

## The Last Page

### The Quality of Mercy

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: It is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The thronèd monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,  
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God Himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Portia, in William Shakespeare,  
*The Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1*