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*The
Merchant
of Venice*

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH DETAILED NOTES
FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING CENTER FOR
SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT
AND PAUL WERSTINE

Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALARINO My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea. 25
I should not see the sandy hourglass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy *Andrew* ¹docked¹ in sand,
Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church 30
And see the holy edifice of stone
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks, 35
And, in a word, but even now worth this
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio 40
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO
Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year: 45
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SOLANIO
Why then you are in love.

ANTONIO Fie, fie!

SOLANIO
Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy 50
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed
Janus,

57. **other:** i.e., others; **vinegar aspect:** sour face (accent **aspect** on second syllable)

59. **Nestor:** the wise old Greek councillor

60. **kinsman:** This is the only place in the play that such a family relationship is mentioned.

71. **grow exceeding strange:** i.e., are becoming complete strangers

72. **We'll make . . . on yours:** i.e., we'll find time for you whenever you are available

78. **have . . . upon:** i.e., pay too much attention to



A merchant of Venice.

From Jean de Glen, *Des habits, mœurs . . .* (1601).

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes 55
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman, 60
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare you well.
We leave you now with better company.

SALARINO

I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

ANTONIO

Your worth is very dear in my regard. 65
I take it your own business calls on you,
And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

SALARINO

Good morrow, my good lords.

BASSANIO

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say,
when? 70
You grow exceeding strange. Must it be so?

SALARINO

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Salarino and Solanio exit.

LORENZO

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you. But at dinner time 75
I pray you have in mind where we must meet.

BASSANIO

I will not fail you.

GRATIANO

You look not well, Signior Antonio.
You have too much respect upon the world.

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Essay by Alexander Leggatt

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