MERCHANT OF VENICE

**Scene One**

*Character introduction: All characters appear one by one and introduce themselves to the spectators.*

Shakespeare: I am William Shakespeare. I am the author of today’s drama. I have written several tragedies and comedies. This is a tragedy-cum-comedy. There is a murder conspiracy by Shylock, but it ends up as a comedy.

Antonio: I am Antonio, one of the richest merchants in Venice. I have plenty of ships on the seas. Bessanio is my bosom friend. I took out a loan from Shylock to help my friend.

Bessanio: I am a friend of Antonio. I met a beautiful and rich lady, Portia, whom I want to marry. Because I don’t have money, I asked my friend Antonio to help me.

Shylock: I am a Jew and a money lender. I hate Antonio as he has insulted me on several occasions. I am looking for any opportunity to get vengeance.

Portia: I am the daughter of a rich man from Venice. I am in love with Bessanio. I am going in disguise myself as a lawyer, and I will argue in Shylock's case in favor of Antonio.

Duke: Shylock's case is heard in my court. I will hear the arguments from both sides and give my judgment.

**Scene Two**

Bessanio: Oh Antonio, my bosom friend. I need your help.

Antonio: Oh! Old friend, tell me what I can do for you.

Bessanio: I love Portia, a rich and beautiful lady. I want to marry her, so I need money from you.

Antonio: Don’t worry, old friend. I will help you. I have no money now, but I will borrow money from Shylock on loan.

**Scene Three: Shylock’s Office**

Shylock: Antonio! Bessanio! What do you want?

Antonio: I need money. 3000 ducats.

Shylock: I only loan money for interest. In your case, however, I will not take any interest. I will write in the bond one pound of flesh from a part of your body nearest to your heart, just for fun, in case you don’t return my money in three months.

Bessanio: Antonio, don’t sign. Don’t take the risk.

Antonio: Don’t you worry. My ships will return next month. We can return the money then.

**Scene Four: Duke’s Court**

Clerk of Court: The plaintiff is Shylock. The defendant is Antonio. The defendant's lawyer is Mr. Mirabella. (*Mirabella is actually Portia in disguise.*)

Duke: Has Shylock come here?

Shylock: Yes, Your Honor.

Duke : Tell me, Shylock. What is your case?

Shylock: Your Honor, it has been three months since I loaned money to Antonio. Since a reasonable time has passed, he should give me a pound of flesh, as per the bond, signed by Antonio.

Duke: Antonio, what do you say?

Antonio: My lawyer will speak for me.

Mirabella: (*bows and starts speaking*) Your Honor, Shylock is keen to collect his pound of flesh. (*pauses*) Let him have it. Have you brought a knife, Shylock?

Shylock: Yes I have.

Mirabella: You may cut out flesh from the nearest part to the chest. Not more. Not less.

Shylock: That is not mentioned in the bond.

Mirabella: Furthermore, there should be no blood spilled because it is also not mentioned in the bond. Your Honor, is it possible to take flesh without spilling blood? I don’t want my client to lose even a single drop of blood. Shylock has conspired to murder Antonio, as one cannot cut flesh without spilling a drop of blood.

Duke: Now it is judgment time.

Clerk: Silence, please. Silence.

Duke: The conspiracy is obvious: Shylock planned to murder Antonio. Shylock, I order you to apologize. You should give half of your fortune to the government and half to Antonio as punishment for your actions.

(*Shylock walks off in shame. Antonio, Bessanio, and Portia hug and celebrate their victory.*)

THE END