

The Merchant of Venice

author: William Shakespeare

2026-06

Synopsis

author	William Shakespeare
readBy	Derek Jacobi, Donald Beves, John Barton, George Rylands, Tony Robertson, full cast
inLanguage	english

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'The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven'
Bassiano, a noble Venetian, hopes to woo the beautiful heiress Portia. However, he requires financial assistance from his friend Antonio. Antonio agrees, but he, in turn, must borrow from the Jewish moneylender Shylock. As recourse for past ills, Shylock stipulates that the forfeit on the loan must be a pound of Antonio's flesh.

In the most renowned onstage law scene of all time, Portia proves herself one of Shakespeare's most cunning heroines, disguising herself as a lawyer and vanquishing Shylock's claims; meanwhile, Shylock triumphs on a humanitarian level with his plea for tolerance.

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Thurston Dart, Professor of Music at London University and a Fellow of Jesus College Cambridge, directed the music for this production.

The full cast includes: Donald Beves; John Barton; Toby Robertson; George Rylands; Gary Watson; Anthony Jacobs; Gerald Mosback; Derek Jacobi; Richard Marquand; Tony Church; Clive Swift; Michael Bates; Terrence Hardiman; Christopher Renard; John Tracy-Phillips; Margaretta Scott;

Christine Baker; Jan</p>

Reader's comments

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