

The Merchant of Venice abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Pride

Situation: Portia and Nerissa learn that “the Prince of Morocco will be there tonight.” Portia reluctantly receives him into her Belmont home, offering him the opportunity to choose among the three caskets.

PORTIA: The lottery of my destiny bars me the right of voluntary choosing. But if my father had not restricted me and hedged me by his wit to yield myself his wife who wins me by that means I told you, yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair as any comer I have looked on yet for my affection.

Morocco to Portia

**Dislike me not as a tawny Moor’s son,
A darkened product of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born
And cut us, to prove whose blood is most red,
His or mine; the valiant become forlorn.
I would not change this hue except to share
Your thoughts, my gentle queen. I would o’erstare
The sternest eyes that look and out clock
Them, outbrave the most daring heart that’s been,
Pluck the young cubs from the she-bear, yea, mock
The lion when he roars for prey, to win
Thee. And so may I, blind Fortune leading
Me, miss by losing you, and die grieving.**

MOROCCO: I pray you lead me to the caskets to try my fortune.

PORTIA: You must take your chance and either not attempt to choose at all or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong never to speak to lady afterward in way of marriage. Therefore be advised.

MOROCCO: Come, bring me unto my chance.