

The Merchant of Venice

1. Why does Shylock hate Antonio?

Answer: Shylock hates Antonio because he gives money to distressed people and does not charge any interest for the money he lends. Shylock, a hard – hearted man, pays with great severity for the money he lends. Since Antonio is generous, he earns a lot of Shylock's hatred.

2. How does Antonio help Bassanio?

Answer: Bassanio wants to travel to Belmont to offer a rich and lovely girl named Portia. However, he has no money to make himself as rich and important as her other followers. He goes to Antonio for money borrowing. Antonio has no money this time, so he decides to borrow the money from an old jew named Shylock for Bassanio. Shylock lends the money to Antonio on the condition that if he does not repay the money by a certain day, he will forfeit a pound of flesh as a penalty to be cut out of any part of his body that Shylock desires.

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

Answer: When Antonio asks Shylock to borrow him some money, he is delighted. He thinks he'll feed the old grudge if he can catch him on the hip. Shylock reminds Antonio of his insults at the hands of him. Shylock finds an option to vindicate Antonio by paying him the money for any interest. He nevertheless makes him sign a bond that if he does not repay the money by a certain day, he must forfeit a pound of flesh to be cut off from any part of his body.

Q4. What condition does shylock put forth if the debt is not paid in time?

Ans: The condition that shylock puts forth is that, if the debt is not repaid within a specified date, he may have right to forfeit a pound of flesh from any part of his body that Shylock pleases.

Q5. How does Bassanio marry Portia?

Answer: Bassanio loves Portia. However, he feels frightened to propose her. He needs some money to look as rich and important as other followers. He's going to Antonio to get the money. Antonio has, this time, no cash at hand. He approaches an old jew, Shylock for the money. Shylock gives him the money on a serious condition that he must forfeit his pound of flesh as a penalty if he fails to repay the debt on time. So Antonio arranges the money for his friend at the expense of his life. Bassanio takes the money and reaches Belmont. The borrowed elegance impresses Portia. The girl is in love with him and they are both married.

Q6. Why is the case brought before the duke of Venice?

Answer: Since the three months mentioned in the bond pass, Antonio fails to reimburse the borrowed money. Shylock files a case against him before the Duke of Venice claiming the penalty of a pound of the flesh of Antonio.

Q7. Who is disguised as the learned counsellor (Dr Balthasar) ? Why has he come to the court of Venice?

Answer: Portia is disguised as a trained consultant, Dr. Balthasar. He came to the court to plead Antonio's case, who failed to repay the debt and faces trial.

Q8. How does the counsellor start the argument, and how was he able to get the judgement in Antonio's favour?

Answer: The counselor begins his argument in favour of Shylock and says that he is in fact entitled to claim his pound. He calls on Shylock to have mercy on Antonio in the same breath. Shylock is not moved by the appeal of the counselors and his knife continues to sharpen. However, the counselor turns the tide against him when he discovers a new point. He urges Shylock not to shed a single drop of Antonio's blood by cutting a pound of flesh out of his body. The counselor tells the court that it is the flesh not the blood mentioned in the bond. This wise finding of the counselor enables him to obtain judgment in favour of Antonio.

9. How does Portia get back her ring?

Answer: After Portia won the case for Antonio in the disguise of a lawyer, Bassanio thanks her. He requires her to accept a gift that Portia refuses to accept. When Bassanio insists on her, she tells her to put the ring on her finger. Bassanio feels hesitant, but Antonio recommends that he give it to the lawyer, because he has done a great service. Portia gets her ring back, this way.

10. Describe the theme of the play “the Merchant of the Venice”.

Answer: The play “Venice’s merchant” revolves around three themes: love, sacrifice and hate. The beginning of the play describes Antonio’s hatred of an old jew, Shylock, who charges the needy with a very high interest rate on his loan money. Shylock also has a plan to vindicate Antonio’s hatred.

The play also emphasizes the sincere love of Bassanio for Portia. He won’t lose her beloved at any cost. Sacrifice is another theme which is reflected in the play. Antonio is a sacrificial epitome. He lends his money to the needy with interest charges. He risks his life and borrows money from a cruel Jew for his bosom friend, this he does to see his friend winning Portia’s love.

Character Sketch of Shylock

The jew, Shylock lived in Venice. He was a professional usurer. He had amassed an immense fortune by lending money to Christians merchants at high interest rates. As a hard – hearted man, he demanded that the money he lent should be paid so severely that all good men disliked him very much. Antonio also had his hard hearts to reproach him. In the entire city of Venice, Shylock was accused of being selfish.

With Antonio, Shylock had tremendous enmity. He cooked revenge against him, for which he always wanted the chance. This opportunity came when Antonio appealed to him to have three thousand ducats needed. Shylock made Antonio sign a bond that he would have to forfeit a pound of flesh if he failed to repay the money on a certain day. Luck went the way of Shylock. The money was not repaid by Antonio. Shylock brought the case to the duke of Venice, who claimed the penalty

The enemies met in court next. In order to nourish his greed, Shylock sharpened his knife to Antonio’s dismay. He looked forward to seeing Antonio die at his feet, but that couldn’t happen. The counselor turned the table against Shylock by saying that Shylock could cut from Antonio’s breast his pound of flesh, but he must not shed even a single drop of Antonio’s blood. This sabotaged Shylock’s conspiracy, because it was impossible for him to cut the flesh and shed some blood.

Language Work

(I) Fill in the blanks:

Answers

- Denmark
- Uncle
- Sting
- The ghost of his father
- Claudius
- The juice of poisonous henbane
- Ears
- Revenge
- Heaven, and to the stings and thorns of conscience
- Vanished

(II) Give the meanings of the following:

Contemptible: not deserving any respect at all; despicable

Disposition: the natural qualities of a person's character; temperament

Rejoice: to express great happiness about something.

Contrive: to manage to do something in spite of difficulties.

Quicksilver: mercury; changing and moving very quickly.

Linkers: "So... that"

Answers:

- a) The rains were so heavy that the whole city was flooded.
- b) My luggage was so heavy that even the potter found it difficult to lift.
- c) We were so excited that we could not sleep a wink last night.
- d) He is so careful with money that he hardly spends at all.
- e) Arundhati Roy's first book was so good that it won her Booker Prize.

