

Act 1 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 money-lending, and Shylock reminds Antonio of his past insults. However, he agrees to lend the money; but he asks for an unusual bond.

1 *ducats*: Venetian gold coins.

5 *bound*: as security.

Scene 3 *Venice. A public place*

Enter Bassanio and Shylock

Shylock

Three thousand ducats; well.

Bassanio

Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock

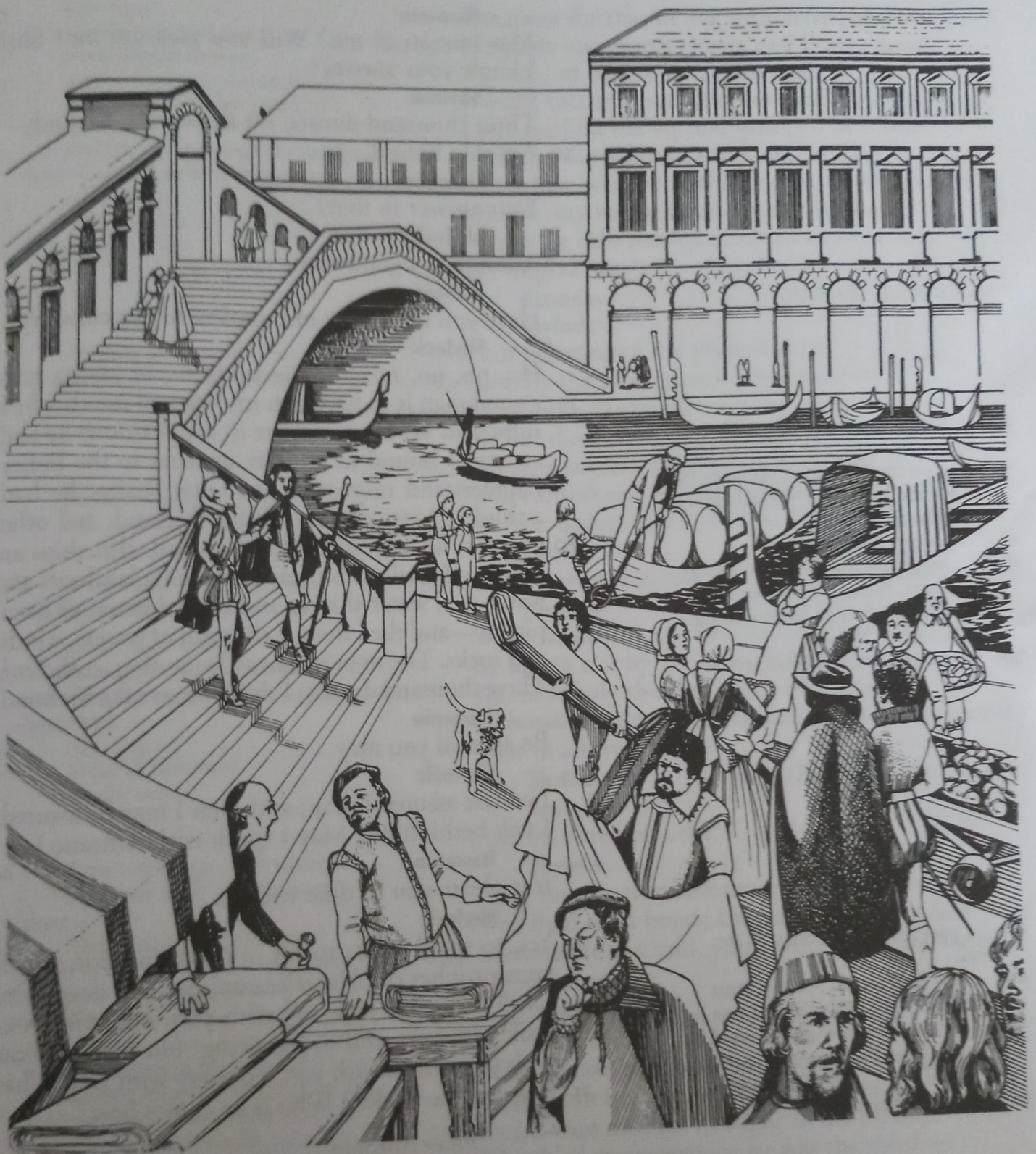
For three months; well.

Bassanio

For the which, as I told you, Antonio
5 bound.

Shylock

Antonio shall become bound; well.



7 *stead*: supply.

16 *sufficient*: financially adequate.
are in supposition: have to be
 taken on trust (because his property is
 all outside Venice, as Shylock goes on
 to explain).

17 *argosy*: merchant ship.

18 *the Rialto*: the Venetian Stock
 Exchange; the name is often used
 today for the bridge leading to the
 Exchange.

20 *squandered*: scattered lavishly.

30 *pork*: meat forbidden to the
 Jews.

30-1 *the habitation . . . into*: Jesus
 ('the Nazarite') healed a madman by
 ordering the devils that possessed his
 mind to leave the man and enter into
 a herd of pigs (St. Mark 5: 1-13).

33 *and so following*: etc.

37 *fawning*: servile.

publican: innkeeper.

38 *for*: because.

Bassanio

May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall
 I know your answer?

Shylock

Three thousand ducats, for three months, and
 10 Antonio bound.

Bassanio

Your answer to that?

Shylock

Antonio is a good man.

Bassanio

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shylock

Ho, no, no, no, no; my meaning in saying he is
 15 a good man is to have you understand me that he is
 sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath
 an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies;
 I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath
 a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other
 20 ventures he hath squandered abroad. But ships are
 but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and
 water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves—I mean
 pirates—and then there is the peril of waters, winds,
 and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient.
 25 Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bassanio

Be assured you may.

Shylock

I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured,
 I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bassanio

If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock

30 Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which
 your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into.
 I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you,
 walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat
 with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What
 35 news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter Antonio

Bassanio

This is Signior Antonio

Shylock

[*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
 I hate him for he is a Christian;

39 *low*: base.
simplicity: foolishness.
 40 *gratis*: free of interest.
 41 *usance*: usury, money-lending.
 42 *upon the hip*: off his guard, at
 a disadvantage.
 43 *feed fat*: i.e. as though the grudge
 were an animal to be looked after.
 44 *rails*: abuses.
 46 *thrift*: success.
 47 *interest*: profit.

49 *debating of*: reckoning up.
present store: ready money.
 50 *near*: close.
 51 *gross*: whole sum.

54 *furnish*: supply.
soft: wait a minute.

56 *in our mouths*: that we were
 talking about.

57 *albeit*: although.
 58 *excess*: interest (an amount
 exceeding the original sum lent or
 borrowed).

59 *ripe*: urgent.
 60 *possess'd*: informed.
 61 *would*: want.

66 *Upon advantage*: with interest.
I do never use it: I have never
 done it.

67-84 There are two stories about
 Jacob in the Book of Genesis. The first
 (chapters 25 and 27) tell how, with the
 aid of 'his wise mother', he tricked his
 elder brother of his birth-right, and so
 became the heir to his father and to his
 grandfather, Abraham, the founder of
 the Jewish race. The second story
 (chapter 30) tells of Jacob's cunning
 trick with Laban's sheep; Shylock
 recounts this episode.

67 *graz'd*: shepherded.
 69 *wrought*: devised.

But more for that in low simplicity
 40 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,
 45 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!

Bassanio

Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock

I am debating of my present store,
 50 And, by the near guess of my memory,
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
 55 Do you desire? [*To Antonio*] Rest you fair, good
 signior;

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Antonio

Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow
 By taking nor by giving of excess,
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
 60 I'll break a custom. [*To Bassanio*] Is he yet possess'd
 How much ye would?

Shylock

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Antonio

And for three months.

Shylock

I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
 Well then, your bond; and let me see—but hear you;
 65 Methought you said, you neither lend nor borrow
 Upon advantage.

Antonio

I do never use it.

Shylock

When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep—
 This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
 As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
 70 The third possessor: ay, he was the third—

Antonio

And what of him? did he take interest?