

The Merchant of Venice

William Shakespeare

Act 1

- 1 They thought he was worried about his merchant ships and the cargo they were carrying.
- 2 He wanted to borrow some more money from Antonio so that he could go to Belmont and ask Portia to marry him.
- 3 He told Bassanio to borrow some money in his name in Venice.
- 4 Any man who wanted to win her as his wife had to choose the correct one of three chests – gold, silver or lead.
- 5 Because he drank too much.
- 6 The Prince of Morocco.
- 7 He wanted to borrow 3000 ducats, for three months.
- 8 Because Antonio was a Christian, and because he lent money to people interest-free and therefore brought down the cost of borrowing in Venice.
- 9 He wanted a pound of Antonio's flesh.

Act 2

- 1 He was going to Shylock's house to visit his son Launcelot and give Shylock a present.
- 2 His old master was Shylock, and Bassanio became his new one.
- 3 Because Gratiano was often rude and wild, and Bassanio was worried that people would judge him by his friend's behaviour.
- 4 She asked him to give Lorenzo a letter.
- 5 They were planning to run away together.
- 6 She was dressed in a boy-servant's suit, pretending to be Lorenzo's torch-bearer for the masque, so that she could run away from home.
- 7 Because the wind was right for sailing, so Bassanio and Gratiano needed to sail away to Belmont.
- 8 He chose the gold chest, because he thought that a jewel like Portia could not be kept in anything less than gold.
- 9 He woke the duke up and they looked for Jessica on Bassanio's ship. He then went through the streets shouting for her and for his money and jewels.
- 10 He had to promise never to tell anyone which chest he had chosen, never to ask another woman to marry him, and to leave at once if he made the wrong choice.
- 11 He chose the silver chest, because he wanted to give himself what he thought he deserved.

Act 3

- 1 Because he wanted to take his revenge on Antonio for all the bad things he had done to him (disgracing him, causing trouble for him, laughing at him when he made losses, making fun of him for his winnings, being rude about his people, trying to get in the way of his business, being cold with his friends and making his enemies angry with him).
- 2 Because she did not want him to go if he made the wrong choice.
- 3 He chose the lead chest, because he believed that outward appearances tell us nothing about what is inside.
- 4 Nerissa and Gratiano.
- 5 His ships had all gone down, the people he had borrowed money from had turned against him, he had very little money left, and he had to pay the penalty of his bond to Shylock.
- 6 He asked him to be with him when he died.
- 7 She said that she and Nerissa were going to stay in a monastery until Bassanio and Gratiano came back, to spend some quiet time in prayer and thought.
- 8 She told her that they were going to dress up as young men.

Act 4

- 1 He offered him six thousand ducats.
- 2 He sent Balthazar to take his place because he was very ill, and because Balthazar was a clever young lawyer who knew Doctor Bellario's thoughts about Shylock and Antonio's argument.
- 3 He tried to explain to him that nobody is saved through justice alone, and that justice should always be softened with mercy.
- 4 He said that Shylock could take his pound of flesh from Antonio.
- 5 First, he told him that if he let a drop of Antonio's blood fall, his home and everything he owned would be taken (under law) by the city of Venice. Second, if he took any more or less than a pound of flesh, he would die and lose everything he owned.
- 6 Because he had said in court that he did not want it.
- 7 Because he had tried to take Antonio's life, and that was the punishment according to the laws of Venice.
- 8 He had to become a Christian, and he had to make a will giving everything he had to Jessica and Lorenzo when he died.
- 9 Bassanio offered Balthazar three thousand ducats, but Balthazar asked for Bassanio's gloves and the ring given to him by Portia.

Act 5

- 1 Because Nerissa had found out that Gratiano had given her ring to the 'judge's clerk'.
- 2 He swore by his own heart that Bassanio would never break another promise to Portia.
- 3 They told them that they had slept with the lawyer and the lawyer's clerk for the rings.
- 4 Three of his ships had safely arrived home, bringing him a lot of money.