

## The Merchant of Venice

*LAUNCELOT GOBBO is the young servant of Shylock, the moneylender. In this street scene, he is deciding whether to run away from his master. He is talking to the audience.*

### **LAUNCELOT GOBBO:**

Certainly, my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master: the fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says "No; take heed honest Launcelot, take heed honest Gobbo," or as aforesaid "honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run, scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack, "Fia!" says the fiend, "away!" says the fiend, "for the heavens rouse up a brave mind" says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me: "My honest friend Launcelot" – being an honest man's son, or rather an honest woman's son, for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to; he had a kind of taste; – well, my conscience says "Launcelot budge not!" – "Budge!" says the fiend, – "Budge not!" says my conscience. "Conscience" say I, "you counsel well, – Fiend" say I, "you counsel well," – to be rul'd by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who (God bless the mark) is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew I should be ruled by the fiend, who (saving your reverence) is the devil himself: certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation, and in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew; the fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run fiend, my heels are at your commandment, I will run.

*by William Shakespeare*