

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice

Character: Bassanio

Genre: Comedy

Tone: Seriocomic

Style: Verse

Act/Scene: III ii

Approx. Run Time: 1.20

Scene Setting: Bassanio chooses the correct casket and wins the hand of Portia in marriage.

What find I here? [Opening the leaden casket] Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes? Or whether, riding on the balls of mine, Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips, Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs The painter plays the spider, and hath woven A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men, Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes,— How could he see to do them? having made one, Methinks it should have power to steal both his And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow In underprizing it, so far this shadow Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll, The continent and summary of my fortune. [Reads] "You that choose not by the view, Chance as fair and choose as true! Since this fortune falls to you, Be content and seek no new, If you be well pleased with this, And hold your fortune for your bliss, Turn you where your lady is, And claim her with a loving kiss."

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave; I come by note, to give and to receive. Like one of two contending in a prize, That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes, Hearing applause and universal shout, Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt Whether these pearls of praise be his or no; So, thrice fair lady, stand I, even so; As doubtful whether what I see be true, Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.