

## **The Merchant of Venice abbreviated**

Act 4, Scene 1

### **Inspiration**

**Situation:** Having entered the courtroom disguised as a “lawyer’s clerk,” Nerissa hands a paper from Bellario to the Duke; a letter that informs the court that he can’t attend the session since he is “very sick.” Bellario provides in his letter that he has sent a very talented young lawyer, Balthazar, to stand in for him. It’s at this point when Portia enters disguised as the young lawyer, Balthazar.

PORTIA: I am informed thoroughly of the cause. Is your name Shylock?

SHYLOCK: Shylock is my name.

PORTIA: Of a strange nature is the suit you follow, yet in such rule that the Venetian law cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

PORTIA TO ANTONIO: You stand within his danger, do you not?

ANTONIO: Ay, so he says.

PORTIA: Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO: I do.

PORTIA: Then must the Jew be merciful.

SHYLOCK: On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

### **Portia to Shylock, No. 1**

**The quality of mercy is not strained.  
It droppeth upon this earth as if rained  
From heaven. It blesseth both him that gives  
And him that takes; a gift from the mighty,  
The monarch better than his crown, who lives  
But as a temporal sway, where mercy  
Is above the crown’s power; it’s God’s hand.  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings, and  
Earthly power doth then show when God’s love  
Seasons justice. It’s an attribution  
To God himself. Therefore in the course of  
Justice none of us should see salvation.  
Praying for mercy doth teach us that we  
All should surrender to deeds of mercy.**

SHYLOCK: I crave the law, the penalty and forfeit of my bond.