

Merchant of Venice

Act - 3

Scene – 3

Extract – 1

1. What does Shylock ask the jailer to do? Give two reasons from the extract to justify why Shylock was against Antonio.

Answers: Shylock asks the jailer to guard Antonio closely and see that he does not escape. He tells him not to plead with him to show mercy to Antonio. The extract shows that Shylock was against Antonio. He insists on having the bond saying that he has taken an oath to exact the full penalty of the bond. Besides, he says that since Antonio called him a 'dog'. Antonio should beware of his teeth, as they can bite.

2. Give the meaning of:

(a) lent out money gratis: lending money without interest

(b) beware my fangs: beware of my teeth. That is beware of my revenge

3. What does Shylock say after this extract, blaming the jailer for bringing Antonio out of prison?

Answers: After this extract, Shylock angrily tells the jailer that he is surprised at his being so foolish as to yield to Antonio's request and to bring him out in the open. He censures the jailer for bringing him out.

4. How does this short scene show the determination of Shylock to extract the penalty as stipulated in the bond?

Answers: This short scene shows the determination of Shylock to extract the penalty as stipulated in the bond. His passion for revenge is revealed in this scene, when he savagely cries to the jailer to guard Antonio closely and see that he does not escape. He refers to the bond five times in the scene and refuses to listen to Antonio's pleas. His determination is sealed by his statement that he has sworn an oath that he will have his bond.

5. Describe briefly how this scene prepares the audience for the climax of the Trial scene.

Answers: This scene is important because it brings the action near to the Trial Scene. It adds suspense to the bond story as it shows that it is impossible for Antonio to escape Shylock's revenge. This scene fills the interval before the Trial scene and allows time for Bassanio's journey from Belmont to Venice.

Extract - 2

1. What has enraged Antonio to speak in this manner? According to Antonio, why does Shylock seek his life?

Answers: When Antonio's continuous pleas to Shylock to listen to him fail and he insists, on having his bond, Antonio get enraged. He says that Shylock wants to take away his life because he has frequently helped Shylock's debtors out of his clutches when they approached him for help. This has made Shylock to hate him.

2. What does Salarino say about the Duke?

Answers: Salarino says that he is sure that the Duke will never permit the penalty of the bond to hold good in law.

3. Who are the strangers referred to in the extract? What commodity do they have in Venice?

Answers: Strangers referred to in the extract are the traders and businessmen from other countries doing business in Venice. Here, specific reference is to Shylock, a Jew, a foreigner. They do trade and business in Venice.

4. Can the Duke deny the course of law to the strangers? Why?

Answers: The Duke cannot deny the course of law to the strangers. Firstly, the rights and privileges of trade that foreigners have in Venice cannot be denied. If denied they will expose the justice system of the state to reproach. Secondly, prosperity of Venice depends on its trade with foreign nations. If injustice is done to Shylock, other foreigners will raise alarm and objections. They will lose confidence in the justice system and it will affect the trade in the city.

5. What final wish does Antonio express before he would die? What does it reveal about his character?

Answers: Antonio's final wish is to see Bassanio before he dies. This shows his great love and affection for Bassanio, Antonio resigns himself to his fate but takes comfort in the thought that he is going to die for the sake of his friend.