Family and Friends 6

The Merchant of Venice



By William Shakespeare
Illustrated by Jérôme Brasseur

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Text adaptation by Bill Bowler

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Activities

Before reading

The Merchant of Venice, Antonio, is rich, but his money is at sea in his ships. When Antonio's friend, Bassanio, asks him for money to help find a wife, the merchant visits Shylock, the moneylender. But Shylock doesn't like Antonio, and he asks the merchant to sign a paper saying what will happen if he can't pay back the money on time.

1 Read the introduction to the story. Then tick the boxes.

	Yes	No
1 Antonio is poor.	☐	☑
2 Antonio's money is in the bank.	☐	☐
3 Bassanio wants to find a wife.	☐	☐
4 Shylock likes Antonio.	☐	☐
5 Bassanio must sign a paper.	☐	☐

2 What do you think will happen if Antonio can't pay Shylock on time? Can you guess?

1 Antonio must leave Venice. ☐

2 Antonio must die. ☐

3 Antonio must give Shylock his house. ☐

4 Bassanio must pay Shylock. ☐

CHAPTER 1 **Money for a friend**

Our story starts many years ago when Venice was a very rich and important city. In those days lots of Venetian ships crossed the Mediterranean Sea to North Africa and the East. Venetian captains bought many beautiful things abroad, and they took them back home to sell in Venetian shops. One of the most important men in Venice at that time was Antonio, who was a very rich merchant. Antonio had many friends in the city of Venice, but his best friend of all was Bassanio.

buy (*past* **bought**) to give money for something

sell (*past* **sold**) to take money for something

merchant this man buys and sells things

Bassanio was a handsome young man from a good family, but he wasn't rich. When Bassanio's father died, he left Bassanio only a little money, and Bassanio had spent it all. Antonio, the Merchant of Venice, was a kind and generous man. From time to time, because he was a good friend to Bassanio, he gave money to the young man to help him when things were difficult for him.





Bassanio wanted to marry Portia, a young Venetian woman from a good family. Portia was good and beautiful, and because her old father had died not long ago, she was a very rich young woman, too. Portia was the old man's only daughter, and her mother had died when Portia was a young child. So Portia now had all her father's money and she lived in an enormous house in the country. Because of this, lots of young men visited Portia to ask her to marry them. From England, Scotland, France, Germany and Naples they came to Portia's house in Belmont. They went there with many servants, and they gave her lots of expensive presents.

Bassanio didn't have enough money to do this, and he felt miserable about that. For the time being, Portia had not agreed to marry anybody, but Bassanio was worried that she would soon be tired of saying 'no' and would

marry to make somebody your wife, or husband

agree to say yes

say 'yes' to somebody.

So Bassanio went to ask Antonio for his help. Antonio was delighted to see his young friend.

'How are you?' he said with a smile. 'You must tell me all about this young woman that you want to marry.'

So Bassanio told Antonio about his plans. 'I think that Portia likes me,' he finished. 'And if I can visit her wearing beautiful new clothes, with lots of servants and lots of expensive presents for her, maybe she'll agree to marry me. But I have no money left. So could you lend me some money to help me visit Portia and ask her to marry me? If I don't do it soon, I'm worried that some rich man will go there before me and ask Portia to marry him, and that she'll agree to it.'

Smiling, Antonio answered his friend, 'Bassanio, I'd love to help you, but I've got no money right now. All that I have is in my ships at sea: one has gone to Tripoli, another to Lisbon, a third to England, a fourth to India and a fifth to Mexico. Now I'm waiting for them all to return. When they do, I'll be three times richer than I was before, and I can give you all the money that you want.'

Then he saw the sad look in Bassanio's eyes, and, feeling sorry for the young man, he said, 'Don't worry, my friend. Because you need the money now, I'll borrow it from Shylock and give it to you today. I want you to marry Portia and be happy.'

Shylock the moneylender was very rich. He lent money to people and made them pay back more than they had borrowed. He loved money more than anything – more than his family and more than his friends. But he wasn't a very popular man in Venice, and he didn't have many friends, because he was so mean. He hated spending

lend (*past* **lent**) to give for a short time

borrow to take for a short time

moneylender this man's job is to lend money to people

pay (*past* **paid**) to give money to somebody

money on things. He wasn't even kind to his only daughter, Jessica. She never went outside the house, and Shylock's house was always very cold inside. His wife, Leah, had died years before, so Jessica did all the housework for her father. She cleaned and cooked, washed and tidied for him. Her father never said 'thank you' to her for all her hard work. He didn't give her much money or much food to eat. And he never bought her any new clothes, so the poor girl had to wear her mother's old things.

Shylock hated Antonio, because Antonio sometimes lent money to friends for free, and this was very bad for Shylock's business. So he was waiting for the right time to hurt Antonio if he could.

That afternoon Antonio went with Bassanio to see Shylock. He asked the moneylender if he could borrow 3000 gold coins from him.

'When all my ships come back to Venice, I can give you your money back,' he said. 'I don't often lend money. And I never borrow money for myself. But Bassanio, my best friend, has asked me for help when I don't have any money to hand. So I'd like to borrow this sum from you now, if you agree.'

At first Shylock wasn't very happy with the plan. 'What will happen if all your ships cross dangerous waters and sink in storms at sea before they return to Venice? You won't have the money to pay me.'

Then he had an idea and smiled. 'Look. Let's be friends,' he said to Antonio. 'I'll be glad to lend you this money for free. You're a kind and generous man, and I want to show you that I can be as kind and generous as you are. But for a joke, I've got an idea, and maybe you can agree to it. My idea is this: if you can't pay me back the money that I

business work

joke a thing you say or do to make people laugh

lend you on time, you must pay me a pound of your flesh. And you must agree that I can cut it from any part of your body that I want.'

Bassanio was worried by this 'joke' and he didn't feel comfortable with Shylock's plan.

'Shylock wants to harm you. Don't agree to this!' he said quietly in Antonio's ear.

But Antonio laughed, saying, 'Don't worry. My ships will come home safely and on time, and I won't have to give Shylock a pound of my flesh. You'll see.'

So Antonio, Shylock and Bassanio went at once to the moneylender's office. There Antonio signed a bond that said Shylock would lend him 3000 gold coins for three months, and that he would give Shylock a pound of his flesh if he couldn't pay him back on time. After that was done, Shylock put the gold coins into Antonio's hands.

pound half a kilo

flesh soft part of a person's body

sign to write your name to show that you agree

bond an old word for a paper which says that you agree to do something



Activities

1 Match the pictures with the names. Then match the words with the people they describe.

Portia Bassanio ~~Antonio~~ Shylock






Antonio _____ _____ _____ _____

a handsome _____ c popular Antonio

b mean _____ d beautiful _____

2 Complete the sentences with these words.

agree borrow flesh lend ~~marry~~ pay signed ships

1 Bassanio wants to marry Portia.

2 Bassanio wants to _____ some money from Antonio.

3 Antonio's money is in his _____ at sea.

4 Shylock says that he'll _____ money to Antonio for three months.

5 Shylock wants a pound of Antonio's _____ if he can't _____ back the money on time.

6 Bassanio told Antonio not to _____ to Shylock's plan.

7 Antonio wasn't worried about his ships coming home safely and he _____ Shylock's bond.

3 Rewrite these words from Chapter 1. Then complete each sentence with one word.

1 chir r ich

2 sibussen b _____

3 nemoydenlre m _____

4 tanchrem m _____

5 aide i _____

6 okej j _____

7 odnb b _____

1 Antonio is a _____ in Venice.

2 Bassanio is from a good family, but he isn't rich .

3 Shylock is a rich _____ .

4 When Antonio lends money for free, it is bad for Shylock's _____ .

5 Shylock has an unusual _____ for what must happen if Antonio can't give him back the money on time.

6 Shylock told Antonio that it was only a _____ .

7 After Antonio signed the _____ , Shylock gave him 3000 gold coins.

4 What do you think happens next? Tick two boxes.

1 Different young men ask Portia to marry them. ☐

2 Portia agrees to marry a prince. ☐

3 Bassanio prepares to visit Portia. ☐

4 Bassanio asks Antonio for more money. ☐

CHAPTER 2 **The guessing game**

Antonio and Bassanio left the moneylender's office with the 3000 gold coins. Out in the street, Antonio gave the money to his best friend.

'You see,' he said. 'Shylock isn't so bad after all.'

'I don't know about that,' answered Bassanio. 'A bad man can't become good from one day to the next. Let's see what happens in three months' time. Maybe Shylock will play a trick on you, and make you pay him back with a pound of your flesh and not gold coins.'

'Don't worry about that, Bassanio. My ships will be back in Venice a month before then, so I'll have enough money to pay back Shylock his 3000 gold coins on time, and nothing bad will happen. The important thing is that you now have the money that you need to visit Portia.'

That afternoon Bassanio started preparing for his visit to Belmont, where beautiful Portia lived. There was a lot to do, and it took him some weeks. First, he bought himself lots of expensive new clothes. Then he bought lots of nice presents to give to Portia, and after that, when he was nearly ready to leave, he had a big party for all his friends. His good friends Gratiano and Lorenzo were there to celebrate with him.



'Can I come with you to Belmont?' asked Gratiano.

'I don't know,' said Bassanio. 'If you come, you mustn't be wild, or speak too loudly, or say bad things. People who don't know you won't like that, and I don't want anything to stop me from marrying Portia.'

'I'll be good and quiet, I'll say "thank you" and "sorry", and I'll only speak when I'm spoken to,' said Gratiano.

'All right,' smiled Bassanio. 'Then you can come.'

* * *

Portia's father had wanted his daughter to marry a good man. So, before he died, he had invented a plan to help her to find the best husband of all. He asked the cleverest craftsman in Venice to make three beautiful metal boxes for him: a gold box, a silver box and a lead box.



One of these boxes had a picture of Portia in it. Portia's father wanted her to marry the first man who guessed correctly which box had her picture inside. Every man who came to Belmont wanting to marry Portia had to promise that if he didn't guess correctly, he would leave her house at once, that he would never say which box he had opened, and that he would never again ask any woman to marry him. Portia was a good daughter and so, when her father was dying, she agreed to his unusual plan in order to find herself a husband.

clever able to think or do things well

craftsman someone who makes beautiful things

lead this is a very heavy metal with a dull, grey colour

guess to think something without knowing for sure

promise to say that you will do something

leave (*past* **left**) to go away from somewhere

Of course, many young men who came to Belmont to see Portia were very worried about the guessing game when they heard about it. They didn't want to guess wrongly and never be able to marry. So they chose not to guess at all and went away. Portia giggled at this, and she told her servant Nerissa that it was a good thing.

'They weren't the right husbands for me. I don't want a man who's afraid, or a man who's going to bore me, or a man who never laughs, or a man who's always angry. My father was very clever to invent this plan to keep me safe from a bad husband.'

One of the men who came to Belmont to ask her to marry him was an African prince. When he entered Portia's house, she told him about her father's unusual plan to choose her a good husband.

'I'm sorry but you must play the guessing game,' she said. 'Are you scared of the consequences?'

'Me? Scared?' laughed the African prince. A relaxed smile shone on his brown face. 'Look at me. I'm a brave man. My face frightens many people. But I'm never scared of anything myself. I love danger. So I'm happy to play the game, and through it to win your beauty.'

'Good. Later this afternoon you can choose one of the boxes. But come, let's eat something first.'

Then Portia took the African prince to the dining room, where they had a delicious lunch. After they had finished, they went back into the room where the three metal boxes were, and Portia pulled back the curtains.

'It's time to play the game,' she said.

The African prince stood looking at the three beautiful metal boxes in front of him. On the gold box he read: 'If you choose this box, you will find what all men want.'

choose (*past* **chose, chosen**) to go for a thing that you want

prince the son of a king

consequence result of something that has happened

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'This is beautiful Portia, I think,' said the African prince, and he smiled. 'Everybody wants her. Young men come from many countries to see her. And gold is the most expensive metal of all, so that's the best box for Portia's picture to be in, because she's the best woman of all.'

So the African prince chose the gold box. Portia gave him the gold key, and with that, he opened the box. But when he looked inside, he found only a picture of a skull in it and a note saying:

Often you have heard it told:
Not all things that shine are gold.
Feelings can't be bought or sold.
So leave – your plan to marry is cold.

The African prince said goodbye to Portia sadly and left Belmont at once.

skull the head of a skeleton

The next man who came to Belmont some weeks later to visit Portia was a Spanish prince.

'It's your lucky day,' he said when he walked in. 'Marry me, pretty Portia, and be happy. I'm the Prince of Spain, you know. One day, when my father dies, I'll be the King of Spain, and you'll be my queen.'

Portia smiled sweetly at him, and she told him about her father's idea of the guessing game.

'I'm sorry, but before I can say "yes" to you, you must choose one of these three boxes,' she said. 'If my picture is inside the box that you choose, I'll marry you. But if it isn't, then you must go at once from Belmont. You must never tell anybody which box you opened, and you must never think of marrying another woman. Do you want to play?' she asked.

'What a funny puzzle!' giggled the Spanish prince. 'But I'm a lucky man, and I love games. And you, Portia, are the woman for me. So yes, I'll play the game, and I'll win you through it, I know.'

So Portia went over and pulled back the curtains, and the Spanish prince stood and looked at the three beautiful metal boxes in front of him. On the gold box he read: 'If you choose this box, you will find what all men want.'

'I don't want what all men want,' said the Spanish prince, and he laughed. 'I like to be unusual.'

On the silver box he read: 'If you choose this box, you will find what you deserve.'

'I like what this box says,' said the Spanish prince. 'Many young men who want to marry Portia are not as good as they look on the outside. But I am the Prince of Spain – rich, handsome and important. I deserve to marry Portia, who is rich, beautiful and from a good family.'

fool a silly person

So the Spanish prince chose the silver box. Portia gave him the silver key, and with that, he opened the box. But when he looked inside, he found only a picture of a poor fool and a note which said:

The plan that brought you here is dead.
You are not right in the head.
Have you never heard it said?
Go now when this paper's read.

'Oh no! What do I see written here? It can't be! I don't deserve this!' cried the Spanish prince, and he left Belmont with a frozen smile on his face and an ice-cold look in his angry eyes.



Activities

1 Who said this and who to?

Bassanio **Antonio** **Nerissa** **Portia** **Gratiano**

the Spanish prince **the African prince**

1 'Shylock isn't so bad after all,' Antonio said to Bassanio.

2 'Let's see what happens in three months' time,' _____

_____.

3 'Can I come with you to Belmont?' _____.

4 'If you come, you mustn't be wild, or speak too loudly, or say bad things,'

_____.

5 'They weren't the right husbands for me,' _____.

6 'My face frightens many people,' _____.

7 'I don't want what all men want,' _____.

2 Circle the odd-one-out. Explain the difference.

1 merchant / craftsman / moneylender / (fool)

It isn't a job.

2 metal / clever / rich / handsome

_____

3 lead / silver / skull / gold

_____

4 letter / bond / note / consequence

_____

5 guess / promise / choose / dead

_____

3 Choose the correct words to complete the chapter summary.

silver guessing gold agrees boxes Portia Gratiano skull

~~Bassanio~~ angry leaves choose fool

Bassanio prepares to go to Portia's house in Belmont. When he is ready to leave, he has a big party for his friends. _____ asks to go with him to Belmont. Bassanio _____.

Many young men come to Belmont, because they want to marry _____. They must play a _____ game. There are three metal _____, and they must _____ the one which has Portia's picture inside it. The first man to choose correctly can marry Portia. The African prince chooses the _____ box. It has a picture of a _____ in it. He _____ Belmont at once. The Spanish prince chooses the _____ box. It has a picture of a _____ in it. He is _____.

4 Before you read Chapter 3, can you guess the answer to these questions?

1 Which box does Bassanio choose in Belmont, and what does it have in it?

_____

2 What does Jessica do to make her father angry?

_____

3 What news does Bassanio get about Antonio's ships?

_____

CHAPTER 3 **Bassanio in Belmont**

One month went by – then two. Back in Venice Shylock's daughter, Jessica, felt miserable.

'My father doesn't love me,' she said to herself. 'He doesn't love anybody. The only things that he loves are money, gold and jewellery. I'm not his servant, but he makes me do all the housework at home. I'm his only daughter, but he never says "thank you" to me for everything that I do for him – all the cooking, cleaning, washing and tidying. He's mean and unkind, and I hate living here with him.'

So Jessica started to make plans to leave her father's house. It was difficult, because she could never go outside, and when Shylock was at home, he watched her very carefully all the time.



'What are you dreaming about, standing there? Do your work, lazy girl!' he often shouted at her.

Because Shylock was an untidy man, and because the house that they lived in was old and not very easy to clean, there was always lots of housework for Jessica to do. When Shylock left the house, he always closed the front door behind him with a big key. He didn't want Jessica to go out to the shops, or to make friends with anybody.

'How can I leave this house? I'll need help from somebody,' she thought.

One day, when Shylock was out, Jessica was standing upstairs at the open window in her room. She was looking up at the sky and dreaming of being free. Then she looked down into the street under her window, and she saw a young man standing there. It was Lorenzo, Bassanio's friend. He was looking up at her, and he had a nice smile on his face.

'Oh!' cried Jessica when she saw him, and she started to close the window. She was very surprised and very worried too. Her father didn't like her looking out of the window and talking to people in the street.

'Wait! Please don't go!' called Lorenzo up to her. 'What's your name?'

Jessica looked down at him. He had a good, kind face. Maybe he could help her?

'I'm Jessica, Shylock's daughter. And who are you?'

'My name's Lorenzo. I'm good friends with Bassanio, and with Antonio, the merchant, too. Can we talk?'

'Not now. But wait a minute,' Jessica called down to him. She didn't want the neighbours listening to them.

She left the window and went straight to her room. There she wrote Lorenzo a short note.

call to shout or speak loudly

Dear Lorenzo,

Help me! I'm planning to leave home. I only do housework all day and I can never go outside. My father's so mean! I wish to be free of him. You have a kind face. Can you rescue me? If you come tomorrow night with a ladder, I can climb through this window and leave with you. Tomorrow evening my father has an invitation to dinner at Antonio's house. He'll be home late. It'll be safe for me to leave then. Please say 'yes'.

I'm sorry that we can't talk, but I don't want the neighbours to know about my plans.

Jessica

When she had finished writing, she went back to the window with the note. She quickly threw it down to Lorenzo. He picked it up, read it and smiled up at her.



'I'll come tomorrow,' he called up to her. 'Don't worry.'

The next night, when Shylock was out, Jessica left her father's house with Lorenzo. She took her mother's jewellery and bags of gold coins with her, but nothing that belonged to her father. Later that night Shylock returned from Antonio's house to find that the house was dark.

'Jessica, where are you?' he called out. He couldn't find his daughter anywhere. Then he went upstairs to his room and opened the cupboard where he kept all his money and a box of his dead wife's jewellery. The box had gone, and some bags of his wife's money had gone with it. Then Shylock went into Jessica's room and found the open window. 'My daughter! My money!' he cried.

'So the little bird has flown from her cage, taking all her mother's things with her. I'll never forgive Jessica for this,' said the old moneylender. 'I won't give her any of my money when I die.'

When Shylock learnt that Antonio's young friend Lorenzo had helped his daughter to leave, and that she had married him, Shylock was very angry with Antonio.

'Antonio has to pay me back in one month's time. But I hope that he won't have the money, because now I want a pound of his flesh!' the moneylender cried.

* * *

Two weeks after that, Bassanio arrived in Belmont with his friend Gratiano. Gratiano was friendly with Portia's servant, Nerissa. He hoped that, if Bassanio married Portia, maybe he could marry Nerissa, too. Portia didn't want Bassanio to play the guessing game at once. She liked talking to him, and she wanted him to spend some weeks at Belmont as her guest before he had to choose a box.

belong to someone to be someone's thing

forgive (*past* **forgave, forgiven**) to stop feeling angry with somebody who has done something bad to you

hope to want something to happen

to risk to put something in danger

choice when you choose something

fiancé the man that a woman has promised to marry

But Bassanio felt sick thinking about the game, and he didn't want to wait for long. So he asked Portia to play it as soon as he could, and she sadly agreed. Once she had pulled back the curtains, Bassanio looked at the three metal boxes. On the lead box he read: 'If you choose this box, you risk all that you have.'

'Gold and silver look very beautiful,' said Bassanio. 'But something which is beautiful outside can have ugly things inside it. Lead is a heavy metal, and this is a heavy choice in front of me.'

So Bassanio chose the lead box. Portia gave him the lead key, and with that, he opened the box. When he looked inside, he saw Portia's picture there. He was very happy, and Portia too was very glad. 'Bassanio was chosen for me by my father's clever plan,' she thought. 'He's the best husband I could wish for.'

Then she gave her fiancé a beautiful silver ring, saying, 'Wear this ring always, Bassanio, and never give it away.



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If you do, our love will end.'

Bassanio took the ring, and he put it on his finger. He promised Portia never to give it away. Gratiano spoke then. He hoped that Portia and Bassanio would be very happy together.

'And can Nerissa and I marry, too?' he asked.

Portia and Bassanio agreed to this, smiling.

Just then Lorenzo and Jessica arrived in Portia's house, with Antonio's friend Salerio.

'Bassanio, here's a note from Antonio for you,' said Salerio, and he put it into Bassanio's open hand.

Dear Bassanio,
I'm sorry to say that my ships haven't returned to Venice. They're lost in bad storms at sea, so I'm a poor man now. I can't pay back the money that I borrowed from Shylock, and the three months that we had agreed have gone by. I wish I hadn't signed the bond. But it's too late to do anything about that. Now I must give Shylock a pound of my flesh, and because he wants to take it from near my heart, I won't live long after he cuts it from me. But before I die, I want to see you again and to say goodbye to you.
Your best friend, Antonio

Bassanio's face went white when he read it:

'What's the matter, Bassanio?' asked Portia, looking at her husband's worried face.

Then, for the first time, Bassanio told Portia about the 3000 gold coins that Antonio had borrowed.

Salerio said, 'Shylock has spoken to the Duke of Venice. He wants his pound of flesh. So Antonio's now in prison, waiting for his trial. You must do something to stop Shylock and to help Antonio – before it's too late.'

Duke the most important man in an old city

prison a criminal usually lives in this building for some time

trial when people meet to decide if someone has done wrong and must go to prison

Activities

1 Correct the mistakes in these sentences.

isn't

1 Jessica is happy living with her father.

2 She first sees Lorenzo in a boat.

3 She writes an email to Lorenzo.

4 She leaves her father's house with Antonio's help.

5 She takes her father's jewellery and some money with her.

6 Shylock wants Jessica to have his money when he dies.

7 Shylock is angry with Gratiano when he hears that Lorenzo helped Jessica.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct name.

Portia **Antonio** **Jessica** **Salerio** **Nerissa** **Bassanio**

1 Shylock goes to dinner at Antonio 's house.

2 Lorenzo marries _____.

3 The lead box has _____'s picture in it.

4 _____ wants to marry Portia.

5 Gratiano wants to marry _____.

6 _____ gives a note to Bassanio from Antonio.

3 Complete the sentences and the crossword. Then find the mystery word to discover what Portia pretends to be in the next chapter.

1 Lorenzo _____called_____ up to Jessica, who was at her window.

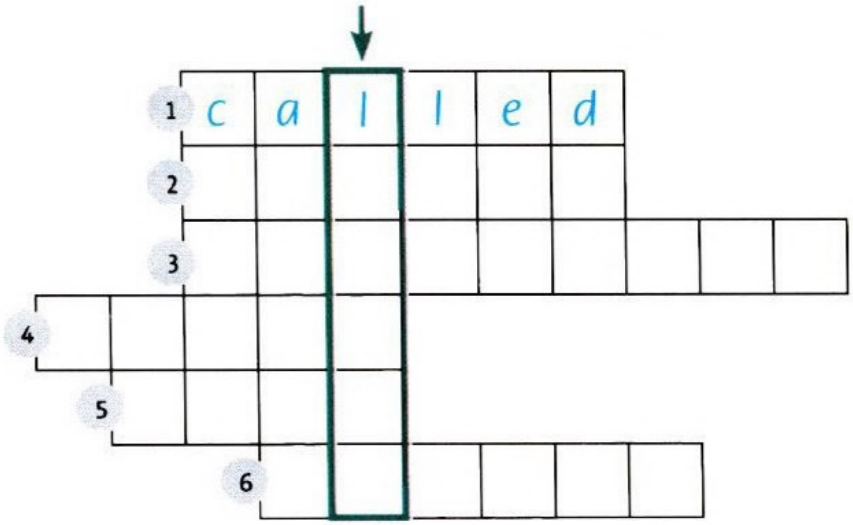
2 Bassanio and Portia agreed to get married, so Bassanio became Portia's _____.

3 Jessica took some money and her mother's _____ with her.

4 In the guessing game Bassanio had a _____ choice to make.

5 The most important man in Venice was the _____.

6 Antonio couldn't pay Shylock back, so he was put in _____.



Mystery word: l_____

4 What do you think happens next? Tick three boxes.

1 Bassanio goes to Venice to help Antonio. ☐

2 Bassanio gives 3000 gold coins to Shylock. ☐

3 Portia goes to Venice to help Antonio. ☐

4 Shylock doesn't want his money back. ☐

5 Bassanio gives away Portia's silver ring. ☐

CHAPTER 4 **The trial starts**

'Can this be true, Salerio?' asked Bassanio. 'Haven't any of Antonio's ships returned to Venice?'

'Not one,' answered Salerio. 'And if they had, it wouldn't do any good, because Shylock isn't interested in Antonio's money any more. He visits the Duke morning and night, asking for his pound of flesh. Many of the most important men in Venice have spoken to the moneylender, asking him to be more kind to the merchant, but he will not listen to any of them.'

When Portia heard about everything that Antonio had done to help her fiancé, Bassanio, and how Shylock had played a trick on the merchant and was now asking for a pound of his flesh, she felt very sorry for the man.

'How much does the merchant owe?' she asked.

'3000 gold coins. He borrowed them for me,' answered Bassanio.

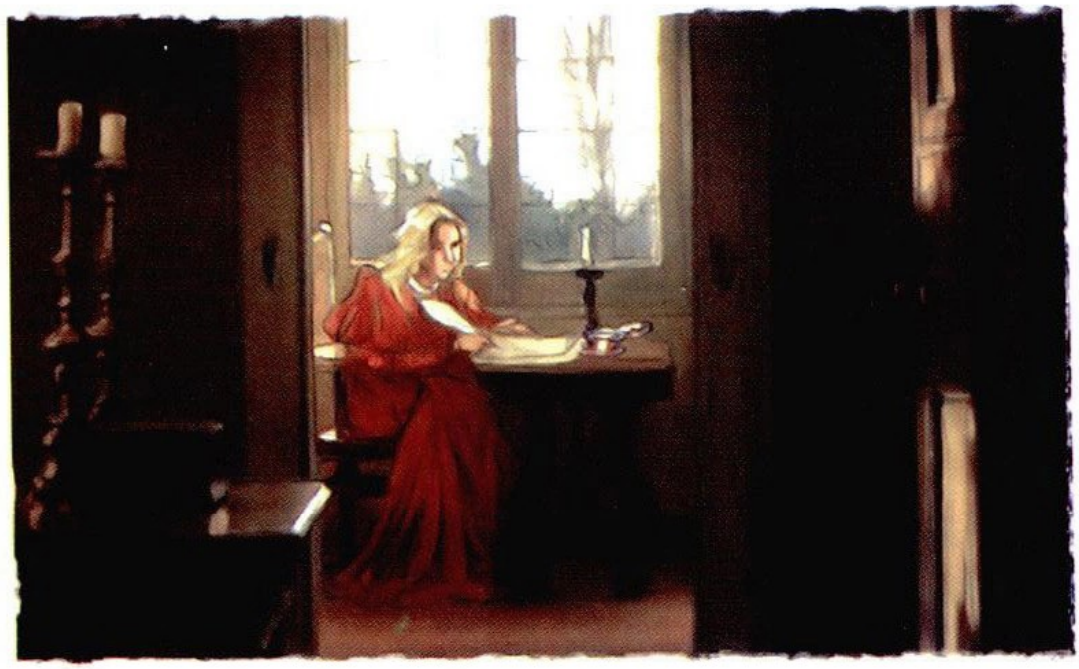
'And is he your best friend?'

'Yes. He's the best friend that I have ever had, or ever will have,' said Bassanio.

'Then I myself will pay back Shylock the money that Antonio owes him,' Portia said. 'And if he asks for more than 3000, you can give him 6000 gold coins from me. Now that you are my fiancé, my money is your money, and your good friend is my good friend, too. Bassanio, you must go to the city at once and help Antonio. And when you have helped him, bring him back here to Belmont. But before you leave, we must marry.'

So Portia and Bassanio, and Nerissa and Gratiano were married that afternoon. That evening Bassanio and Gratiano left by boat for Venice with Salerio.

owe to have to give something back to somebody



When they had gone, Portia wrote a short note to her cousin, Doctor Bellario. He was a clever lawyer who spoke at all the most important trials in Padua. Portia wrote to Bellario about Antonio's problem, and she asked for her cousin's advice and some lawyer's clothes, too. The advice and the clothes arrived from Doctor Bellario the next day.

After that Portia told everybody at Belmont that she and Nerissa were going away for some days to have a quiet time until their husbands returned. She spoke to Lorenzo and Jessica at the door.

'I'm leaving my house in your good hands, Lorenzo!' she said, smiling. 'My servants will do all that you and Jessica tell them. You are here in place of Bassanio and myself until we return. And now, goodbye.'

Then she and Nerissa left.

'Goodbye. Have a safe journey!' called Lorenzo and Jessica after them.

A coach and horses were waiting outside to take Portia and Nerissa down to the sea. When they got into the

doctor a clever person who has studied at university

lawyer this person speaks in a trial for a criminal or for somebody hurt by a criminal

problem something bad that you must do something about

advice good ideas to help somebody with a problem



coach, they put on men's clothes, because they didn't want anyone in Venice to recognize them. Then they drove away from Belmont. At the sea shore they got into a little boat that took them to Venice.

* * *

Back in Belmont Jessica and Lorenzo were sitting in the garden and talking.

'How are you feeling, Jessica?' asked Lorenzo. 'And what do you think of Bassanio's new wife?'

'I'm very happy that I left my father's house and that I married you, too,' answered Jessica. 'And I like Portia. She's a kind woman and very good for Bassanio.'

'Yes, she's the right wife for him. And I'm the right husband for you, I think, too,' said Lorenzo with a smile.

'Aren't you going to ask me what I think about that?' laughed Jessica.

'Let's talk about it over dinner. I'm hungry now.'

'So am I,' said Jessica, and they went back into the house.

* * *

recognize to know who somebody is

shore the edge of the land next to the sea

At the same time, in Venice, the trial between Shylock and Antonio had started. The Duke spoke first to Antonio.

'I'm sorry for you, merchant,' he said. 'I've talked to Shylock, and I can see that he hates you and wants to hurt you. He was angry with you before, because you lent money to friends for free. And now, since his daughter left home with your friend Lorenzo, he's angrier than ever. I don't think that you're going to be very lucky in this trial.'

Antonio replied, 'I've heard that you've spoken many times to the moneylender, and that you've asked him to be kinder to me. I thank you for that. But if Shylock's angry with me, then there's nothing that you or I can do about it. I'll try to be brave, whatever happens.'

After that the Duke asked a servant to tell Shylock to come in. The moneylender entered the room holding the paper that had Antonio's name on. He had a knife in his belt. This was the knife that he wanted to use to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body. He looked at the merchant with red and angry eyes before he said to the Duke with a crooked smile, 'I'm here for the trial.'

'Shylock,' said the Duke. 'Tell me something. Why are you being so unkind to Antonio?'

'Unkind?' laughed the moneylender.

'Yes. Can't you forgive him, and show him some mercy?' said the Duke.

'What do you mean?' asked Shylock.

'Can't you forget the pound of flesh?' replied the Duke.

But Shylock answered, 'No. The merchant signed this bond saying that if he couldn't pay me back my 3000 gold coins in three months, he would pay me a pound of his flesh.' He held the paper up for everybody to see. 'Antonio

mercy kind feelings to someone, usually who has done a bad thing

sum total amount of something

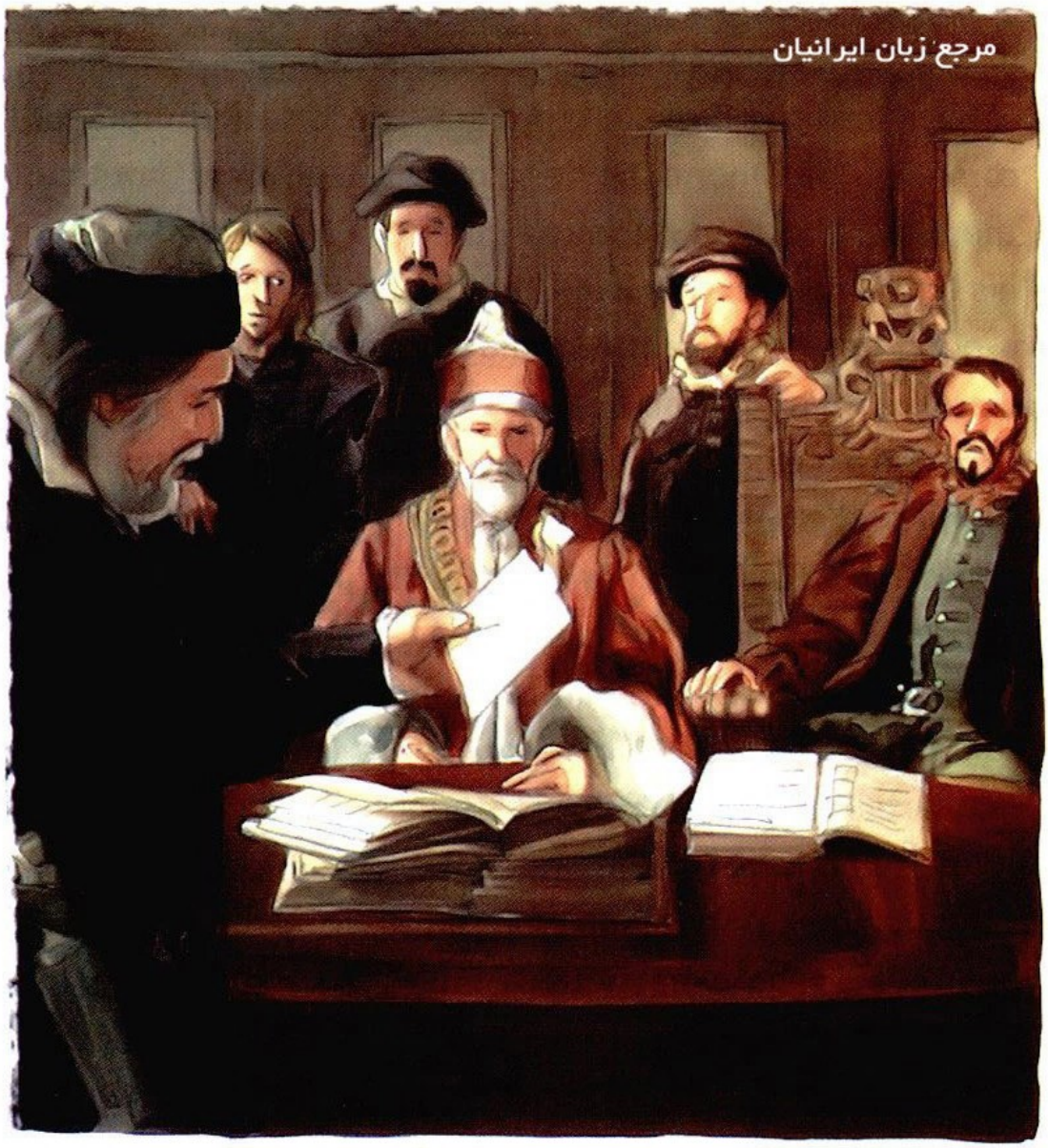
law this tells people things to do and not to do in a country

promised me that, and he must keep to it.'

Then Bassanio spoke.

'Shylock,' he said. 'Listen. Antonio borrowed that money from you to help me, and now I want to help him. I'll pay you 6000 gold coins. That's twice the sum of money that Antonio owes you.'

'No, thank you,' Shylock answered. 'The laws of Venice say that I can have a pound of Antonio's flesh, because he didn't pay me back the money that I lent him on time. I hate Antonio, and I'd like a pound of his flesh more than all the money that you can give me. Do you agree with the laws of Venice or not?'



'You're right,' said the Duke. 'The laws of Venice say that you can have your pound of flesh. But don't you feel sorry for Antonio?'

'Sorry?' laughed Shylock. 'No, I don't. Antonio never felt sorry for me when he lent money for free and hurt my business. Why should I feel sorry for him? The law is the law. I want my pound of flesh.'

'Very well,' said the Duke. 'But you must wait before you take it. I've written to a clever lawyer in Padua, Doctor Bellario, to ask for his advice in this trial. He'll be here soon. We must wait for him and hear what he says.'

Just then, a young lawyer's clerk entered the room.

'I come from Padua with a note from Doctor Bellario for the Duke,' said the young man, and he put the note into the Duke's hand. The Duke opened it and read it with interest.

To the Duke of Venice:
I'm sorry to say that I am ill and so I can't come to Venice to speak at the trial between Shylock and Antonio. But can a young lawyer – Balthasar – come in my place to help you? He comes from Rome, but was visiting me when they brought your note to me.
We have talked about the moneylender and the merchant's trial together, and Balthasar is a clever young man. He can give you my best advice – and his – if you want it.
Bellario

'Where's the clever young lawyer that Doctor Bellario writes about in his note?' the Duke asked the lawyer's clerk.

'Doctor Balthasar is waiting outside,' said the clerk. 'Do you want me to ask him to come in?'

clerk this person helps a lawyer in his job

Activities

1 Answer these questions.

1 How many of Antonio's ships have returned to Venice?
Not one of Antonio's ships has returned.

2 Why does Portia write to Doctor Bellario?

3 Where does Doctor Bellario work as a lawyer?

4 Who says goodbye to Portia and Nerissa in Belmont?

5 What does Shylock want from Antonio?

6 Why couldn't Doctor Bellario come to the trial?

7 Who comes to help at the trial?

2 Complete the sentences with these words.

advice **dinner** **law** **lawyer** **mercy** **owe** **problem** **recognize**

1 How much do I ___owe___ you? I want to pay you back.

2 I don't know what to do. Can you give me some _____?

3 He's a lot fatter now than before, and I didn't _____ him.

4 There's a _____ which says you mustn't drop litter in the street.

5 There's a lot of litter at our school. It's a big _____ for us.

6 Would you like to come for _____ at my house tonight?

7 'Please forgive me! Please have _____ on me!' she cried.

8 Someone who knows about the law and speaks for you at a trial is called a _____

3 What did they say? Complete the sentences.



1 'I myself will pay back Shylock the money,' said Portia to Bassanio.

2 _____ said Bassanio to Portia.

3 _____ said the Duke to Antonio.

4 _____ said Antonio to the Duke.

5 _____ said Bassanio to Shylock.

6 _____ said Shylock to the Duke.

4 What do you think happens next? Choose the best answer.

1 Portia comes to the trial as . . .

a ☐ Doctor Balthasar. b ☐ herself. c ☐ the Duke's friend.

2 Doctor Balthasar helps . . .

a ☐ Shylock. b ☐ Antonio. c ☐ Bassanio.

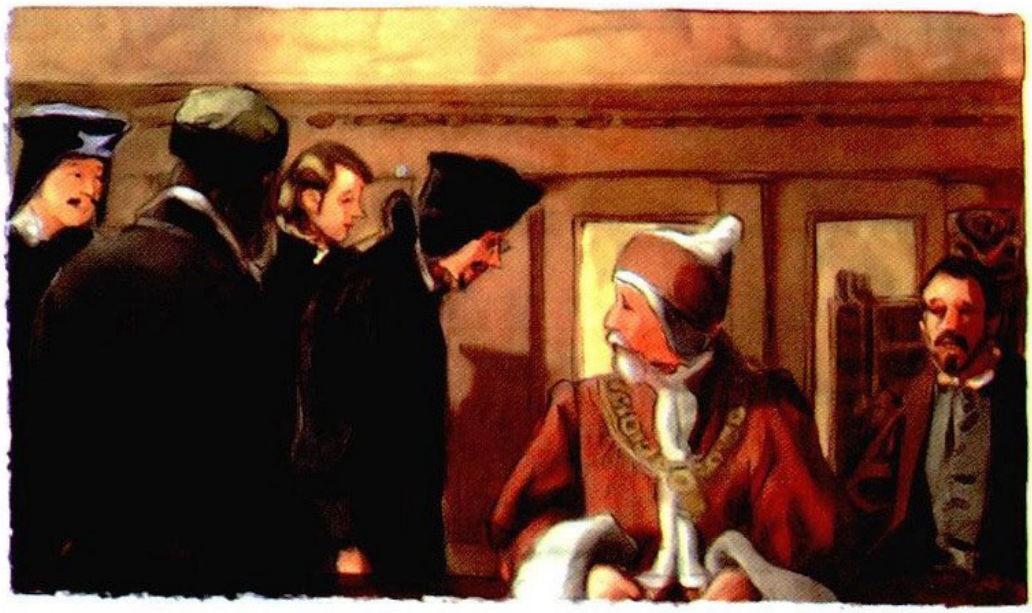
3 Doctor Balthasar says that Shylock can have Antonio's . . .

a ☐ money. b ☐ flesh. c ☐ jewellery.

CHAPTER 5 **The wise young lawyer**

'Go outside and ask Doctor Balthasar to come in at once,' said the Duke. 'We need his help in the trial between Shylock and Antonio.'

When the Duke had finished speaking, the lawyer's clerk went outside. He soon came back into the room with the young lawyer. Of course, the lawyer's clerk was Nerissa, in man's clothes. And the young lawyer was Portia, in the clothes that had arrived for her from Doctor Bellario.



'Welcome, Doctor Balthasar,' said the Duke to the young lawyer. 'Doctor Bellario sent you, didn't he?'

'Yes, he did,' answered Portia. 'Doctor Bellario has told me everything about the problems between Shylock and Antonio. Where are these two men? I want to see them. Can they stand up?'

So Shylock and Antonio stood up.

'Very good. Thank you. But which is the moneylender and which is the merchant?'

'I'm the moneylender,' said Shylock.

'And I'm the merchant,' said Antonio.

'Thank you,' said Portia. 'Now, moneylender, is your name Shylock?'

'It is,' answered Shylock.

'Well then, Shylock, what you ask from Antonio – a pound of his flesh – is strange. But the laws of Venice cannot stop you from taking it, I think.'

Shylock smiled, and he put his hand on the long knife in his belt. Then Portia looked at Antonio.

'And you risk dying at Shylock's hands if he takes what he wants from you,' she said.

'I do,' answered the merchant.

'Did you put your name to this strange agreement?'

'I did,' said Antonio.

'I see,' said Portia. 'Then Shylock must show some mercy.'

'Why must I?' asked Shylock. 'Tell me that!'

'Listen, moneylender. I can't make you show mercy. Nobody can do that. But when you show mercy to somebody, it's not only good for them, but it's good for you, too. So I'm asking you now, please show some mercy to Antonio.'

But Shylock answered, 'Look, I'm only asking the merchant to pay me what we agreed.'

'Can Antonio pay back the money that you lent him?' asked Portia.

'I can pay 6000 ... or 9000 gold coins for Antonio,' said Bassanio.

'It's too late now to pay the money,' said Shylock. 'I want my pound of flesh. The law is the law.'

'Forget the law,' said Bassanio. 'And take this money from me in place of your pound of flesh.'

'No,' said Portia. 'I'm sorry, but we can't forget the law.

agreement when you agree something

wise clever and good

If Antonio breaks the law now, then more people will want to break it later. The law is the law.'

Shylock was very happy with this.

'You are a wise young lawyer,' he said.

'Show me your agreement, moneylender,' said Portia.

'Here it is, Doctor Balthasar,' Shylock said. 'Please look through it and tell me what you think.'

Portia read the bond through with interest. 'Yes, it says here that you can have a pound of Antonio's flesh,' she said. Shylock smiled.

'From where on the merchant's body do you want to take it?'

'From near his heart,' said Shylock, and he took the long knife from his belt.

'Shylock,' said Portia, 'in this agreement Antonio owes you 3000 gold coins, but his friend here wants to pay you



two or three times that sum of money. Why don't you take the money and show mercy to Antonio?'

'No, no. I don't want to break our agreement. And I don't want any money now. I want only my pound of flesh. You know the laws of Venice well. You know what must happen now,' replied Shylock.

'What *is* going to happen?' asked Antonio.

'Merchant, open your shirt and prepare yourself,' said Portia. 'In the bond that you signed, you promised to pay Shylock a pound of your flesh. You must pay him now. That's the law.'

'You *are* a clever lawyer,' said Shylock.

'Do you have doctors here to stop the blood after you cut off the pound of Antonio's flesh?' Portia asked.

'Doctors?' cried Shylock. 'Does it say anything about doctors in our agreement?'

'No. But you could show mercy to Antonio by having doctors here to help him.'

'Look, I don't want to show any mercy to the merchant. So I won't have doctors here if our agreement doesn't speak of it.'

'Very well,' answered Portia. 'That's your choice. Merchant, do you have anything to say?'

'Yes,' cried Antonio. 'I want to say that I'm happy to die now. Many rich men lose all their money and live to be poor old men for many years. This won't happen to me. Don't feel bad about me, Bassanio. I'm glad that you've been my best friend. When I die, you can forget the money that you owe me. I won't want it then. I hope you will remember me and that you will speak kindly of me after I'm gone. Tell your good wife about me and how I died.'

Bassanio began to cry. 'I'm married to a wife that I love more than anything, but I would give her and everything that I have for you to live, my friend,' he said.

Portia looked at Bassanio, surprised. 'If you said this in front of your wife, she wouldn't thank you,' she told him.

'And I have a wife that I love very much, too,' said Gratiano. 'But I wish that my wife was dead if that could save you, Antonio.'

Nerissa looked very surprised at this. 'I'm glad that your wife can't hear you now,' she said, 'Because if she could, you wouldn't have a very quiet time at home.'

'Stop all this talking!' cried Shylock. 'I've waited long enough. Just give me what I'm owed.'

'Of course,' said Portia to the moneylender. 'Shylock, Antonio must pay you a pound of his flesh. The law gives this to you, and I agree.'

'You are a wise young lawyer!' said Shylock.

'And you must cut this pound of flesh from the merchant's chest. The law says this, and I agree,' said Portia.

'What a clever young man you are!' said Shylock. And he took his long knife and put it to Antonio's chest.

'Prepare to die,' he said to the merchant. But before he could start to make a cut, Portia spoke again.

'Wait a minute, Shylock,' she cried. 'I have something more to say. The agreement says "one pound of flesh", but it does not say that you can take any blood. You can take Antonio's flesh, but you must not take any of his blood at all. And if the merchant loses any blood, you'll break the agreement and you'll have to give your house, your money and all that you have to the government of Venice. This is the law. You asked for the law before, and so you will have it now, maybe more than you wanted.'

chest your heart is in this part of your body

to lose (*past* **lost**) not to have something suddenly

government the people who control a country



'Listen to that, moneylender! What a wise young lawyer he is!' cried Gratiano.

When he heard what Portia said, Shylock was very surprised. He couldn't speak for some time.

'Is this what the law says?' he asked at last.

'It is,' answered Portia. 'I can show you the laws if you want me to do that.'

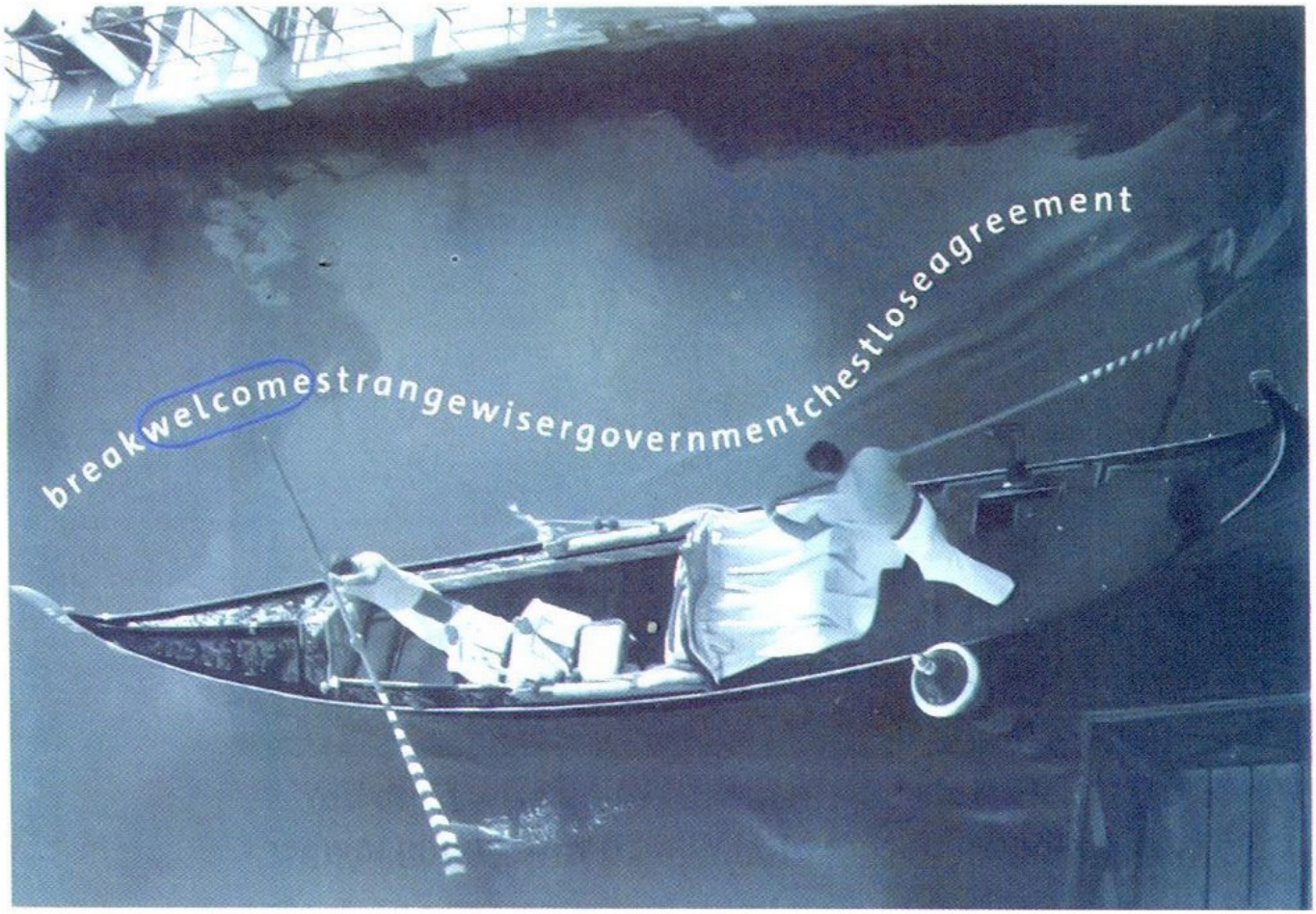
'What a clever young man! Do you hear what he says, Shylock?' cried Gratiano.

Then Shylock thought of what Bassanio had said to him before. 'Very well. Then I'll take 9000 gold coins from this young man in place of the pound of flesh,' he said. 'And after that Antonio can go free.'

'I'll be very happy to give you the money,' cried Bassanio to Shylock.

Activities

1 Find words from Chapter 5 in the canal. Use the words to complete the sentences.



1 'Welcome ____ to the city of Venice,' the Duke said to Doctor Balthasar.

2 Doctor Balthasar thought that the moneylender and the merchant had a ____ agreement. But at the trial the young lawyer didn't want to ____ the law.

3 Shylock wanted to take a pound of flesh from Antonio's ____.

4 Shylock could only take the pound of flesh if Antonio didn't ____ any blood.

5 If Shylock broke the ____, he would have to give all his money to the ____ of Venice.

6 The young lawyer was ____ than Shylock thought.

2 Choose the correct name to complete the sentences.

1 *Portia / Nerissa* was pretending to be a lawyer's clerk.

2 Portia asked *Shylock / Bassanio* to show Antonio mercy.

3 *Bassanio / Antonio* said that he could pay 6000 or 9000 gold coins.

4 *Nerissa / Portia* told Antonio to open his shirt.

5 *Shylock / Portia* took a long knife and put it to Antonio's chest.

3 Put these sentences in the correct order.

a Doctor Balthasar asked Shylock and Antonio to stand up. ☐

b The lawyer's clerk went out of the room. [1]

c Balthasar looked through Shylock's bond. ☐

d The lawyer's clerk came back with Balthasar. ☐

e Balthasar said that Shylock couldn't have any of Antonio's blood. ☐

f Shylock wanted to take Bassanio's money. ☐

g Balthasar agreed that Shylock should have a pound of flesh. ☐

4 What do you think happens next? Tick the boxes.

	Yes	No
1 Antonio dies.	☐	☐
2 Bassanio gives Shylock 9000 gold coins.	☐	☐
3 Bassanio gives Portia's ring to Doctor Balthasar.	☐	☐
4 Shylock loses everything that he has.	☐	☐
5 Portia and Nerissa go back to Belmont.	☐	☐

CHAPTER 6 **The trial finishes**

Bassanio was ready to give Shylock the 9000 gold coins in place of Antonio's flesh. But Portia stopped him, saying, 'Shylock didn't agree to take those 9000 gold coins before. So I'm sorry but he can't take them now. The moneylender must leave the court with his pound of flesh or nothing. And be careful when you cut Antonio's chest to lose no blood, Shylock, and not to take more or less than a pound, or you will die.'

'You are a wise young lawyer!' cried Gratiano.

'What is it, moneylender? Don't you want to take your pound of flesh now?' asked Portia.

'No,' said Shylock. 'Look. Can't I just take my 3000 gold coins and forget the agreement?'

'Yes. I have your money here. Take it,' cried Bassanio.

'No,' said Portia. 'The law is the law. We can't forget that. You can have only a pound of Antonio's flesh. And you must risk losing your life when you take it.'

'Then the merchant can keep his pound of flesh, and his money. I don't want them!' cried Shylock, and with an angry look on his face, he started to leave the room.

But Portia called after him, 'Wait! There's another law that we mustn't forget. If anyone plans to take the life of a Venetian man, half of all that he has must go to that man and half to the government of Venice. And the Duke can punish the criminal in any way that he wants.'

'What's that to me?' cried Shylock.

'From what I have seen, you planned to take Antonio's life. So you must now lose half of everything that you have to the merchant, and half to Venice. You could lose your life, too. Go on your knees and ask for the Duke's mercy.'

punish to do something bad to a criminal to make him feel sorry for the bad things that he did



So Shylock went on his knees and asked for mercy.

'Moneylender, get up,' said the Duke. 'You won't lose your life at my hands. You didn't show any mercy to Antonio, but I'll show mercy to you. But half of all that you have must go to Antonio, and half must go to the government of Venice.'

'No, no!' cried Shylock. 'If this is how things go, please take my life too. You take my money, my house, my business. If I have nothing to live on, then I prefer to die.'

'Can you show the moneylender some mercy too, merchant?' asked Portia.

'Yes, I can,' said Antonio. 'I don't want my half of all that Shylock has. But he must stop being greedy and mean and from this day be a better man. And when he dies, he must give all that he has to his daughter, Jessica, and to her husband, Lorenzo.'

'And if Shylock doesn't agree to this, then he must die at once,' said the Duke.

'Are you happy with this, moneylender?' asked Portia.

'Yes,' answered Shylock. 'Now can I go?'

'Wait,' cried Portia. Then she spoke to Nerissa. 'Clerk, prepare the agreement for Shylock to sign at once.'

Shylock felt dizzy when he heard this. 'I'm ill,' he said. 'Can I go home? Send the papers to my house, and I'll sign them there.'

The Duke agreed to this, and Shylock left. The trial was finished. Everybody had what they deserved. Shylock was punished, and Antonio was a free man once again.

'Can you come to dinner with me, Doctor Balthasar?' asked the Duke.

'No, I'm sorry,' answered Portia. 'My clerk and I must return to Padua tonight. We must leave soon.'

'Very well,' said the Duke. 'Antonio, you must thank this young lawyer for helping you in the trial'. With that, the Duke left.

After the Duke had gone, Bassanio and Antonio went to speak to Doctor Balthasar. Bassanio did not recognize Portia in her man's clothes.

'My friend and I have 3000 gold coins here that were owed to the moneylender. Please take this sum of money for your help,' said Antonio.

But Portia answered, 'No, thank you. I did what I did to help you, not to be paid.'

'But we must give you something,' said Bassanio.

'Very well,' said Portia. 'Then you, Antonio, can give me the gloves that you're wearing, and you, Bassanio, can give me that ring on your finger.'

Antonio gave Portia his gloves at once. But Bassanio felt



very bad about giving his ring to the young lawyer. 'This was the ring that Portia gave me, and I promised never to give it away,' he thought.

'It's only a cheap ring,' he said. 'Can't I give you something better?'

'No, I want only that,' answered Portia.

'But it's a ring from my wife. I can't give it away. I'll buy you the most expensive ring in Venice and give that to you instead if you want.'

'No, you won't,' said Portia. 'You don't want to give that ring to me, do you? Your wife wouldn't be angry with you for long if you told her what I'd done to deserve the ring. But enough of this. Goodbye.'

With that, Portia and Nerissa left the room and started to walk down the street.

'That young lawyer's right. He deserves the ring. He saved my life, didn't he?' Antonio said to Bassanio. 'Your wife's a good woman. She'll understand.'

instead in place of something

grateful showing thanks to someone after they did something to help you

Bassanio felt bad about not showing how grateful he was to the young lawyer, so he took Portia's ring from his finger and he called Gratiano to him.

'Run after young Doctor Balthasar,' he said. 'And give him this ring.'

Gratiano took the ring and ran after Portia and Nerissa. He found them at the house where they were staying in Venice. They were preparing the papers for Shylock to sign, and were still wearing men's clothes.

'Bassanio thought better of what he said, and he wants you to have this,' said Gratiano, putting the ring into Portia's hand. 'He asks you to dinner with him and Antonio this evening to celebrate the way the trial went.'

'Say "thank you" to Bassanio,' said Portia, 'for the ring and for his invitation. I'll take the ring gladly. And please



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tell him that I'm sorry, but I can't come to dinner with him this evening, because my clerk and I are leaving Venice tonight.'

'I'll give him the message,' answered Gratiano.

'And now can you show my clerk where Shylock's house is? He must take this agreement there for the moneylender to sign, and then he must hurry back here to me.'

'Of course,' said Gratiano, and he took Nerissa at once to the house. On the way there Nerissa spoke to Gratiano.

'I've done a lot of work for your friend, the merchant Antonio, preparing this agreement for Shylock to sign in no time at all. It was a lot of writing.'

'And we're very grateful to you for it,' said Gratiano. 'So can I give you something for your hard work?'

'Yes,' said Nerissa. 'I'd like that ring from your finger.'

Gratiano looked down at the ring. Nerissa had given it to him on the day that they were married, and Gratiano had said that he would never give it away. But the lawyer's clerk wanted only the ring and nothing more, and so – to thank the young man for his hard work – Gratiano gave it to him.'

After Shylock had signed the agreement, Portia and Nerissa took a small boat out of Venice. A coach and horses came to meet them when they arrived at the sea shore to take them to Belmont. In the coach they took off their men's clothes and put on women's clothes again.

When they arrived at Portia's house, it was very late, and the silver moon was high in the black night sky.

'Look at the moon!' cried Portia. 'How beautiful it is!'

Lorenzo and Jessica, hearing voices in the garden, came with a candle and met them at the door.

'Welcome back to Belmont,' they said.

Activities

1 Put the letters in the correct order to make words to match the definitions.

1 To do something to make somebody feel sorry for the bad things that he did. (**hisnup**) ___punish___

2 To write your name on a paper. (**gnis**) _____

3 To have a party because you are happy about something. (**lebtecare**)

_____

4 Showing thanks to somebody who did something to help you. (**lufegart**)

_____

5 Kind feelings to someone who has done something bad. (**remyc**)

_____

6 Asking someone to join you for something. (**vanitoniti**) _____

7 In place of something. (**tdeisan**) _____

2 Complete the sentences with words from Exercise 2.

The Duke had to ___punish___ the moneylender but he also wanted to show _____. Then after the trial Bassanio wanted to show that he was _____ to Doctor Balthasar, but he didn't want to give away his ring at first. So he offered the young lawyer an expensive ring _____. Before Doctor Balthasar left, Antonio and Bassanio invited him and his clerk to _____ with them, but the young lawyer refused the _____. Later that day the lawyer's clerk took the agreement to Shylock's house for the moneylender to _____.

3 Match the two halves of the sentences.

1 Shylock wanted to take Bassanio's money, ... [f]
2 Shylock wanted to leave the room, ... [ ]
3 Balthasar asked Antonio ... [ ]
4 Balthasar asked Bassanio ... [ ]
5 Shylock had to give Antonio half of all that he had, ... [ ]
6 Shylock signed an agreement that said ... [ ]
7 Portia and Nerissa hurried back to Belmont ... [ ]

a but Antonio gave it back to Shylock.
b he would give Jessica and Lorenzo all that he had when he died.
c and on the way they changed back into women's clothes.
d for his gloves.
e but he had to go on his knees to ask the Duke's mercy.
f but Balthasar said 'no' to that.
g for his ring.

4 What do you think happens next? Tick the boxes.

	Yes	No
1 Portia and Nerissa are angry with their husbands.	☐	☐
2 Antonio visits Belmont.	☐	☐
3 Antonio marries a beautiful Venetian woman.	☐	☐
4 Bassanio and Gratiano are jealous of their wives.	☐	☐
5 Shylock visits Lorenzo and Jessica at Belmont.	☐	☐
6 Portia and Nerissa forgive their husbands.	☐	☐

CHAPTER 7 **Happy at last**

Portia and Nerissa entered the house in Belmont late in the evening. They were wearing women's clothes now, and Lorenzo and Jessica came to the door to meet them.

'Lorenzo, is there any news of our husbands? Have they come back from Venice?' Portia asked.

'No, they haven't,' answered Lorenzo.

'But we've heard that the trial between Shylock and Antonio is now finished, and that Bassanio and Gratiano are planning to return to Belmont tonight,' said Jessica.

'Good. Then we've come home in time,' Portia said. 'But nobody must say anything to them about us going away from Belmont. Lorenzo, Jessica, did you hear that?'

'Yes, we did,' answered Lorenzo.

'Of course, we won't tell them anything about you leaving home,' said Jessica.

A short time later, very late that night, Bassanio and Gratiano arrived back in Belmont. Bassanio's friend Antonio, the Merchant of Venice, came with them.

'Welcome home, husband,' said Portia to Bassanio at the door.

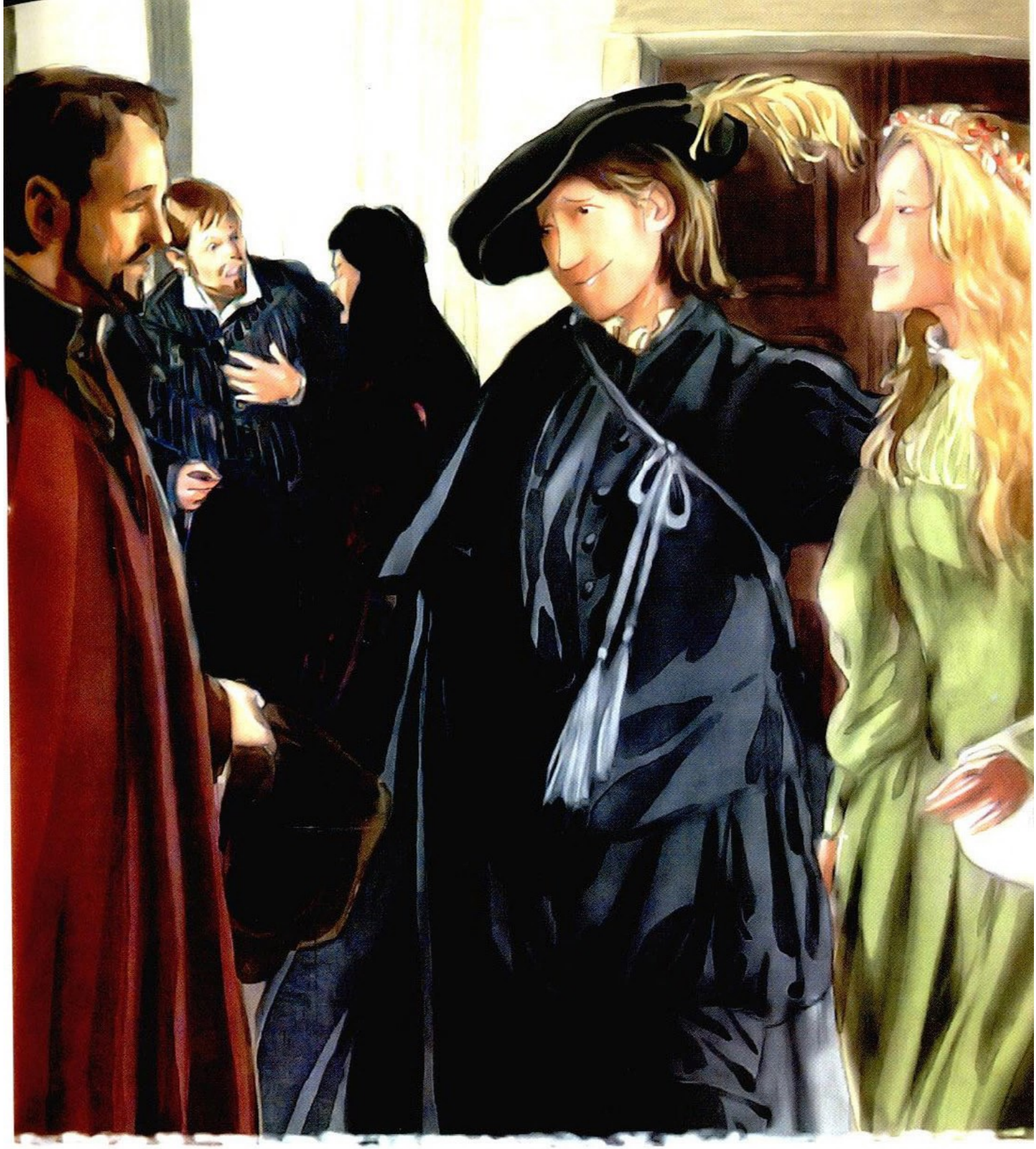
'Thank you, Portia,' said Bassanio. 'And this is Antonio, my very best friend, and the man that I went to help in Venice. Please welcome him into our house, too, wife.'

'Welcome to Belmont, Antonio,' said Portia. 'I'm glad to meet you. My husband went to help you, because you'd helped him a lot before, he told me.'

'That's right. I'm very grateful to him for it, I must say,' said Antonio. 'And I'm glad to meet you, too, Portia.'

Just then Nerissa and Gratiano, who were speaking by the window, began arguing.

argue to talk with somebody in angry voices



'What?!' screamed Nerissa. 'You gave it away!'

'Yes, I tell you. But only to a lawyer's clerk – a boy. Not to a woman!' shouted Gratiano.

'I don't believe you!' cried Nerissa.

'Stop that shouting at once, the two of you!' cried Portia. 'What are you arguing about?'

believe to think that something that someone says is true

'We're arguing about a little gold ring,' Gratiano told Portia. 'It had "Love me and never leave me" written on it. Nerissa gave it to me on our wedding day.'

'And Gratiano told me that he would keep that ring always, that he would never take it from his finger while he lived,' said Nerissa. 'And now he tells me that he's given it away to somebody in Venice. He says that he gave it to a young lawyer's clerk from Padua. But I don't believe him. I think that he gave it to some young Venetian woman that he met. But woman or man, it's not important. Now my ring is lost. I'm very angry with Gratiano.'

'I see. Well, I think that you're right to be angry,' said Portia. 'It was very bad of Gratiano to give away this ring when he knew that it was so important to you. I gave my husband Bassanio a ring on our wedding day, and I asked him to keep it always. If he gave that ring away, I'd be very angry with him, too.'

Then Gratiano spoke. 'But that's what Bassanio did. He gave his ring away to the young lawyer from Padua who spoke at the trial between Shylock and Antonio. And some time later the boy, his clerk, asked me for my ring to pay him for writing out an agreement for Shylock to sign, and so I gave my ring to him, too.'

At this, Portia looked at Bassanio. 'Tell me: which ring did you give to this young lawyer? Was it the ring that I gave you on the day that we married?' she asked.

Bassanio felt sick, but he knew that he had to tell the truth to his wife. 'Yes, it was,' he said.

He held up his hand. 'You can see that my finger hasn't got your ring on it. It's gone!'

'And why did you give my ring away?' asked Portia. 'Had you forgotten what I told you about it? "If you lose this

truth something true


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ring, our love will end." I'm very angry with you, husband. I want that ring back! I won't call myself your wife until you find it and give it back to me.'

'And I want *my* ring back, too,' said Nerissa to Gratiano. 'I won't call myself your wife until you find it and give it back to me.'

'Portia, please don't be angry with me. I hadn't forgotten what you said,' said Bassanio to his wife. 'But I gave your ring to the young lawyer from Padua because I wanted to say "thank you" to him for saving Antonio's life in the trial with Shylock. Doctor Balthasar said "no" to the 3000 gold coins that I wanted to give him. The ring was the only thing that the young man agreed to take.'

'Well, I don't believe you, Bassanio. I can't believe that you gave my ring away to a young man,' answered Portia. 'I think that this is only a story which you're inventing. I believe that Nerissa has got the right idea. I think that you gave my ring to a young woman that you met in Venice.'

'Portia, please, I'm not as bad as that,' cried Bassanio. 'Don't be angry. I'm a good husband and I'm telling the truth! I gave your ring to a young man. And if you had heard him speak, I think that you would have asked me to give the ring to him, too. He's a very good lawyer. And he saved my best friend's life! Then, after the trial, when I went to tell him how grateful I was for his help in the trial, he asked me for the ring. I didn't want to give it to him, but what could I do?'

'You could think of me, your faithful wife who gave you the ring,' said Portia. 'You could remember how important it was to me, and you could keep it on your finger, husband! If you had said "no" to this lawyer from the first, he wouldn't have asked you for our ring a second time.'

Then Antonio said to Portia, 'I'm very sorry. You and Bassanio are arguing because of me.'

'Please don't worry about it, Antonio,' said Portia.

Just then Bassanio went on his knees in front of Portia.



'Wife, believe me. I promise that I'll never break another promise that I make to you again,' he said with his hand on his heart.

'Can I believe that, my husband,' said Portia, 'after what's happened with my ring?'

Then Antonio spoke to Portia, 'Before, I promised to give my heart to help Bassanio. And the lawyer from Padua who spoke for me at the trial, the one who now has the ring, saved my heart and my life too. So maybe I can help you and your husband to an agreement now. I promise you, Portia, that – from this day – Bassanio will be faithful to you now and always.'

'Good. I like this new agreement between my husband and me,' said Portia. 'And I'm glad that you guarantee it, too, Antonio.'

She smiled and took the ring from her bag. She gave it to Antonio and said, 'Give this ring to my husband, and tell him to keep it better than he kept my last ring.'

So Antonio gave the ring to Bassanio. 'Here, Bassanio. Take this ring and promise me – your best friend – that you will look after it better than before.'

Bassanio was very surprised when he saw his old ring again. 'But this is your ring, Portia – the one that I gave to the Doctor!' he cried to his wife. 'How did you get it?'

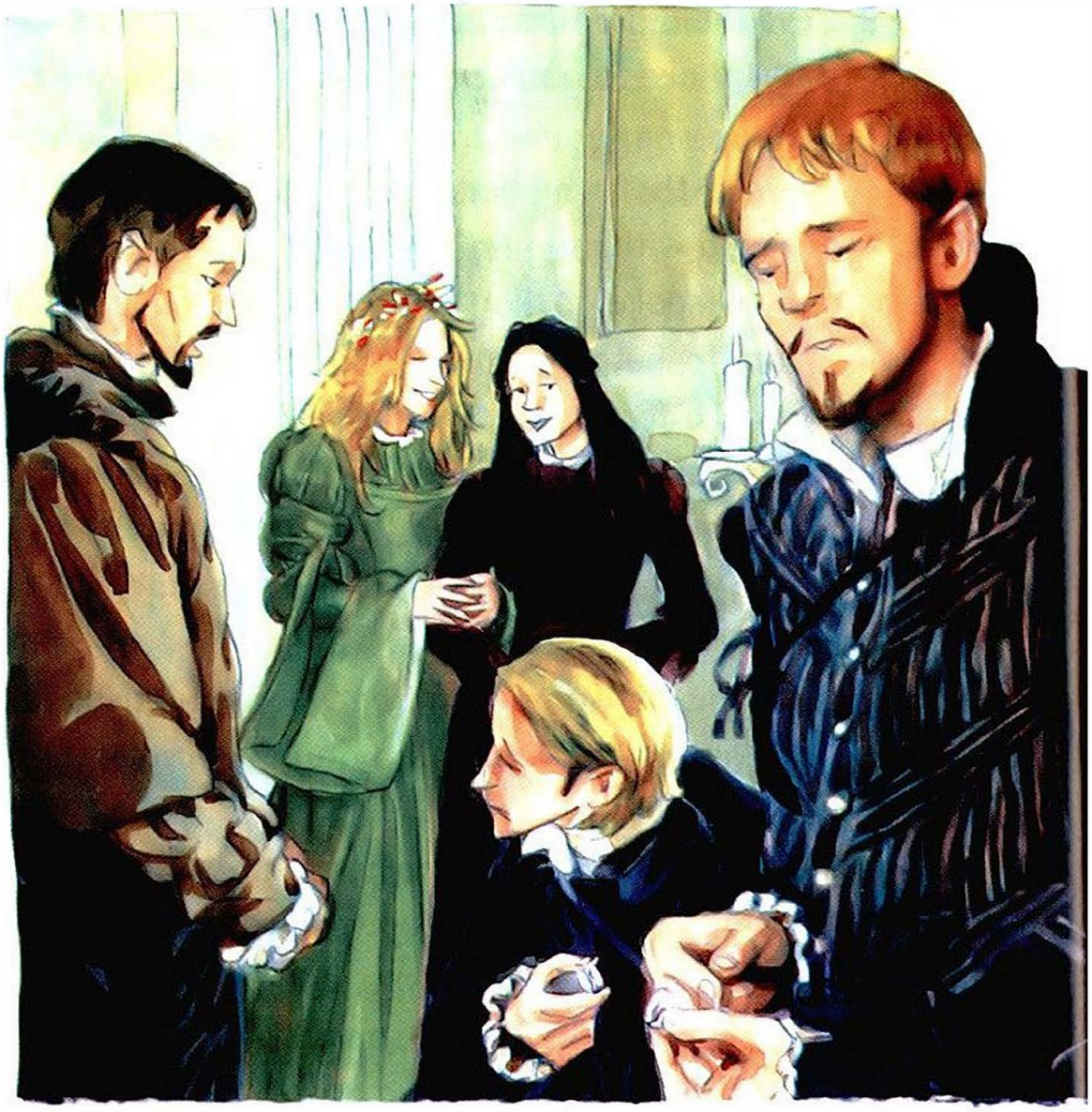
Then Nerissa gave her old ring back to Gratiano, and he was very surprised to see that ring again, too.

'And this is the ring that I gave to the lawyer's clerk! What's it doing here?' cried Gratiano.

'How did you find these rings?' Bassanio and Gratiano asked their wives. 'Did you meet Doctor Balthasar and his clerk? Did those two young men from Padua visit you here at Belmont? Tell us what happened!'

faithful when your husband or wife can trust you and rely on you

guarantee to support a promise that somebody has made



Then Portia and Nerissa looked at their husbands and laughed at them. 'Husbands, are you worried? Are you feeling jealous now?' they cried.

'Yes, we are,' answered Bassanio and Gratiano. 'So please tell us the truth!'

Then Portia took out the letter from Doctor Bellario in Padua, and she told them everything. Bassanio soon learnt that the young lawyer, Doctor Balthasar – who spoke so well at the trial between Antonio and Shylock – was really his wife, Portia. And Gratiano soon learnt that the young lawyer's clerk was really his wife, Nerissa.

jealous angry when your wife or husband spends time with other people

'Lorenzo and Jessica can tell you that we left Belmont for Venice not long after you went, and that we came back from Venice to Belmont not long before you returned,' finished Portia.

'That's right,' said Lorenzo and Jessica. 'Portia's telling you the truth.'

Bassanio and Gratiano were very surprised but very happy to learn the truth about their clever wives, and they stopped feeling worried and jealous at once.

And soon Antonio was a happy man, too. Portia gave him a note from a friend of his that she had brought for him from Venice.

'Here's some good news for you, too, Antonio,' she said. 'Don't ask me how I got it.'

Antonio read the note with interest:

Dear Antonio,
I've got some very good news for you! Three of your ships weren't lost at sea after all. They've arrived back home safely from Mexico, India and Tripoli, and they're full of lots of expensive things that you can sell in Venice. So you're not a poor man any more, but a very rich merchant once again.
Your friend,
Salerio

Then Nerissa took out the papers that Shylock had signed after the trial, and she gave them to Lorenzo.

'These papers are for you,' she said. 'In them the moneylender promises that he will leave all that he has to his only daughter, Jessica, and to you, her husband, when he dies. Old Shylock forgives you.'



'Thank you very much,' cried Lorenzo. 'This is very good news for Jessica and me! It will help us a lot.'

'Now it's nearly morning,' said Portia. 'Let's go into the house and sit and talk some more. And if you – Bassanio or Gratiano – have any more questions for Nerissa and me about what has happened, we'll be happy to answer them.'

* * *

And in this way our story ends: the Merchant of Venice was free and a rich man once more. Jessica and Lorenzo were forgiven by the moneylender Shylock, who had promised to be a better man after losing the trial. Portia forgave her husband, Bassanio, for giving away her ring, and Nerissa forgave her husband, Gratiano, for giving away *her* ring. And Bassanio and Gratiano were very happy to be back home in Belmont once again with their clever and faithful wives, Portia and Nerissa.

1 Correct the underlined words in the story summary.

'The Merchant of Venice' is about Antonio, a merchant, and his ~~old~~ best friend Bassanio. When Bassanio asks Antonio for money to visit Portia, Antonio borrows 3000 silver coins from the Duke. As a joke Shylock says that if Antonio can't pay him back in three months, he will take a pound of Antonio's hair. Antonio signs a birthday card to agree to this.





Different men play the guessing game with three wooden boxes to win Portia as their wife. An African prince chooses the silver box, and finds a picture of a fool in it. A German prince chooses the lead box and finds a picture of Portia in it. These two leave without Portia. But Bassanio chooses the gold box, and Portia agrees to marry him.

Shylock's daughter Jessica leaves home and marries Antonio's friend Salerio. When Antonio's ships are lost at sea, Shylock asks for a pound of his clothes.

Nerissa puts on lawyer's clothes and goes to Venice to speak at the trial between Antonio and Shylock. She wins the trial for Shylock, who can now go free.



At the end of the story Salerio and Portia, Gratiano and Nerissa, and Lorenzo and Leah are happily married.



Some of Antonio's ships come back to Padua and he is a rich man again, and the Duke promises to be a better man in future.

Activities

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Change the false sentences into true sentences.

1 After the trial Antonio left Venice with Bassanio and Gratiano to go to ~~Padua~~ Belmont. F

2 Portia said that she was sad to meet Antonio. ☐

3 Nerissa and Portia were angry with their husbands for giving away their rings. ☐

4 Portia and Nerissa will never forgive their husbands. ☐

5 Jessica and Lorenzo won't get Shylock's money when he dies. ☐

6 Not all of Antonio's ships are lost at sea after all. ☐

3 Choose the correct answer.

1 What did Gratiano's ring have written on it?

a 'Love me and never leave me.' ☑

b 'Home is where the heart is.' ☐

2 Who guaranteed the new agreement between Portia and Bassanio?

a Antonio ☐

b the Duke ☐

3 Who wrote the note to Antonio?

a Bassanio ☐

b Salerio ☐

4 Why were Bassanio and Gratiano jealous?

a They thought Doctor Balthasar and his clerk had been to Belmont. ☐

b They thought Shylock and the Duke had been to Belmont. ☐

5 Which of Antonio's ships have come back to Venice?

a the ships from Portugal and England ☐

b the ships from Mexico, India and Tripoli ☐

6 Who gave the agreement signed by Shylock to Lorenzo and Jessica?

a Nerissa ☐

b Portia ☐

4 Match the underlined words in the sentences with words that mean the same.

argue **believe** **faithful** **guarantee** **jealous** **truth**

1 He was very true to his wife. faithful

2 Don't talk in an angry way with me. I don't like it. _____

3 Please tell me the true story . Where did you put that money? _____

4 I think it's true that you've been very ill. _____

5 We promise that you will like this holiday a lot. _____

6 When Julie went away on holiday with some of her friends, her husband was not wanting her to meet others. _____

5 What do you think happens after the story ends? Tick the boxes.

	Yes	No
1 Are Bassanio and Portia happy?	☐	☐
2 Does Nerissa continue working as Portia's servant?	☐	☐
3 Do Jessica and Lorenzo go and live with Shylock?	☐	☐
4 Does Antonio ever borrow money again?	☐	☐

Project

Complete the questionnaire. Then compare your answers with your classmates.

'The Important Things in Life' Questionnaire

1 Which are the three most important things in life for you?

1 To be rich.

2 To have lots of friends.

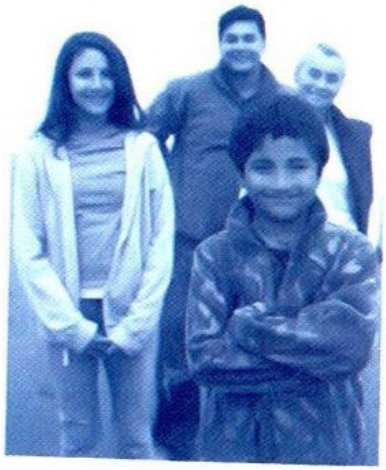
3 To live happily with your family.

4 To do work that you like.

5 To have a nice house to live in.

6 To live a good life.

7 To live a long life.



2 If you had lots of money, which three things would you do with it?



1 Buy lots of nice clothes.

2 Put some in the bank.

3 Give some to help poor people.

4 Share some with your friends.

5 Share some with your family.

6 Visit different countries.

7 Buy expensive things.

3 Answer these questions about your best friend.

1 Who is your best friend? _____

2 How long have you known him or her? _____

3 Where did you first meet him or her? _____

4 What do you like most about him or her? _____

5 What do you like doing with him or her? _____

6 How do you help him or her? _____

7 How does he or she help you? _____

4 Which do you think are the three most important things to look for in a husband or wife?

1 rich ○

2 good and faithful ○

3 kind and with a good heart ○

4 from a good family ○

5 handsome or beautiful ○

6 clever ○

7 hard-working ○



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