

## **Merchant of Venice**

### **William Shakespeare**

#### **Act I Scene I**

Despite its dark and threatening moments, *The Merchant of Venice* is a romantic comedy and, like most of Shakespeare's romantic comedies, it has a group of dashing, young men. The characters Antonio, Salarino, Salanio, Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano are introduced. The absolute and unconditional friendship between Antonio and Bassanio is one of the assumptions of the play that is brought out in scene I

#### **Scene II**

Scene opens at Belmont, Portia discusses the terms of her father's will with her friend, Nerissa. According to the will of her late father, Portia cannot marry a man of her own choice. Instead, she must accept the one who chooses "rightly" from among "three chests of gold, silver and lead." Nerissa reminds her of Bassanio a Venetian, a scholar and soldier who came to Belmont while Portia's father was living. Portia recalls him and praises him highly:

Portia is not simply a "fair" object of Bassanio's love, but a woman of powerful character and wit, perceptive about the people around her and quite able to hold her own in verbal combat with anyone.

#### **Scene III**

This scene has two important functions. First, it exposes two major plots of the play: Antonio agrees to Shylock's bond — three thousand ducats for a pound of flesh; and second, and more important it introduces Shylock himself! Both Antonio and Shylock openly disclose their hatred for each other.

### **I. Answer the Following:-**

1. What was common between Antonio and Shylock?
2. How has Antonio insulted Shylock in the past?
3. Who was the wealthy merchant in the Hebrew tribe?
4. What did Shylock say when Bassanio invited him to dine with him?
5. Who is a notary?
6. Why was Bassanio in need of money?
7. Why was Antonio not in a position to help Bassanio?
8. What are the difficulties faced by the merchant ships on sea?
9. What was the agreement made by Shylock before lending money?
10. Why did Shylock say that, sufferance is the badge their tribe?

**Answers:-**

1. Money lenders
2. By spitting on him & calling him a dog
3. Tubal
4. Shylock would walk and talk but will not eat with him
5. Notary is a solicitor ( A person authorised to carry out legal formalities )
6. He wanted to get married to a rich heir Portia.
7. As his merchant ships had not returned from sea.
8. They had to face dangers from land thieves, pirates, water rats winds & rocks.
9. If Antonio didn't repay the amount on a particular day as mentioned he would be nominated for a pound of flesh from any part of the body he wishes.
10. As he had borne all insults with lot of patience.