

**Qno.1. Why does Shylock hate Antonio?**

**Ans.** Shylock hates Antonio because he lends money to people in distress and does not charge any interest for the money he lends. Shylock being a hard hearted man exacts the payment of money he lends with much severity. Since Antonio is generous he earns much of hatred of Shylock.

**Qno.2. How does Antonio help Bassanio?**

**Ans.** Bassanio wants to travel to Belmont in order to propose a rich and beautiful girl called Portia. He has, however, no money to make himself look as rich and important to her as her other suitors. He goes to Antonio for borrowing money. Antonio, this time, has no money so he decides to borrow the money for Bassanio from an old jew called Shylock.

Shylock lends Antonio the money on the condition that if he fails to repay the money in a certain time, he will, as a penalty forfeit a pound of flesh, to be cut from any part of his body that Shylock pleases.

**Qno.3. How does Shylock feel when Antonio asks for some money? Why is he interested to pay the required sum?**

**Ans.** When Antonio asks Shylock to borrow him some money, he feels happy. He thinks if he can catch him on the hip, he will feed fat the ancient grudge. Shylock reminds Antonio the insults he has suffered at his hands. Shylock finds an option to revenge Antonio by lending him the money without charging any interest. He, however, makes him sign a bond that if he fails to repay the money by a certain day he will have to forfeit a pound of flesh to be cut from any part of his body Shylock pleases as the penalty. Shylock, thus wants to kill his enemy in the pretence of not repaying the borrowed money.

**Qno.5. How does Bassanio marry Portia?**

**Ans.** Bassanio loves Portia. He, however, feels scared to propose her. He needs some money to make himself look as rich and important as her other suitors. He goes to Antonio to borrow the money. Antonio has, this time, no cash at hand. He approaches an old jew, Shylock for the money. Shylock lends him the money on a severe condition that if he fails to repay the debt in times he will have to forfeit his pound of flesh as penalty. Thus Antonio arranges the money for his friend at the cost of his life. Bassanio takes the money and reaches Belmont. He manages to impress Portia with his borrowed elegance. The girl falls in love with him and both get married.

**Qno.6. Why is the case brought before the duke of Venice?**

**Ans.** Since the three months mentioned in the bond pass, and Antonio fails to repay the borrowed money, Shylock files a case against him before the duke of Venice claiming the penalty of a pound of Antonio's flesh.

**Qno.7. Who is disguised as the learned counselor (Doctor Balthasar)? Why has he come to the court of Venice?**

**Ans.** Portia is disguised as the learned counselor, Dr Balthasar. He has come to the court to plead the case of Antonio who has failed to repay the debt and is facing the trial.

**Qno.8. How does the counselor start the argument, and how was he able to get the judgment in Antonio's favor?**

**Ans.** The counselor starts his argument in favor of Shylock and says that he indeed has the right to claim his pound of flesh. He, in the same breath appeals Shylock to have mercy on Antonio. Shylock is not moved by the counselors appeal and he keeps on sharpening his knife. The counselor, however, turns the tide against him by discovering a new point. He impresses upon Shylock not to shed even a single drop of Antonio's blood while cutting a pound of flesh from his body. The counselor tells the court that it is the flesh, not the blood that is

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named in the bond. This wise discovery of the counselor makes him able to get the judgment in favor of Antonio.

**Qno.9. How does Portia get back her ring?**

**Ans.** After Portia, in the disguise of a lawyer has won the case for Antonio, Bassanio goes to thank her. He asks her to accept a gift which Portia refuses. When Bassanio insists her, she suggests her that she can give her the ring on his finger. Bassanio feels hesitated but Antonio suggests him to give it to the lawyer for he has done a great service to him. This way Portia gets her ring back.

**Qno.10. Describe the theme of the play –“the Merchant of the Venice”.**

**Ans.** The play “the Merchant of the Venice” revolves around three themes- love, sacrifice, and hatred. The beginning of the play describes the hatred of Antonio for an old Jew, Shylock who charges very high rate of interest on his lent money to the needy. Shylock also hatches a plan to revenge the hatred of Antonio. The play also highlights the Bassanio’s candid love for Portia. He does not want to lose her beloved at any cost.

Sacrifice is yet another theme reflected in the play. Antonio is an epitome of sacrifice. He lends his money to the needy without charging any interest. He risks his life and borrows money for his bosom friend from a cruel Jew, this, he does to see his friend winning the love of Portia.

**Character Sketch of Shylock:**

Shylock, the Jew lived in Venice. He was a usurer by profession. He had amassed an immense fortune by lending money at great interest rate to Christian merchants. Being a hard-hearted man, he exacted the payment of the money he lent with such a severity that he was much disliked by all good men. His hard-heartedness had also made Antonio to reproach him. Shylock was accused for his selfish behavior in the whole city of Venice.

Shylock had tremendous enmity with Antonio. He had cooked revenge against him for which he was always looking for the opportunity. This opportunity came his way when Antonio approached him with a plea that he needed three thousand ducats. Shylock made Antonio sign a bond that if he failed to repay the money on a certain day he would have to forfeit a pound of flesh. Luck went Shylock’s way. Antonio failed to repay the money. Shylock took the case to the Duke of the Venice claiming for the penalty. The enemies next met in the court. To feed his greed, Shylock sharpened his knife much to the dismay of Antonio. He was impatient to see Antonio dying at his feet, But this could not happen. The counselor turned the table against Shylock by saying that Shylock could cut his pound of flesh from Antonio’s breast, but he must not shed even a single drop of Antonio’s blood. This sabotaged the conspiracy of Shylock, for it was impossible for him to cut the flesh without shedding some blood. Shylock, after this suffered another setback when the young counselor charge-sheeted for plotting against the life of a Christian and a citizen of Venice. He demanded death sentence for Shylock besides this he demanded that his whole property be seized. Thus the cruel merchant met a dreadful end.

**Character Sketch of Antonio**

Antonio is the merchant of Venice, the titular protagonist of the play. He is about forty years of age and has lived his life to the fullest. He is a successful businessman, owning a fleet of trade ships. Surprisingly, Antonio appears in relatively few scenes of the play, but he is the driving force behind much of the action. Antonio is the model Christian, as defined by Elizabethan society. He represents, among other things, the ideal of nobility in friendship. He is also

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kind and generous, both to his friends and to the poor of Venice. Although he is now more philosophical, gentle, and quiet, he can still appreciate the frivolous nature of youth, as portrayed by his beloved friend, Bassanio. Aside from his love for Bassanio, he is unattached. Perhaps his lack of love is the reason for his melancholy.

Antonio's principles are against the borrowing or lending of money for profit. He reflects the medieval attitude that money should be lent for Christian charity. His noble generosity for his friend, however, leads him to cast aside these principles and to take a loan from the merchant, Shylock. He borrows money and pledges his flesh as the bond. When his ships are lost at sea, he cannot repay the loan and accepts the fact that he must pay Shylock with a pound of his flesh.

Antonio's warmth and generosity, however, save him. Portia, who has married Bassanio, comes to Antonio's aid. Even though she has never met Antonio, she loves him for his generosity to her husband. She appears in court as a young, intelligent lawyer and turns the law against Shylock, saving Bassanio's dear friend in the process. Antonio, with characteristic generosity and mercy, spares the life of Shylock and gives the Jew's wealth to Lorenzo and Jessica, the rightful heirs. Antonio's good fortune continues when he learns that his ships are not lost at sea, but have returned laden with goods. As the symbol of Christian warmth, kindness, generosity, and love, Antonio truly receives his just reward during the play when all turns out well for him.

**Character Sketch of Portia**

Like Antonio, Portia is an example of nobility. She is a fair-haired beauty with an immense power to attract. Her goodness and virtue enhance her beauty. Unlike Antonio, she is not passive, but displays energy and determination. In many ways, hers is the more forceful figure in the play. Her authority and control with which she deals and manipulates the circumstances of the play are exemplary. In Belmont, the terms of her father's will leave her without any choice in her future husband, and she is saddened that she does not have an appropriate mate. As a dutiful daughter, however, she is compelled to accept her father's wishes. Despite her dissatisfaction with her circumstances, she has a cheerful and optimistic nature. She is clever with words and wit and enjoys the opportunity of performing, both in Belmont and Venice. She uses her wonderful ability with words and her keen sense of humor to enliven the scenes in which she appears. Her treatment of her money reflects Bassanio's belief that money is to be used only in the sense of helping loved ones. She proves she is unselfish and generous. Her happiness and Antonio's meet in Bassanio. Her ideal of mercy is unselfish generosity and she shows an understanding of Christian values.

As a Christian gentlewoman, she considers it her duty to show Shylock the foolishness of his exact interpretation of the law that has no mercy. She dresses as a young lawyer and goes to court to defend Antonio. Like Shylock has demanded, she strictly interprets the law and disallows the Jew from taking a drop of Antonio's blood when he takes his pound of flesh. Since this is impossible, Shylock begs to just be given money, but Portia is unrelenting. She cites another law that states any alien who tries to take the life of a Venetian is to lose all of his money, which will be split between the state and the person who was to be killed. As a result, Shylock loses all of his wealth. Portia has cleverly tricked Shylock at his own game.

Portia is the most multi-dimensional character in the play, alternating between a beautiful woman in the remote setting of Belmont and the authoritative lawyer in Venice, who orchestrates the victory of good over evil.

**Character Sketch of Bassanio**

Bassanio is a young man who has just left behind the carefree days of his youth with a resolve to enter into the respectable life of being a good husband. In the past, he has squandered his wealth on pleasures of good living and extravagant expenditures. His lack of funds, however, does not stop him from generosity nor does it prevent him from enjoying a good life. As a result, he is deeply in debt, mostly to Antonio. To solve his financial problems, he seeks to marry into money, and Portia is the object of his desire. As her suitor, he is graceful with words and is presented as the model of a romantic hero.

Because of his kindness and generosity, especially in his relationship to Antonio, Portia is very attracted to him and delighted that he chooses the correct casket to win her hand in marriage. His and Portia's love, though born in the magic world of Belmont, is tested in Venice, which symbolizes the real world, and is proven to be true and strong.