The Merchant of Venice

Act III & IV  
Study Questions

1. Why, since it won’t result in any financial gain, does Shylock insist on the terms of his bond with Antonio?

2. What news does Tubal bring Shylock?

3. Why does Portia want Bassanio to wait before facing the challenge of the three caskets?

4. Why does Bassanio select the lead casket?

5. What does the lead casket contain?

6. What does Portia claim will occur if Bassanio gives up the ring she gives him?

7. What does Gratiano reveal after Bassanio solves the riddle of the three caskets?

8. Why does Portia allow Bassanio to leave before they get married?

9. According to Antonio, why won’t the Duke be able to intercede on his behalf?

10. What does Portia decide to do at the end of Act III?

**Act IV**

1. What does the Duke request of Shylock?

2. What reason does Shylock give for his wanting the pound of Antonio’s flesh?

3. Why does Antonio advise his friends to give up attempting to dissuade Shylock?

4. Why does Shylock believe the Duke must enforce the terms of the bond?

5. Why does Portia, disguised as the lawyer, initially conclude that Shylock’s bond must be adhered to?

6. Although she acknowledges Shylock’s right to a pound of Antonio’s flesh, how does Portia prevent the usurer from acting on it?

7. Why is Shylock stripped of his possessions?

8. Apart from the financial conditions, what does Antonio’s new arrangement demand of Shylock?

9. What does the disguised Portia demand from Bassanio for her services?

10. Why is Bassanio reluctant to give up the ring?

***Act V***

1. What message does Stephano deliver to Lorenzo and Jessica?

2. What opinion does Lorenzo hold of men who don’t like music?

3. What does Portia order her household not to do?

4. To whom does Nerissa claim to believe Gratiano gave his ring?

5. What does Portia threaten when Bassanio admits he gave the ring away?

6. What does Portia claim she will do if she encounters the doctor to whom Bassanio gave the ring?

7. How does Antonio attempt to placate Portia?

8. What does Portia offer Bassanio to seal the new promise?

9. What secret does Portia reveal to the company?

10. What good news does Portia tell Antonio?