

Act 1

Scene 1

Antonio was a **merchant**. One day, he was walking home with his friends, Solanio and Salerio. Antonio had been very depressed for a few days. He didn't know how to make himself happy again. Antonio lived in Venice.

"I don't know why I am so unhappy," Antonio said to his friends, "Being so sad all the time is making me tired. I know it's making you tired too. I'm also so confused that I don't know where I am most of the time."

"Your ships are out at sea! You are worrying about them. Your mind is out at sea with them. But your ships are like kings on the sea. They tower over other ships. The other ships all **bow** as yours pass by," Salerio replied.

"If my ships were out at sea with such valuable cargo, I would be worried too. Everything that might bring disaster to my ships would make me more depressed," Solanio said.

"I agree. I would think about storms that might **wreck** my ships. I would think about sandbanks that the ships might get stuck on. I would think about rocks that might wreck my ships. I would go from being rich to being poor in a second. I would be miserable if that happened. You must be depressed because you are worried," Salerio agreed.

merchant (n) a person who buys and sells products

bow (v) to bend your head or body forward to show respect

wreck (v) to damage or destroy

“I am very happy with the good luck I have had, but not all of my money is on one ship in one place. I will still be rich even if I have a bad year of trading. Worrying about my ships isn’t making me depressed,” Antonio sighed.

“Well, then, you must be in love!” Solanio laughed.

“Come on! I’m not in love,” Antonio replied with a smile.

“You’re not in love either? Then you are sad just because you aren’t happy. If you wanted to be happy and jumping around, you could be, but you just keep saying you are sad. People are so strange. Some are happy all the time and go around smiling like idiots. Others walk around so sour that they don’t even smile at a funny joke,” Salerio said. The three men kept walking down the street until they saw three men who were coming towards them.

“Here comes Bassanio! Salerio and I will leave you to talk to him,” Solanio said. Salerio and Solanio were not **mean** but it is very hard to try to be cheerful around someone who is miserable. They were both glad to be able to leave Antonio with Bassanio.

“If Bassanio hadn’t come to see you, I would have stayed to cheer you up,” Salerio told Antonio.

“Hello, my lords,” Salerio greeted Bassanio and the two men with him. Their names were Lorenzo and Gratiano.

“Bassanio, now you have found Antonio, we will leave you,” Gratiano said. Salerio, Solanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano all left in a hurry. No one wanted to be around Antonio when he was depressed. Bassanio and Antonio walked around the city together. Antonio was trying to cheer himself up.

“Tell me about the woman you are in love with, Bassanio,” Antonio said.

“Well, you know that I have wasted my **inheritance** by **living beyond my means**. I’m not sorry that I have to cut back on spending money now. I want to get rid of all my debts. I owe you the most, not only money but friendship too. You are a good friend. I will tell you about my plan to clear all my debts,” Bassanio replied.

“If it is an honourable plan, I will help in any way I can,” Antonio said.

“When I was a boy, if I lost an arrow, I fired another one in the same way. I risked losing two arrows, but I nearly always found them both. I owe you a lot and a lot has been lost. But my plan is to fire another arrow in the same direction as you shot the first. I will watch things very carefully, so I have no doubt that I will find both arrows or I will bring back the second arrow and pay you back what I owe you for the first,” Bassanio explained.

inheritance (n) money, property, objects, etc. that you receive when someone dies

live beyond one’s means (phrase) to spend more money than one can afford to spend



*“Tell me about the woman you are in love with,
Bassanio,” Antonio said.*

“Tell me what you want to do. There is no need to tell me long stories. I have said I will help you however I can. If I think you can do what you plan, I will help you. So talk,” Antonio **frowned** at Bassanio.

“I am in love with Portia. She is beautiful and has many wonderful qualities. She is a rich **heiress** who lives in Belmont. She has beautiful blonde hair too. But I am not the only man who says he loves her. Men from all over come to try to marry her. Oh Antonio, if I had the money to compete with them, I know I would win,” Bassanio sighed.

“All my wealth is on the ships at sea. I have no money to give you in cash and nothing I can sell to give you money, but I do have credit. Test how good my credit is in Venice. Take it to the limit of my credit to pay for your **quest** to win Portia. Go ask around now. I will do the same. We will find out where we can borrow money from. I will borrow as much as I can on my credit and from my friends too,” Antonio smiled at Bassanio. The two men went in different directions to find out how much money they could borrow.

frown (v) to make a serious or angry facial expression by moving your eyebrows down and closer together

heiress (n) a girl or woman who receives a large amount of money or property when someone dies

quest (n) a search for something; desire

Act 1

Scene 2

Portia's father had died recently. Nerissa, Portia's **lady-in-waiting**, had spent a lot of time with her. They both lived in Portia's home in Belmont.

"Honestly, Nerissa, my body is so tired of this world," Portia said.

"You might be tired of the world if you didn't have such good luck. No one can be as sick from overeating as they get from **starving**. Being poor isn't bad. Having too much makes you get old too quickly. Having less lets you live longer," Nerissa replied.

"If it were that easy, then chapels would all be churches. Poor men's **cottages** would all be palaces. A good preacher follows his own advice. I'd rather teach twenty people what to do than have to be one of the twenty following the advice. The brain makes rules for the body, but passion makes the body ignore them. Being young makes you ignore good advice. All this sensible thinking isn't going to help me pick a husband. My father's will means I can't pick who I want or don't want. It's very unfair," Portia sighed.

lady-in-waiting (n) a female servant

starve (v) to suffer or die because you don't have enough food

cottage (n) a small house (usually in the country)

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Test 1

Are the following sentences TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)?

1. Antonio was depressed. T / F
2. The Prince of Morocco came to try to marry Portia. T / F
3. Shylock's daughter was called Nerissa. T / F
4. Portia's father didn't care who married his daughter. T / F
5. Antonio sent forty men to look for Gratiano. T / F
6. Bassanio and Antonio got home before Portia. T / F
7. Shylock woke up the Duke shouting about his daughter and his money. T / F
8. Antonio was taken to prison. T / F
9. Nerissa had a secret plan to save Antonio. T / F
10. Gratiano gave Portia Bassanio's ring. T / F

Test 2

Match the sentences.

Beginnings

1. Jessica watched as Shylock and
2. She is going to take gold
3. He prayed for good judgement
4. His ships are at sea
5. A wise father knows his child
6. He used to lend money out of charity
7. Bassanio arrived in Venice
8. Bassanio will be a better man
9. I didn't tell Nerissa that
10. A servant came into the room

Endings

- a. and sailing all over the place
- b. I loved her until you won Portia.
- c. and jewels from her father
- d. and went over to Nerissa.
- e. because he married her.
- f. just in time for the trial.
- g. Lancelot walked away.
- h. and now look at him.
- i. and in the end the truth will come out.
- j. and looked at the chests again.

GRAMMAR CHECK

Test 1

Form Type-2 conditional sentences by putting the verbs into the correct form.

Example:

*If she **spoke** English, she **would get** a better job.*

1. If I (win) the lottery, I (be) a millionaire.
2. I (buy) a sport car if I (have) the money.
3. Mark (be) happier if he (have) more friends.
4. I (learn) Spanish if I (decided) to live in Spain.
5. Jane (pass) the exam if she (study) harder.
6. If it (rain), we (get) wet.
7. I (be) glad to help you if we (have) more time.
8. You (catch) the bus if you (walk) faster.
9. If I (have) a dog, I (take) it for a walk every morning.
10. Sophie (invite) him to the party if she (have) his phone number.

VOCABULARY CHECK

Test 1

Fill in the blanks with the words below.

merchants mean starve frowned heiress
impatient wrecked pleasing cottage inheritance

1. She will be the to the throne after her father's death.
2. His wealth comes from a large that he received from his parents.
3. Most of the town's had to close their shops during the demonstrations.
4. During school holidays, they like to hire a in the countryside and spend time as a family there.
5. The storm most of the cars in the town and caused extensive damage to the buildings.
6. He enjoyed the night by turning on some music in the background while drinking his favourite tea.
7. When she heard the news, she was to get home.
8. It was obvious that the authorities left the animals to to death.
9. Mike at me when he walked into the room, so I knew that he was annoyed at me.
10. Don't be so She was just trying to help.