

The Jew of Malta



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By Christopher Marlowe

Edited By The Rev. Alexander Dyce

The Famous Tragedy of The Rich Iew of Malta. As it was playd before the King and Qveene, in His Majesties Theatre at White-Hall, by her Majesties Servants at the Cock-pit. Written by Christopher Marlo. London; Printed by I. B. for Nicholas Vavasour, and are to be sold at his Shop in the Inner-Temple, neere the Church. 1633. 4to.

TO MY WORTHY FRIEND, MASTER THOMAS HAMMON, of GRAY'S INN, ETC.

This play, composed by so worthy an author as Master Marlowe, and the part of the Jew presented by so unimitable an actor as Master Alleyn, being in this later age commended to the stage; as I ushered it unto the court, and presented it to the Cock-pit, with these Prologues and Epilogues here inserted, so now being newly brought to the press, I was loath it should be published without the ornament of an Epistle; making choice of you unto whom to devote it; than whom (of all those gentlemen and acquaintance within the compass of my long knowledge) there is none more able to tax ignorance, or attribute right to merit. Sir, you have been pleased to grace some of mine own works 1 with your courteous patronage: I hope this will not be the worse accepted, because commended by me; over whom none can claim more power or privilege than yourself. I had no better a new-year's gift to present you with; receive it therefore

as a continuance of that inviolable obligation, by which he rests still engaged, who, as he ever hath, shall always remain,

Tuissimus,

Tho. Heywood. [2](#)

THE PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT COURT.

Gracious and great, that we so boldly dare
('Mongst other plays that now in fashion are)
To present this, writ many years ago,
And in that age thought second unto none,
We humbly crave your pardon. We pursue
The story of a rich and famous Jew
Who liv'd in Malta: you shall find him still,
In all his projects, a sound Machiavill;
And that's his character. He that hath past
So many censures [3](#) is now come at last
To have your princely ears: grace you him; then
You crown the action, and renown the pen.

EPILOGUE SPOKEN AT COURT.

It is our fear, dread sovereign, we have bin [4](#) Too tedious; neither can't
be less than sin

To wrong your princely patience: if we have,
Thus low dejected, we your pardon crave;
And, if aught here offend your ear or sight,
We only act and speak what others write.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE STAGE, AT THE COCK-PIT.

We know not how our play may pass this stage,
But by the best of poets [5](#) in that age
THE MALTA-JEW had being and was made;
And he then by the best of actors [6](#) play'd:
In HERO AND LEANDER [7](#) one did gain
A lasting memory; in Tamburlaine,
This Jew, with others many, th' other wan
The attribute of peerless, being a man
Whom we may rank with (doing no one wrong)
Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue,—
So could he speak, so vary; nor is't hate
To merit in him [8](#) who doth personate
Our Jew this day; nor is it his ambition
To exceed or equal, being of condition
More modest: this is all that he intends,
(And that too at the urgency of some friends,)
To prove his best, and, if none here gainsay it,
The part he hath studied, and intends to play it.

EPILOGUE TO THE STAGE, AT THE COCK- PIT.

In graving with Pygmalion to contend,

Or painting with Apelles, doubtless the end

Must be disgrace: our actor did not so,—

He only aim'd to go, but not out-go.

Nor think that this day any prize was play'd; [9](#) Here were no bets at
all, no wagers laid: [10](#) All the ambition that his mind doth swell,

Is but to hear from you (by me) 'twas well.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

FERNEZE, governor of Malta.

LODOWICK, his son.

SELIM CALYMATH, son to the Grand Seignior.

MARTIN DEL BOSCO, vice-admiral of Spain.

MATHIAS, a gentleman.

JACOMO,

BARNARDINE, | friars.

BARABAS, a wealthy Jew.

ITHAMORE, a slave.

PILIA-BORZA, a bully, attendant to BELLAMIRA.

Two Merchants.

Three Jews.

Knights, Bassoos, Officers, Guard, Slaves,
Messenger,

and Carpenters

KATHARINE, mother to MATHIAS.

ABIGAIL, daughter to BARABAS.

BELLAMIRA, a courtezan.

Abbess.

Nun.

MACHIAVEL as Prologue speaker.

Scene, Malta.

THE JEW OF MALTA.

Enter MACHIAVEL.

MACHIAVEL. Albeit the world think Machiavel is dead,
Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps;
And, now the Guise [11](#) is dead, is come from France,
To view this land, and frolic with his friends.

To some perhaps my name is odious;
But such as love me, guard me from their tongues,
And let them know that I am Machiavel,
And weigh not men, and therefore not men's words.

Admir'd I am of those that hate me most:
Though some speak openly against my books,
Yet will they read me, and thereby attain
To Peter's chair; and, when they cast me off,
Are poison'd by my climbing followers.

I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.
Birds of the air will tell of murders past!
I am asham'd to hear such fooleries.

Many will talk of title to a crown:

What right had Caesar to the empery? [12](#) Might first made kings,
and laws were then most sure

When, like the Draco's, [13](#) they were writ in blood.

Hence comes it that a strong-built citadel
Commands much more than letters can import:

Which maxim had [14](#) Phalaris observ'd,

H'ad never bellow'd, in a brazen bull,
Of great ones' envy: o' the poor petty wights
Let me be envied and not pitied.
But whither am I bound? I come not, I,
To read a lecture here [15](#) in Britain,
But to present the tragedy of a Jew,
Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramm'd;
Which money was not got without my means.
I crave but this,—grace him as he deserves,
And let him not be entertain'd the worse
Because he favours me.

[Exit.]

ACT I. [16](#)

BARABAS discovered in his counting-house, with heaps
of gold before him.

BARABAS. So that of thus much that return was made;
And of the third part of the Persian ships
There was the venture summ'd and satisfied.
As for those Samnites, [17](#) and the men of Uz,
That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
Here have I purs'd their paltry silverlings. [18](#) Fie, what a trouble 'tis
to count this trash!

Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell [19](#) that which may maintain him all his life.
The needy groom, that never finger'd goat,
Would make a miracle of thus much coin;
But he whose steel-barr'd coffers are cramm'd full,
And all his life-time hath been tired,
Wearying his fingers' ends with telling it,
Would in his age be loath to labour so,
And for a pound to sweat himself to death.
Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
That trade in metal of the purest mould;
The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up,
And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight;
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld-seen [20](#) costly stones of so great price,
As one of them, indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve, in peril of calamity,
To ransom great kings from captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth;
And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,

And, as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
Infinite riches in a little room.

But now how stands the wind?

Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill? [21](#) Ha! to the east? yes.

See how stand the vanes—

East and by south: why, then, I hope my ships
I sent for Egypt and the bordering isles
Are gotten up by Nilus' winding banks;
Mine argosy from Alexandria,
Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail,
Are smoothly gliding down by Candy-shore
To Malta, through our Mediterranean sea.—
But who comes here?

Enter a MERCHANT.

How now!

MERCHANT. Barabas, thy ships are safe,
Riding in Malta-road; and all the merchants
With other merchandise are safe arriv'd,
And have sent me to know whether yourself
Will come and custom them. [22](#)

BARABAS. The ships are safe thou say'st, and richly fraught?

MERCHANT. They are.

BARABAS. Why, then, go bid them come ashore,

And bring with them their bills of entry:
I hope our credit in the custom-house
Will serve as well as I were present there.
Go send 'em threescore camels, thirty mules,
And twenty waggons, to bring up the ware.
But art thou master in a ship of mine,
And is thy credit not enough for that?

MERCHANT. The very custom barely comes to more
Than many merchants of the town are worth,
And therefore far exceeds my credit, sir.

BARABAS. Go tell 'em the Jew of Malta sent thee, man:
Tush, who amongst 'em knows not Barabas?

MERCHANT. I go.

BARABAS. So, then, there's somewhat come.—
Sirrah, which of my ships art thou master of?

MERCHANT. Of the Speranza, sir.

BARABAS. And saw'st thou not
Mine argosy at Alexandria?
Thou couldst not come from Egypt, or by Caire,
But at the entry there into the sea,
Where Nilus pays his tribute to the main,
Thou needs must sail by Alexandria.

MERCHANT. I neither saw them, nor inquir'd of them:
But this we heard some of our seamen say,
They wonder'd how you durst with so much wealth
Trust such a crazed vessel, and so far.

BARABAS. Tush, they are wise! I know her and her strength.
But [23](#) go, go thou thy ways, discharge thy ship,
And bid my factor bring his loading in.

[Exit MERCHANT.]

And yet I wonder at this argosy.

Enter a Second MERCHANT.

SECOND MERCHANT. Thine argosy from Alexandria,
Know, Barabas, doth ride in Malta-road,
Laden with riches, and exceeding store
Of Persian silks, of gold, and orient pearl.

BARABAS. How chance you came not with those other ships
That sail'd by Egypt?

SECOND MERCHANT. Sir, we saw 'em not.

BARABAS. Belike they coasted round by Candy-shore
About their oils or other businesses.
But 'twas ill done of you to come so far
Without the aid or conduct of their ships.

SECOND MERCHANT. Sir, we were wafted by a Spanish fleet,
That never left us till within a league,
That had the galleys of the Turk in chase.

BARABAS. O, they were going up to Sicily.
Well, go,
And bid the merchants and my men despatch,
And come ashore, and see the fraught [24](#) discharg'd.

SECOND MERCHANT. I go.
[Exit.]

BARABAS. Thus trolls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enrich'd:
These are the blessings promis'd to the Jews,
And herein was old Abraham's happiness:
What more may heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the sea[s] their servants, and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts?
Who hateth me but for my happiness?
Or who is honour'd now but for his wealth?
Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,
Than pitied in a Christian poverty;
For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,

Which methinks fits not their profession.
Haply some hapless man hath conscience,
And for his conscience lives in beggary.
They say we are a scatter'd nation:
I cannot tell; but we have scambled [25](#) up
More wealth by far than those that brag of faith:
There's Kirriah Jairim, the great Jew of Greece,
Obed in Bairseth, Nones in Portugal,
Myself in Malta, some in Italy,
Many in France, and wealthy every one;
Ay, wealthier far than any Christian.
I must confess we come not to be kings:
That's not our fault: alas, our number's few!
And crowns come either by succession,
Or urg'd by force; and nothing violent,
Oft have I heard tell, can be permanent.
Give us a peaceful rule; make Christians kings,
That thirst so much for principality.
I have no charge, nor many children,
But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear
As Agamemnon did his Iphigen;
And all I have is hers.—But who comes here?

Enter three JEWS. [26](#)

FIRST JEW. Tush, tell not me; 'twas done of policy.

SECOND JEW. Come, therefore, let us go to Barabas;
For he can counsel best in these affairs: