

The Merchant of Venice

Plot Summary

1^o) The solutions are in bold

A young Venetian, Bassanio, needs a **loan** of three thousand ducats so that he can woo Portia, a wealthy Venetian **heiress**. He approaches his friend Antonio, a merchant. Antonio is short of money because all his **wealth** is invested in his fleet, which is currently at sea. He goes to a Jewish **moneylender**, Shylock, who hates Antonio because of Antonio's anti-semitic behaviour towards him.

Shylock nevertheless agrees to make the short-term loan, but, in a moment of **dark** humour, he makes a condition - the loan must be **repaid** in three months or Shylock will exact a pound of flesh from Antonio. Antonio agrees, confident that his ships will return in time.

Because of the terms of Portia's father's will, all **suitors** must choose from among three caskets, one of which contains a portrait of her. If he chooses that he may marry Portia, but if doesn't he must vow never to marry or court another woman. The Princes of Morocco and Arragon **fail** the test and are rejected. As Bassanio prepares to travel to Belmont for the test, his friend Lorenzo elopes with Shylock's daughter, Jessica. Bassanio chooses the lead casket, which contains her **picture**, and Portia happily agrees to marry him immediately.

Meanwhile, two of Antonio's ships have been wrecked and Antonio's creditors are pressurising him for repayment. Word comes to Bassanio about Antonio's predicament, and he hurries back to Venice, leaving Portia behind. Portia follows him, accompanied by her maid, Nerissa. They are **disguised** as

a male lawyer and his clerk. When Bassanio arrives the date for the repayment to Shylock has passed and Shylock is demanding his pound of flesh. Even when Bassanio offers much more than the **amount** in repayment, Shylock, now infuriated by the loss of his daughter, is intent on seeking **revenge** on the Christians. The Duke refuses to intervene.

Portia arrives in her disguise to defend Antonio. Given the authority of **judgment** by the Duke, Portia decides that Shylock can have the pound of flesh as long as he doesn't draw blood, as it is against the law to shed a Christian's blood. Since it is obvious that to draw a pound of flesh would kill Antonio, Shylock is denied his suit. Moreover, for conspiring to **murder** a Venetian citizen, Portia orders that he should forfeit all his wealth. Half is to go to Venice, and half to Antonio.

Antonio gives his half back to Shylock on the condition that Shylock bequeaths it to his disinherited daughter, Jessica. Shylock must also **convert** to Christianity. A broken Shylock accepts. News arrives that Antonio's remaining ships have returned safely. With the exception of Shylock, all **celebrate** a happy ending to the affair.

KEY: ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

1.C - 2.A - 3.C - 4.B - 5.A -
6.B - 7.C - 8.A - 9.A - 10.B

RIDDLES

- 1.- **A chair.**
- 2.- The air.
- 3.- Your picture in a mirror.
- 4.- A river.
- 5.- Tomorrow.
- 6.- The word 'silence'.
- 7.- Because there isn't a single person.
- 8.- Because walking would take too long.
- 9.- A dead horse.
- 10.- An elephant can have fleas, but a flea can't have elephants.