**ACT 5, SCENE 1.**

*Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.*

* Lorenzo and Jessica talk together in the garden of Belmont. They speak of their love for each other by comparing themselves to great classical lovers.

* Stephano brings news of Portia’s return to Belmont. Lancelot informs Lorenzo that Bassanio is also on his way back from Venice. Lorenzo proposes to welcome them home with music.
* Lorenzo tells Jessica of the harmony of the heavens. As the musicians play, he describes the healing power of music.
* Portia and Nerissa return, unnoticed at first and comment on the light and the music. They discover that their husbands have not yet arrived back in Belmont, and they plan to keep quiet about their own absence.

*Music ceases*

**LORENZO**

That is the voice,

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

**PORTIA**

He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,

By the bad voice.

**LORENZO**

Dear lady, welcome home.

**PORTIA**

We have been praying for our husbands' healths,

Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.

Are they return'd?

**LORENZO**

Madam, they are not yet;

But there is come a messenger before,

To signify their coming.

What order does Portia give to everyone at Belmont?

What is she planning that leads her to give this order?

**PORTIA**

Go in, Nerissa;

Give order to my servants that they take

No note at all of our being absent hence;

Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.

*A tucket sounds*

**LORENZO**

Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:

We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

**PORTIA**

This night methinks is but the daylight sick;

It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,

Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

In much of this scene, the audience is aware of something that some of the characters are not. What technique is Shakespeare using here?

What is the effect of this on the audience?

*Enter* ***BASSANIO****,* ***ANTONIO****,* ***GRATIANO****, and their followers*

**BASSANIO**

We should hold day with the Antipodes,

If you would walk in absence of the sun.

**PORTIA**

Let me give light, but let me not be light;

For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,

And never be Bassanio so for me:

What technique is Portia using here? What is the effect?

But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

**BASSANIO**

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio,

To whom I am so infinitely bound.

**PORTIA**

You should in all sense be much bound to him.

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

**ANTONIO**

No more than I am well acquitted of.

**PORTIA**

Is Portia really surprised by this quarrel? Why not?

Sir, you are very welcome to our house:

It must appear in other ways than words,

Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

**GRATIANO**

[To ***NERISSA***] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:

Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,

What are Nerissa and Gratiano in the middle of here?

What has Nerissa ‘noticed’?

Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

**PORTIA**

A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

In these lines, does Gratiano show that he understands the true significance of the ring Nerissa gave him? Also, highlight the words which back up your answer.

**GRATIANO**

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring

That she did give me, whose posy was

For all the world like cutler's poetry

Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'

**NERISSA**

Who does Nerissa ‘claim’ to think that Gratiano gave his ring to?

What talk you of the posy or the value?

You swore to me, when I did give it you,

That you would wear it till your hour of death

And that it should lie with you in your grave:

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,

You should have been respective and have kept it.

Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,

The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

**GRATIANO**

He will, an if he live to be a man.

**NERISSA**

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Why does Portia get involved in Gratiano and Nerissa’s argument and state her opinion of Gratiano’s behaviour?

**GRATIANO**

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,

A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,

No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk,

A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:

I could not for my heart deny it him.

**PORTIA**

You were to blame, I must be plain with you,

To part so slightly with your wife's first gift:

A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger

And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.

I gave my love a ring and made him swear

Never to part with it; and here he stands;

I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it

What does Gratiano do to his friend Bassanio here?

Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth

This aside is spoken directly to the audience without the other characters being able to hear it. What is the audience’s likely reaction to this aside? Why?

That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:

An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

**BASSANIO**

[Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

**GRATIANO**

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away

Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed

Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,

That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;

And neither man nor master would take aught

Bassanio is immediately honest with Portia. Is this what we would expect from him having got to know his character throughout the play. Why?

But the two rings.

Is this a genuine question from Portia? Why/why not?

**PORTIA**

What ring gave you my lord?

Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

**BASSANIO**

If I could add a lie unto a fault,

I would deny it; but you see my finger

Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

**PORTIA**

What do both Portia and Nerissa resolve to do about the men giving away their rings?

Even so void is your false heart of truth.

By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed

What exactly do the rings symbolize?

Why are the women REALLY upset that the men have given away the rings? Think back to the court scene and what Bassanio said he would do to save Antonio.

Until I see the ring.

**NERISSA**

Nor I in yours

Till I again see mine.

**BASSANIO**

Sweet Portia,

**If you did** **know** to whom I gave **the ring**,

What does Portia do here with Bassanio’s previous words? What does this suggest about their relationship?

**If you did know** for whom I gave **the ring**

And would conceive for what I gave the ring

And how unwillingly I left the ring,

When nought would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

**PORTIA**

**If you had known** the virtue of **the ring**,

Or half her worthiness that gave **the ring**,

Or your own honour to contain **the ring**,

You would not then have parted with the ring.

What man is there so much unreasonable,

If you had pleased to have defended it

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe:

I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

**BASSANIO**

Look at the underlined words. What type of language is Bassanio using here to try and convince Portia that he had no choice but to give away the ring? Is it effective?

No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,

No woman had it, but a civil doctor,

Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me

And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him

Find the lines in the scene where Portia speaks directly to Antonio and highlight them in a different colour. Look carefully at how she speaks to him. What can you suggest these lines might show about how she feels about Antonio.

And suffer'd him to go displeased away;

Even he that did uphold the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?

I was enforced to send it after him;

I was beset with shame and courtesy;

My honour would not let ingratitude

So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;

For, by these blessed candles of the night,

Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd

The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

**PORTIA**

What do Portia and Nerissa say they will do if she ever meets the doctor and his clerk?

Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:

Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,

And that which you did swear to keep for me,

**I will become as liberal as you;**

**I'll not deny him any thing I have,**

No, not my body nor my husband's bed:

Know him I shall, I am well sure of it:

Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus:

If you do not, if I be left alone,

Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,

**I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.**

**NERISSA**

**And I his clerk**; therefore be well advised

How you do leave me to mine own protection.

**GRATIANO**

Well, do you so; let not me take him, then;

For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

**ANTONIO**

Name and describe two things does Bassanio do to try to persuade Portia not to be angry with him?

I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

**PORTIA**

Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

**BASSANIO**

What could it be suggested that Portia does to Bassanio here? What could this tell us about their relationship?

Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;

And, in the hearing of these many friends,

I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,

Wherein I see myself -

**PORTIA**

Mark you but that!

In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;

In each eye, one: swear by your double self,

And there's an oath of credit.

**BASSANIO**

Nay, but hear me:

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear

I never more will break an oath with thee.

**ANTONIO**

I once did lend my body for his wealth;

What does Antonio try to do here?

Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,

Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord

Will never more break faith advisedly.

**PORTIA**

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this

And bid him keep it better than the other.

**ANTONIO**

Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

**BASSANIO**

What do Portia and Nerrisa both claim to have done to have got their rings back?

By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

**PORTIA**

I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio;

Gratiano calls himself and Bassanio ‘cuckolds’. What does this word mean?

**For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me**.

**NERISSA**

And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano;

For that same scrubbed boy, **the doctor's clerk,**

**In lieu of this last night did lie with me**.

**GRATIANO**

Why, this is like the mending of highways

In summer, where the ways are fair enough:

What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

What secret does finally Portia reveal to the men?

What causes her to finally stop tricking the men and reveal her secret?

**PORTIA**

Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed:

What good news does Portia give Antonio?

**Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;**

**It comes from Padua, from Bellario:**

**There you shall find that Portia was the doctor**,

Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you

And even but now return'd; I have not yet

Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;

And I have better news in store for you

Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;

There you shall find three of your argosies

Are richly come to harbour suddenly:

You shall not know by what strange accident

I chanced on this letter.

**ANTONIO**

I am dumb.

**BASSANIO**

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Antonio thanks Portia here and calls her ‘Sweet lady’. How does she respond to this?

**GRATIANO**

Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

What does Bassanio do in this line? What could it imply about how he feels about the trick that Portia has played on him?

**NERISSA**

Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,

Unless he live until he be a man.

**BASSANIO**

Sweet doctor, you shall be my bed-fellow:

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

**ANTONIO**

Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;

For here I read for certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.

What lesson was Portia trying to teach Bassanio by playing this trick on him?

What good news does Nerissa give to Lorenzo and Jessica?

**PORTIA**

How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

**NERISSA**

Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,

After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

**LORENZO**

Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way

Of starved people.

**PORTIA**

It is almost morning,

And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

Have Gratiano and Bassanio forgiven Nerissa and Portia for their trick?

What tells you this?

Of these events at full. Let us go in;

And charge us there upon inter'gatories,

And we will answer all things faithfully.

**GRATIANO**

Let it be so: the first inter'gatory

That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,

Whether till the next night she had rather stay,

Or go to bed now, being two hours to day:

But were the day come, I should wish it dark,

What is the literal meaning of this last line?

There is also a sexual innuendo in this line. Can you explain it?

That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.

Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing

So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

*Exeunt*

Write down the couples that are happy together in Belmont by the end of the play. Why does Shakespeare need to end the play in this way?

Who is left alone in Belmont? Does this remind you of anyone else in the play?

Does Antonio’s sadness from Act 1, Scene 1 seem to really be resolved?