

You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.  
 What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:  
*Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.*  
 What many men desire — that may be meant  
 Of the full multitude that choose by show,  
 Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;  
 Which pries not to th' interior; like the martlet  
 Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
 Ev'n in the force and road of casualty.  
 I will not choose what many men desire,  
 Because I will not jump with common spirits,  
 And rank me with the barb'rous multitudes.  
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasurehouse:  
 Tell me once more, what title thou dost bear:  
*Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves;*  
 And well said too, for who shall go about  
 To cozen fortune, and be honourable  
 Without the stamp of merit? let none presume  
 To wear an undeserved dignity:  
 O, that estates, degrees, and offices,  
 Were not deriv'd corruptly! that clear honour  
 Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!  
 How many then should cover, that stand bare?  
 How many be commanded, that command?  
 How much low pleasantry would then be gleaned  
 From the true seed of honour? how much honour  
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,  
 To be new varnish'd? Well, but to my choice:  
*Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves:*  
 A key for this; I will assume desert,  
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*Por.* Too long a pause for that which you find there.

[unlocking the silver casket.]

*Ar.* What's here! the portrait of a blinking idiot,  
 Presenting me a schedule? I will read it:  
 How much unlike art thou to *Portia*?

How