

ST. THOMAS SCHOOL, RANCHI – 4

Tales from Shakespeare

The Merchant of Venice

Chapter – 1

Antonio borrows money from Shylock for his friend
Bassanio

Answer the following question:

Q 1- Why was Antonio hated by Shylock?

Ans 1- Shylock hated Antonio because Antonio was a kind person who lent money to people in distress without charging interest.

Q 2- Why was Antonio respected by all?

Ans 2- Antonio was much respected in Venice for his gentle and helpful nature.

Q 3- Why did Bassanio need money?

Ans 3- Bassanio, who was Antonio's dearest friend had wasted all his money by living grandly. So, he made a plan to get rich instantly. Bassanio divulged his plan to his closest friend Antonio. Bassanio wished to marry a rich lady, Portia, whose father had died leaving a big fortune to her.

Bassanio had visited her during her father's lifetime and it appears that the lady liked him. But since he had no money, he needed Antonio's help to furnish himself with servants, dresses and gifts befitting a lover of a rich heiress.

Q 4 – Why did the two friends have to go to Shylock ? Give two reasons.

Ans 4 – The two friends had to go to Shylock for the following reasons:

1.) Bassanio needed three thousand ducats to present himself as an eligible suitor to Portia. Antonio did not have so much money at that time as all his ships were at sea.

2.) All his wealth was tied up in those business ventures.

3.) Unfortunately none in the Venice, at that time could lend three thousand ducats to Bassanio as their money was also tied up in business ventures.

(any two)

Q 5 - What do you think of the conversation held between Antonio and Shylock from the conversations?

Ans 5 - On the basis of the conversation held between Antonio and Shylock the opinion we form about both are as follows:

SHYLOCK: Shylock was a money lender who lent out money to the needy by charging high rate of interest. Antonio's kindness of not charging interest brought down the rate of interest for Shylock. When Antonio along with Bassanio reached out to Shylock to borrow money, Shylock considers this as a fair opportunity of having revenge on Antonio. Shylock reminds Antonio of his ill-treatment and how he had borne all that patiently. Shylock very cleverly manipulates the whole talk and says that he wants to be friends with Antonio and have his love. He shall forget all the insults. He shall not even charge any interest.

ANTONIO: Antonio was a kind merchant who helped the needy without charging interest. Antonio had insulted Shylock many times in public or in the stock exchange market. After Shylock reminds Antonio of his ill-treatment towards Shylock Antonio remained unrepentant and he says that, he dislikes Shylock as much as ever and will continue to insult him. If he wishes to grant the loan, he should consider that he was giving loan to his bitterest enemy. Here Antonio's arrogance is evident. The kind offer given by Shylock surprises Antonio and Bassanio.

So, to conclude we can say that though Antonio is kind but at times he is arrogant, still he falls prey to Shylock's trap. Shylock is an opportunist, a great manipulator and a shrewd contriver. He traps Antonio by making him sign a bond that brings Antonio on the verge of death.

Q 6 – Which clause was put in the bond?

Ans 6 – Shylock agreed to lend three thousand ducats for three months but he asked them to go with him to a lawyer and sign a bond. It would have a penalty clause that if the debt was not paid when due, then the lender would be entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh from any part of the body which Shylock liked.

Chapter – 2 The rich Portia has to go through her father's will.

Answer the following questions:

Q 1 – Write three suitable adjectives for Portia?

Ans 1 – Three suitable adjectives for Portia are as follows:

- a) Beautiful b) intelligent c) vivacious

Q 2 – What are the two conditions laid down by Portia's late father?

Ans 2 – The two conditions laid down by Portia's late father are:

1) Portia's father had willed that whoever chose the right casket among the three (gold, silver and lead) would marry his daughter.

2) To take an oath that if any suitor fails in his attempt to choose the right casket he would never get married.

Q 3 – How did Prince of Morocco plead for himself?

Ans 3- The Prince of Morocco requested Portia not to discard him for his black colour which was the result of living in a hot country. He said that he was also skilled at swordsmanship.

Q 4 – On what condition could Gratiano accompany Bassanio and why?

Ans 4 – Bassanio allowed Gratiano to come along on the condition that he would not talk much there and behave decently so that Portia's impression remained favourable.

Chapter 3 – Jessica escapes with Lorenzo

Answer the following questions:

Q 1 – What plan for elopement was made?

Ans 1 – Jessica sent a letter through a servant, Launcelot, telling Lorenzo about her plan to elope. Lorenzo and his group of friends would meet at Gratiano's house that night. They decided that Jessica would be their torch-bearer.

As arranged, the friends assembled outside Shylock's house. They were going to have a masquerade party Jessica too joined them but the party was cancelled as the winds were favourable and Bassanio had to leave that very night for Belmont.

Thus, taking advantage of their disguise Jessica and Lorenzo eloped.

Q 2 – Why did the Prince of Morocco choose the gold casket?

Ans 2 – The Prince of Morocco tried his luck with the caskets which were made of gold, silver and lead. The gold and silver caskets made promises but the leaden one was menacing. He chose the gold casket

Merchant Of Venice

Chapter-4

A. Answer the following questions:

1. Why did the Prince of Arragon reject the gold and lead caskets?

Ans. The Prince of Arragon rejected the lead casket because he was excessively conscious of his social status and did not like the inscription on the gold casket either because it included 'many men'.

2. Why, do you think, Portia asked Bassanio to stay there for a month or two?

Ans. Portia asked Bassanio to stay there for a month or two because she wanted to spend some time with Bassanio and teach him how to select the right casket.

3. Why did Bassanio reject the gold and silver caskets?

Ans. Bassanio rejected the 'gaudy gold' and the pale and common silver because an object should not be judged by the outward appearance.

4. What did Bassanio say to Portia?

Ans. When Bassanio chose the ordinary lead casket, he found Portia's portrait inside it. Both Portia and he were overjoyed and said, 'O, most beautiful lady, I stand here doubting what I see is true or not until you confirm, approve and accept me.'

5. What promises did the friends make to Portia and Nerissa?

Ans. Both the friends, Gratiano and Bassanio, vowed to wear the rings gifted by Nerissa and Portia respectively, all their life and never part with them.

Chapter-5

1. How was the cheerful mood at Belmont spoiled?

Ans. The cheerful mood at Belmont was spoiled as Lorenzo, Jessica and Salerio arrived there with the distressing news that Antonio's vessels had all been lost and he had failed to pay back his debt to Shylock at the right time.

2. How did Portia respond on hearing the sad news?

Ans. Portia offered to repay the debt twenty times over. She also said Bassanio that his friend Antonio should not suffer at any cost.

Chapter-6

1. Which qualities of Portia do you come to know about from this chapter ?

Ans. Portia was intelligent, quick-witted, and rational.

2. What was Portia's plan?

Ans. Portia knew her own powers and by the guidance of her own true and perfect judgement, she sent her servant, with a letter, to Padua, where her cousin, Dr. Bellario, a lawyer, lived. Portia stated the case to him, sought his opinion and requested him to send her a dress of a lawyer. She ordered the servant to wait for her at the port. Then she told others that she was going to visit certain monasteries with Nerissa. Until her return, her home would be looked after by Lorenzo and Jessica.

Chapter-7

1. What made it a memorable day for the Venetians?

Ans. The trial of a noble man like Antonio was going to be tried in the court made it a memorable day for the Venetians.

2. How did the Duke request Shylock to show mercy?

Ans. The Duke requested Shylock to show sympathy to Antonio as he had suffered heavy losses and remit his penalty.

3. What did Antonio have to say?

Ans. Antonio requested the Duke not to make any more appeals but give his judgement and let the Jew have his will.

4. Explain the words of Gratiano.

Ans. Gratiano means to say that Shylock's knife has been made sharp by the cruelty of his spirit, and not as a result of his rubbing the knife against the leather sole of a shoe.

5. For whom did the duke ask others to wait?

Ans. The duke asked all those in the court to wait for a learned lawyer, Dr. Belario, for his advice.

St. Thomas School, Dhurwa, Ranchi

Std 8 : English Literature

Book : The Merchant of Venice

Chapter : 8

(Portia arrives to save Antonio's life)

Q1) What had Dr. Bellario written in the letter?

Ans) Dr. Bellario had written in the letter that he would have come himself to plead for Antonio but was prevented by sickness. He further requested the Duke in his letter that the learned, young Dr. Balthazar (Portia in disguise) might be permitted to plead in his place.

Q2) How did Portia plead to Shylock to show mercy?

Ans) When the important trial began in the court in Venice, Portia talked to Shylock and spoke about the noble quality of mercy. She said that mercy has two fold blessings. It blesses the one who shows mercy and also the one who receives it. It is a symbol of God Himself. In our prayers, we always ask for forgiveness. Thus, in this way she requested Shylock to show mercy.

Q3) What made Shylock proclaim Portia as 'Daniel' ?

Ans) In the court, when Bassanio offered Shylock as much payment as he desired, Shylock refused the offer. Bassanio then begged the young lawyer, Dr. Balthazar (Portia in disguise) to try to change the law a little to save Antonio's life. But Portia seriously answered that the laws could not

be changed. On hearing the lawyer speak in favour of him, Shylock proclaimed Portia as 'Daniel'.

Q4) What made Portia and Nerissa make sarcastic remarks?

Ans) Antonio bid farewell to Bassanio just before preparing himself for the knife. He told Bassanio that he should not think he was dying for him. Antonio also wished to convey his regards to Bassanio's wife.

(Portia) . Hearing Antonio's words, Bassanio answered emotionally to Antonio that he loved his wife but life itself, his wife and all the world are not as valuable as he (Antonio) was. He was ready to lose everything to save him. (Antonio). Though not being really offended, Portia answered sarcastically saying that his (Bassanio's)

wife won't thank him if she heard that. Gratiano also expressed his wish similar to Bassanio's. Nerissa then remarked that it was good he wished this behind her back otherwise there would have been marital trouble.

Chapter: 9

Portia wins the case

Q1) To which request of Portia's did Shylock say, " It's not mentioned in the bond? "

Ans: Portia asked Shylock to have a surgeon ready in case Antonio bled to death. To this request of Portia, Shylock said those words.

Q2) Which two points raised by Portia tilted the scale in Antonio's favour?

Ans: The following two points raised by Portia tilted the scale in Antonio's favour.

During the case Portia said that while cutting off the flesh from Antonio's body, Shylock must not shed a drop of blood nor cut a smaller or larger amount than an exact pound. She further said should the flesh weigh lighter or heavier by the merest fraction, he should pay the penalty with his own life and his property will be confiscated.

Q3) Why could Shylock not get any money?

Ans) Shylock could not get any money because Portia insisted that he had to keep to the strict terms of the bond. She further said that she would allow him only a pound of flesh no more no less.

Q4) What made Shylock totally devastated?

Ans) Shylock was devastated when Portia attacked him again. She said if any alien

plotted against the life of a Venetian then half his possession would go to that citizen and the other half to the state. The life of the offender was at the mercy of the Duke. So she asked Shylock to kneel down and pray for forgiveness.

Q5) On which condition did Antonio give up his share of Shylock's wealth?

Ans) Antonio gave up his share of Shylock's wealth on the condition that he (Shylock) would sign a deed to make it over at his death to his daughter Jessica and her husband Lorenzo. Antonio knew that Shylock had disinherited his daughter for marrying a Christian.

Q6) Why did Portia not accept (a) the Duke's invitation and (b) fees from Antonio?

Ans) Portia did not accept the Duke's invitation as she had to leave for Padua that night. Actually she had to rush back to Belmont before Bassanio arrived with his friends.

Portia did not accept the fees from Antonio saying that Antonio's acquittal was reward enough.

Chapter: 10

Antonio's ships return; all live happily ever after

Q1) Which two things did Portia ask for?

Ans) Portia asked for Bassanio's gloves. She also asked for the ring which she herself had given to him.

Q2) Why could Bassanio not give the ring?

Ans) Bassanio could not part with the ring because it was his wife's gift and he had promised never to part with it.

Q3) For which two reasons did Bassanio ultimately give the ring to the lawyer?

Ans) Bassanio ultimately gave the ring to the lawyer because of the following reasons- he felt ashamed to appear so ungrateful to the lawyer and also because Antonio urged him to give the ring to the lawyer for his great service.

Q4) How did Portia learn of the loss of the ring?

Ans) A quarrel had begun between Gratiano and Nerissa as the ring given by Nerissa was missing from Gratiano's finger. Portia was annoyed and told Gratiano that he should not have parted with his wife's first gift.

Seeing this as a chance, Gratiano grabbed it and said that his lord Bassanio also gave his ring to the lawyer. This is how Portia learnt of the loss of the ring.

Q5) How did Bassanio plead his case?

Ans) When Portia and Nerissa pretended to believe that their husband's had given the ring to some women , Bassanio honestly tried to plea his case. He said that no woman had the ring but the lawyer who refused 3000 ducats and begged for the ring . When he (Bassanio) refused to part with his ring , the lawyer went away in displeasure. He did not like to appear so ungrateful.

Q6) How did Antonio (a) feel and (b) stop the quarrel?

Ans) Antonio felt embarrassed as he was the cause of this domestic quarrel (between Bassanio and Portia and between Gratiano and Nerissa) .

Antonio stopped the quarrel by saying that once he had lent his body for Bassanio's sake. That lawyer who took the ring had saved him. Now he pledged his soul that Bassanio will never break an oath with her.

Q7) How did they learn the truth?

Ans) Portia handed out the same ring which she had received from Bassanio in the court. Nerissa also followed her. Both the friends Antonio and Bassanio were surprised . Then Portia told them how she herself was the young lawyer and Nerissa was her clerk. She also produced

Dr. Bellario's letter as a proof. This is how the truth was learnt.

Q8) What good news did Portia give Antonio?

Ans) The good news which Portia shared with Antonio was that his ships which were supposedly lost had returned to the harbour.

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