

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (R-3)

When I told you my state was nothing,
I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing, for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady.

1. Why does Bassanio say that he was worse than nothing?
2. Who brought the letter? How did Portia know that there are some 'shrewd contents' in it?
3. Explain why Bassanio finds the news on the letter almost unbelievable.

