAUNCELOT.

Marry, sir, to bid my old master, the Jew, to sup  
to-night with my new master, the Christian.

LORENZO.

Hold, here, take this. Tell gentle Jessica  
I will not fail her; speak it privately.  
Go, gentlemen,

(Exit LAUNCELOT)

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?  
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

SALARINO.

Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

SALANIO.

And so will I.

LORENZO.

Meet me and Gratiano  
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

SALARINO.

'Tis good we do so.

(Exeunt SALARINO and SALANIO.)

GRATIANO.

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

LORENZO.

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed  
How I shall take her from her father's house;  
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;  
What page's suit she hath in readiness.  
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,  
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;  
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,  
Unless she do it under this excuse,  
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.  
Come, go with me, peruse this as thou goest;  
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

(Exeunt)