

*The
Merchant of Venice*

Companion



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ACT 1 SCENE 1

Excerpt A

1. Antonio is a merchant of Venice, and he is conversing with his friends, Salarino and Salanio.
2. a. In sooth: Truly; in truth.
b. want-wit: Someone who is dim-witted and slow. That is, someone who is in want of wit/intelligence.
c. much ado: much trouble
3. They suggest that Antonio's mind is troubled by the large value of his merchandise at sea. Salanio believes that if he had such valuable merchandise at the whim of the sea and the weather, he would always be worrying about his ships, literally holding blades of grass to judge the direction of the wind. Salarino further suggests Antonio might be in love.
4. Salarino describes Antonio's ships as stately and majestic, like noble gentlemen and rich citizens, which sail by as though they are taking part in a pageant. The other small and insignificant boats merely bob on the water as if they are curtsying to his superior ships to show them the respect that is due to them
5. Antonio is pessimistic, dramatic, and reliant on his friends to cheer him up with compliments. These qualities surface again in Act 4 Scene 1. Bassanio and the Duke try to encourage him, to which he gives the response: 'I am a tainted wether of the flock, Meetest for death . . . and so let me.'

Excerpt B

1. When Salanio says, 'had I such venture forth', he means 'had I such valuable merchandise at sea'. He means to say if he had such valuable merchandise at sea, like Antonio, he too would have been worried.
2. 'Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind' means taking up a blade of grass and holding it up to judge the direction in which the wind is blowing, and therefore predicting the weather and how it will affect the course of a ship.

3. a. 'My wind, cooling my broth, Would blow me to an ague,' means that when he blows on his soup to cool it with his breath, he would be reminded of the way a strong wind at sea could damage his ships, and cause him to succumb to a fit of shivering.
- b. 'I should not see the sandy hour-glass run . . . To kiss her burial.' This means that when he looks upon the sand in an hour-glass, he would think of the shallow waters and sandbanks his ships could be grounded in.
4. Antonio assures his friends that his merchandise is neither dependent on just one ship, nor is his financial stability dependent on this one year. Therefore, this is not the reason for his sadness.
5. We are assured by Antonio's friends and Antonio himself of his financial stability, and that he handles his finances and business with great care and wisdom. He is not yet indebted to any creditor and does not rely upon this one venture to keep him afloat. However, the mere suggestion of losing his valuable merchandise and his ships and being in credit is Shakespeare's way of foreshadowing Antonio's misfortune, and thereby implying that more is to come than what initially meets the eye.

Excerpt C

1. Salarino is talking to Antonio. He is trying to explain how he would feel if he was in Antonio's situation. He would forever be worrying about things that could go wrong and cause him to lose all his money. Everyday occurrences would spark another onset of worry.
2. The stone building of the church would remind him of the dangerous rocks that could destroy his ships and have him lose all of his financial worth. In just a moment, his merchandise would go from being very valuable to nothing, scattered upon the sea and lost forever.
3. These lines give an idea of the richness of the cargo – spices and silks – both considered precious commodities in

Elizabethan times. They also imply that it is risky business. The cargo is at the mercy of the weather and dangers of the sea, and once the ship is wrecked, there is no way to get them back. It would only take a moment to be destroyed.

4. a. Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks: Antonio's valuable cargo is compared to silk, an expensive and new fabric of the time, clothing the ocean when it is spilled out into the waters following a ship wreck.
b. But even now worth this, And now worth nothing: Just a moment ago, the cargo was very valuable, and now it is worth nothing.
5. a. When he blows on hot soup with his breath in order to cool it, he would be reminded of the harm the wind could do to his ships.
b. When he looks at the sand in an hour-glass, he would be reminded of the shallow waters and sandbanks that his ships could run aground in.

Excerpt D

1. He is discussing the reason for Antonio's sadness, and assumes it is because of Antonio's business ventures at sea. He talks about all the things that could go wrong and cause Antonio to worry, putting himself in Antonio's shoes to discuss why this would make him sad.
2. a. 'My wind, cooling my broth, Would blow me to an ague,' means that when he blows on his soup to cool it with his breath, he would be reminded of the way a strong wind at sea could damage his ships, and cause him to succumb to a fit of shivering.
b. 'I should not see the sandy hour-glass run, But I should think of shallows and of flats; And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand, Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs To kiss her burial.' This means that when he looks upon the sand in an hour-glass, he would think of the shallow waters and sandbanks his ships could be grounded in.
c. 'Should I go to church, And see the holy edifice of stone,

And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks' means that when he goes to church and sees the building made of stone, he would be reminded of the dangerous rocks that could merely touch the side of his vessel and break her apart, sending all his valuable cargo scattering into the water.

3. 'Shall I have the thought To think on this, and shall I lack the thought That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?' means that if he is able to picture all the things that could go wrong, then he is also able to imagine the grief that these misfortunes would cause him. This would make him worry even more.
4. Antonio assures them that his merchandise is neither dependent on just one ship, nor is his financial stability dependent on this one year. Therefore, this is not the reason for his sadness.
5. Later it is suggested by Salarino that Antonio is in love.

Excerpt E

1. The other reasons suggested by Salarino for Antonio's sadness are worrying over his ships at sea and being in love. The ships with rich cargo are at the mercy of the sea and capricious winds, and so are a natural source of worry. Being in love is another common reason for unexplained melancholy.
2. Salarino refers to the 'two-headed Janus' to support his argument that Antonio is sad because he is the opposite of happy. Janus is the Roman god with two faces, the god of beginnings and transitions. He is used to show that Nature has created people with different outlooks on life and so this is a possible reason for Antonio's unhappiness, because he has a negative outlook on life compared to a positive one.
3. The 'strange fellows' are people who have opposite and extreme dispositions. There are the people who are forever happy and laughing, those who are always optimistic. Then there are the people who are forever sad and despondent like Antonio, those who are pessimistic and never smile, 'That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile.'

4. a. Laugh like parrots at a bag-piper: People who are like parrots that laugh at anything, even the boring drone of bag-pipes.
b. vinegar aspect: sour expression
5. Nestor was the oldest of the Greek leaders during the Trojan War, who was noted for his wisdom and gravity. He is mentioned to imply that there are some people who will not laugh or take happiness from anything, even if someone as serious as Nestor deems it funny.

Excerpt F

1. Gratiano had said that Antonio does not look well, and he takes life too seriously. Those who worry too much about worldly matters are never really happy.
2. 'I hold the world . . . And mine a sad one' means that Antonio sees the world as it is – an unhappy place. Everyone plays a part in life as if they were actors upon the stage, and Antonio's part is a sad one.
3. The Elizabethans believed in four types of characters associated with four body fluids or humours – sanguine (blood), phlegmatic (phlegm), choleric (yellow bile), and melancholic (black bile). These were partly determined by the digestion of food in the liver. So a liver heated with wine would produce rich blood, and hence a cheerful (sanguine) personality, whereas sighing and groaning drained blood from the heart, causing death.
4. Gratiano compares a sad and serious person to a statue of one's grandfather, 'like his grandsire cut in alabaster'. Alabaster is a cold white stone, like an unhappy serious person. He does not think someone with hot blood in their body should behave this way. He compares this disposition to jaundice, a condition that turns the skin yellow. The Elizabethans thought that being surly and ill-humoured caused this jaundice. A comparison is also drawn between such a person and a stagnant pond. Just as a pond's surface is covered by a layer of scum so the waters appear still and unmoving, so does such a person deliberately put on an air of solemnity to appear wise.

5. Gratiano believes that he should play a comic role compared to Antonio's sad role, because he would rather gain wrinkles from laughter than be smooth and unmoving like a statue, or unchanging like a stagnant pond. At this point, Gratiano's outlook on life does seem preferable to Antonio's, which appears quite gloomy.

Excerpt G

1. Gratiano knows of people who are regarded as wise merely because they remain serious and say nothing. If they were to open their mouths and speak, foolish things would come out which would destroy their cultivated image.
2. a. 'There are a sort of men, whose visages Do cream and mantle like a standing pond': There are some people whose faces are overcast with a set expression that is as unchanging as the scum that sits on the surface of a stagnant pond.
b. 'As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle, And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!': The 'reputed wise' would put on such a solemn air as if to say that they speak with the authority of an Oracle, and so when they speak, no one should open their mouths, and there should be respectful silence.
3. But fish not, with this melancholy bait: do not let this melancholy silence earn you the reputation of being wise.
4. By 'this opinion', Gratiano means the reputation of a wise man, that is, Antonio should not use melancholic silence as a bait to earn the reputation of a wise man, for it is a very silly prize to win.
5. Gratiano's criticism does not apply to Antonio because Antonio has been vocal about his unhappiness. He reveals his woes in the opening lines of the play to his friends and does not keep quiet. Instead, he almost 'boasts' of his sorrows. He is not sorrowful to earn the reputation of being wise 'Sir Oracle'.

Excerpt H

1. Bassanio owes much to Antonio, his merchant friend, who has

time and again loaned him money. Bassanio has squandered his wealth as well as all that Antonio loaned him by leading an extravagant lifestyle that is beyond his means.

2. Bassanio compares his wealth to the arrows he used to shoot as a young boy. By saying, 'shoot another arrow that self way', he is imploring Antonio to lend him some more money to recover the money that has been lost. This time Bassanio would keep a keen eye on the money lent. He would use it to go to Belmont, win Portia, and thereby inherit her fortune, which he would then use to recover his losses, and repay Antonio.
3. Earlier, Bassanio talks of the arrows he used to shoot as a young man. When he lost an arrow, he would take an identical arrow, and shoot it in a more careful manner and in the same direction as the first. This would help him recover the first arrow that he had lost. By risking the second arrow, he would often find both.
4. Following the childhood example, Bassanio proposes that Antonio lend him money again to visit Belmont and win Portia. If all goes well, he will be able to marry Portia and inherit her fortune, which in turn will help rebuild his lost wealth and repay all the money borrowed from Antonio.
5. Antonio tells Bassanio that there is no need to ask him for help in such a roundabout way. In fact by doing so, Bassanio doubts all that Antonio can do for him, and so does him a wrong turn. He asks Bassanio to tell him what he needs, and he will be ready to do what is necessary to help him.

Excerpt I

1. Bassanio's Portia is compared to Portia, the daughter of the Roman statesman Cato, and wife of Brutus, the Roman general and conspirator in the assassination of Julius Caesar. The Portia of antiquity was known to be beautiful and courageous. Bassanio uses this comparison to describe his Portia's beauty and emphasize why he finds her attractive.
2. Just as many adventurers came in search of the golden fleece, so too many suitors come from the four corners of the world to

win Portia's hand, making Belmont resemble Colchos. In Greek legend, Jason and his companions, the Argonauts, set out on a dangerous voyage in search of the elusive fleece of the golden ram as the price for the throne of Iolcus, to which he was the rightful heir. Jason found the fleece in Colchos in a grove guarded by a dragon. Before Jason, many had tried to take the fleece and failed.

3. Portia has inherited a great deal of wealth. She is also very beautiful, and her virtues make her even more desirable. Hence, suitors from all corners of the world flock to Belmont to try and win her hand in marriage.
4. Bassanio proposes that if only he had the means and the wealth to rival these suitors who come from all over the world to win Portia, he has a feeling that his quest to obtain her hand would be surely successful.
5. Antonio explains that all of his fortunes are tied up at sea, and he does not have enough money on hand to give Bassanio. He suggests that Bassanio use Antonio's name as security to obtain a loan from anyone in Venice. He has no doubt that his name alone will allow Bassanio the means he needs to gain Portia's hand in marriage.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

Excerpt A

1. 'O me' suggests that Portia is despondent and frustrated at the situation she is in, where she can neither choose nor refuse a suitor out of her own free will.
2. The will of the dead father is the manner in which Portia will find her husband. The suitor who chooses the right casket out of gold, silver, and lead ones will be eligible for Portia's hand. Since her father's will is a lottery, a matter of chance, dependent on the choice of the suitor, it curbs Portia's will to choose her own husband.
3. Portia says: 'such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple.' She means that youth is

like a high-spirited hare that leaps over the nets of good advice. Good advice is called 'the cripple' for it is slow and circumspect in its action, unlike the hare, which is proverbially fickle and easily excitable.

4. Portia means that the choice of a husband is not up to her. She cannot make a free choice of who her husband shall be, and neither can she refuse the husband that will be chosen for her. This is according to her father's will which demands the suitor choose the right casket out of three, to win Portia's hand.
5. Nerissa argues that Portia's father was a virtuous and good man, and that good men like him receive divine guidance on their deathbeds. Therefore, the system he has devised to choose her husband is sanctified by heaven. Not one of her suitors will be able to choose the right casket unless they truly love Portia.

Excerpt B

1. Portia said that her will (choice) was being restrained by the will (testament) of her dead father. She poses to Nerissa a rhetorical question, asking is it not hard that she can neither choose nor refuse a suitor.
2. Nerissa says that Portia's father was a good man, and that good men are given divine advice at the time of their death. This guidance and advice from heaven is what she means by 'inspiration', which made Portia's father devise the lottery of the caskets, which would earn a suitor Portia's hand, if he chooses the right one.
3. The 'princely suitors' whom Nerissa recounts are the Neapolitan prince (a prince from Naples), the Count Palatine (a Count from the Palatinate, one of the two historical districts of Southern Germany), and Monsieur Le Bon, a French Lord. Later, Nerissa also mentions Falconbridge, the young baron from England; a Scottish lord; and a young German lord, the Duke of Saxony's nephew.
4. Nerissa means that the person who will choose the right casket will be the person who will truly love Portia. She justifies the

will of Portia's dead father as a divine 'inspiration', which led to the devising of the lottery of caskets. Portia's late father chose this method to determine a worthy suitor for her. Here, Nerissa explains the motive behind the test of the caskets, while playing on the word 'rightly' to mean both 'correctly' and 'truly'.

5. In the first scene, Antonio laments his unhappiness without the knowledge of his sorrows. He seeks to know from his friends the cause of his sorrow. In the second scene, Portia is upset through no fault of her own. She knows exactly what has caused her unhappiness but cannot find a solution to cure it. This inability to cure her sorrow causes her even more unhappiness and vexation, while Antonio's melancholy seems without cause.

Excerpt C

1. Portia is referring to two of the suitors that Nerissa has named so far. In these lines, the main subject of discussion is the County Palatine, who does 'nothing but frown'. It is this County Palatine, along with the Neapolitan prince, whom Portia has mentioned a few lines before, that she refers to in 'God defend me from these two!' from Naples and the Count Palatine.
2. Before the County Palatine, Portia talks about the Neapolitan prince. She describes him as a 'colt', implying he is young and immature. This also alludes to his homeland, for the people of Naples were known for their good horsemanship. Portia points out that the Neapolitan prince speaks of nothing but his horse, and considers it an addition to his accomplishments that he can shoe his horse.
3. The County Palatine is said to be someone who is serious and 'doth nothing but frown.' Portia implies that he is pompous and that he thinks it will be her loss rather than his if she chooses not to marry him. She worries that because of his gloomy disposition, he will become reclusive in old age, like Heraclitus of Ephesus, known as 'the weeping philosopher'. Portia believes that it is better for her to marry a skull than the County Palatine (or the Neapolitan prince).

4. a. An you will not have me, choose: Portia describes County Palatine as someone who always frowns; his frown seems to convey that Portia will be the one who will lose out if she chooses not to marry the Count.
- b. So full of unmannerly sadness in his youth: Portia describes the County Palatine as already so gloomy in his youth that this does not bode well for his disposition as he grows older.
5. Portia likens the County Palatine to Heraclitus of Ephesus, an ancient Greek philosopher, who retreated from public life to become a hermit due to his contempt for humanity. Portia worries that the Count's gloomy disposition will not improve with age, and he will only become a recluse, earning the title of the 'weeping philosopher', like Heraclitus.

Excerpt D

1. Portia is talking about the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon. She compares him to the two previously mentioned suitors, drawing from their attributes to criticize Le Bon. The context of the conversation is the winning of Portia's hand by an eligible suitor, who would pass the test of the caskets as ordained by Portia's late father. This leads to a number of suitors flocking to Belmont, all of whom Portia discusses with her gentlewoman Nerissa.
2. Portia thinks the Neapolitan prince is too young and immature, like a restless and inexperienced 'colt', and that he can only hold a conversation about his horse. The prince talks of shoeing his horse as one of his accomplishments.
3. a. better bad habit: Portia says that Monsieur Le Bon has an even worse habit of frowning than County Palatine.
- b. he is every man in no man: Monsieur Le Bon has the characteristics of every man with no personality of his own. The criticism of Le Bon is actually a satire on the traditional and affected Frenchman.
4. Marrying Le Bon will be like marrying twenty husbands because he displays the characteristics of several men, with no distinct personality of his own. It is the traditional satirical

picture of a whimsical Frenchman. Portia describes Le Bon as one who talks more about his horse than the Neapolitan prince, with a habit of frowning that is even worse than the County Palatine.

5. Although she knows it is a sin to make fun of people, it is hard to resist mocking Monsieur Le Bon. He talks about his horse even more so than the Neapolitan prince, and has an even worse personality than the County Palatine. He is too excitable, for if a bird sings he will immediately jump up and down at its song, and he will pick a fight with his own shadow. For Portia, marrying Le Bon will be like marrying twenty husbands, as he displays the attributes of many men, with no characteristic of his own. Portia would forgive him if he hates her, as she would never be able to requite his love, if he madly loves her.

Excerpt E

1. Portia is describing Falconbridge, a young baron from England. This description follows that of Monsieur Le Bon, a French lord.
2. Falconbridge is stereotypically English, and has no knowledge of any foreign language other than his own. Also, he criticizes Portia's poor knowledge of English. These factors pose a limitation to holding any conversation between Portia and him. Therefore, conversing with him would be a 'dumb-show', a mime, where the performer uses only body movements and facial expressions rather than speaking.
3. Falconbridge's appearance is mismatched, as if he is trying to fit in everywhere without knowing the style. This is a satirical reference to the Englishmen who travelled to foreign countries and imitated the dressing styles in vogue there. In the process, he mixed up different styles and looked quite funny. Falconbridge's apparel seemed to be an amalgam of doublet from Italy, round hose from France, bonnet from Germany, and his behaviour seemed to be from every where.
4. a. 'a poor penny-worth in the English': a penny is worth very little. Her it shows Portia's inadequate knowledge of English, which she says is criticized by the young English baron, Falconbridge.

- b. 'I think he bought his . . . behaviour every where': He bought his different styles of clothing in a multitude of places around Europe, and as such his manners are a mismatch of all these different countries. Portia criticizes Falconbridge, as he does not fit in and looks silly. This is also Shakespeare's criticism of the Englishmen of his time who adapted the fashion of many European countries.
5. Portia finds the young English baron, Falconbridge, a silly man. He cannot speak any language other than his own, and criticizes Portia's lack of knowledge in English. She describes their future conversations as a 'dumb-show' because they would not be able to communicate properly. She thinks he looks handsome but his style is mismatched due the English way of copying fashion wherever they go without any style of their own.

Excerpt F

1. The Scottish lord is a neighbour of Falconbridge, the English baron. Portia's opinion of the English baron is, 'How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour every where.'
2. The Scottish and English suitors came to blows with one another, and the Scotsman received a blow on the ear from the Englishman. Portia is playing on the fact that Scotland and England were always at war with one another, and considered enemies. The Scottish man promised to pay back the box on the ear later – the word 'charity' is used to denote this promise.
3. a. 'he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able': The Scottish lord was hit by the Englishman in a dispute, and swore to hit him back when he had recovered.
b. 'the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another': This line can be taken as a topical reference to the relations between England, France, and Scotland. Both France and Scotland were often at war with England, and frequently assisted each other against their common enemy.

4. What Portia describes as the relation between the English, French, and Scottish lords actually reflects the relation between the three countries. Both Scotland and France shared a common enemy in the English, and political relations between the three countries were not cordial during Shakespeare's time. As Portia says, the Scottish lord 'borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able', and 'the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another', it indicates that the French and the Scots often allied against the English.
5. The Duke of Saxony's nephew from Germany is described next by Portia. The word that Portia uses to describe him is 'sponge' because he is a drunkard.

Excerpt G

1. Portia is talking about the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew. His chief fault is that he is often drunk.
2. The young German lord, according to Portia, at his best is a 'little worse than a man', and at his worst, is 'little better than a beast'. This shows Portia's extreme dislike for the young lord, who even at his best is less than human.
3. Portia asks Nerissa to put a large glass of Rhenish wine (white wine from the Rhine region of Germany) on the wrong casket. She says that even if the devil were inside the casket, he would choose it anyway because he is so tempted by liquor.
4. Nerissa says Portia has no need to fear any of these suitors as they have informed her of their decisions to give up their quest and return home, unless Portia chooses to be won by some other means than the test of caskets.
5. If Portia does carry out this plan, she would be going against her father's will. She cannot meddle with the test, even if she does not like her suitors. Portia is trapped between her own choices and that of her father. Being an obedient daughter, she sacrifices her desires, no matter how unwillingly, to keep those of her father's.

Excerpt H

1. The manner of Portia's father's will is a casket test. Portia's portrait has been hidden in one of three caskets, made of gold, silver, and lead. The suitor must choose the casket that contains Portia's portrait if he is to marry her.
2. The 'parcel of wooers' are the group of suitors from around the world who have come to 'woo' her. She calls them 'reasonable' in a quipping manner because she is happy that they have decided to return home without attempting to undertake the casket test.
3. 'If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana' means that as long as she lives, she will not marry. Sibylla refers to Sibyl of Cumae, a prophetess in Roman myth. Apollo had granted her as many years of life as there were grains in the handful of sand she carried, but not endless youth, as she had spurned his love. Sibylla stands for all old women. Diana is the Roman goddess of virginity.
4. The Venetian that Nerissa mentions is Bassanio, who had visited Belmont during Portia's father's time. Nerissa says he is a scholar and a soldier, the Elizabethan ideal of an accomplished man. Portia responds, saying she remembers him well and that he is worthy of Nerissa's praise.
5. The suitor who arrives at the end of this scene is the Prince of Morocco. Portia wittily responds that if she should be able to greet him with as much happiness as she feels bidding the other suitors farewell, then she would be very happy indeed. Clearly, she is just as frustrated to welcome this new suitor as she was the others. If he has a lovely nature with a dark complexion, she would rather he were her priest than her husband.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

Excerpt A

1. Shylock is talking to Bassanio. He has asked Shylock to loan him three thousand ducats, and to bind the loan to Antonio.

He questions Shylock's meaning of 'Antonio is a good man' and whether Shylock has heard anything to the contrary.

2. By 'Yet his means are in supposition', Shylock means that Antonio's wealth has to be assumed because it is currently subject to the fate of his ships at sea. This means Shylock cannot be guaranteed his money back if something unfortunate happens to Antonio's merchandise.
3.
 - a. he is sufficient: Antonio is adequate as surety for lending Bassanio money, but not excellent since Antonio's merchandise is at the mercy of the sea.
 - b. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: Ships are merely planks of wood and sailors are mortal humans, both at the mercy of the dangers of the sea. They are not guaranteed to return (so cannot guarantee the payment of Shylock's debt).
4. There are many dangers at sea, including pirates, vermin, dangerous waters, wind, and rocks. Although Antonio is financially sound, his merchandise is 'squandered abroad', and 'ships are but boards, sailors but men', at the mercy of natural and man-made disasters.
5. These lines tell us that Shylock is an intelligent and logical man, who considers his investments with care and consideration. He is also shrewd and knowledgeable about the affairs of other moneylenders, businessmen, and debtors. Being a shrewd lender, he is in the know about Antonio's ventures, and calculates the risk of lending Bassanio the money. He correctly assess Antonio's fortunes – they can only be 'supposed' as they are at the mercy of the wind and the sea.

Excerpt B

1. By 'fawning publican', Shylock means Antonio looks like a servile Roman tax collector. This alludes to the parable of the publican and the Pharisee, Luke 18:10-14, in which a Pharisee and a tax collector go to the temple to pray. The Pharisee shows no humility in his prayer, while the tax collector can barely lift his eyes, sorrowfully asking God to forgive his sins.

The parable tells of the importance of humility in prayer. Here, Shylock shows contempt for the humility of the tax collector.

2. Shylock hates Antonio for being a Christian and hating the Jewish race. He also hates Antonio for offering loans free of interest, which harms the other moneylenders in Venice by bringing the rate of interest down. Shylock also complains that Antonio speaks against him publicly 'where merchants most do congregate', and criticizes his business deals and hard-earned gains, which Antonio calls 'interest'.
3. 'I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him' means Shylock will satisfy to the fullest the long-standing grudge that he holds against Antonio. He compares his grudge to an animal that has to be fattened by the food of revenge against Antonio.
4. Shylock tells Bassanio that he has been calculating the amount of money he currently has to lend out to Bassanio. He cannot immediately provide three thousand ducats but he can call upon another Jew, Tubal, who will supply him with the right amount.
5.
 - a. low simplicity: Shylock considers Antonio's business practices to be base foolishness.
 - b. catch him once upon the hip: Shylock will catch Antonio at a disadvantage.

Excerpt C

1. Antonio and Shylock meet to discuss Bassanio's loan, and to confirm that it will be bound to Antonio's name and wealth. Antonio is to act as guarantor of the loan that Shylock gives to Bassanio to equip him with the means to travel to Belmont to win Portia's hand in marriage.
2. Abraham and Jacob were Biblical characters. Abraham was the founder of the Jewish race, and Jacob was Abraham's grandson, the 'third possessor'. Isaac, Jacob's father, was the second possessor.
3. Jacob was aided by his mother, Rebecca, to succeed his father, Isaac, to the family's estates, elbowing his elder brother, Esau, out of the way. This way he became the third in line after

Abraham, founder of the Jewish race and his grandfather, and Isaac, Abraham's son and his father. Shylock refers to Jacob's cunning trick with Laban's sheep, whereby all of Laban's sheep were appropriated by Jacob.

4. Jacob was third in line after Abraham, founder of the Jewish race, to which Shylock belongs. Shylock uses the Biblical story of Jacob and Laban to justify the charging of interest, which Antonio criticizes and never practises himself. He says, 'thrift is blessing, if men steal it not', meaning that profit can be a blessing if it is not stolen.
5. Antonio says, 'This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for' and that it was 'A thing not in his power to bring to pass, But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven'. This means that Jacob was a servant to the enterprise, rather than the initiator, and that it was brought about and swayed by heaven.

Excerpt D

1. Bassanio has approached Shylock for a loan, bound to Antonio's name. However, Antonio has brought up the fact that Shylock charges interest on his loans, something that Antonio refuses to do. This is considered foolishness by Shylock. Shylock quotes the Biblical story of Jacob to justify charging interest, 'This was a way to thrive, and he was blest: And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.' Antonio has refuted his interpretation with his own explanation that what Jacob did was 'sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.' He further questions Shylock, asking if, Jacob's actions were 'inserted to make interest good'.
2.
 - a. The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose: Antonio says that anyone, even the devil, can cite Scripture for their own selfish purposes. He likens Shylock to the devil, as Shylock has quoted the Biblical story of Jacob to justify usury, or lending money on interest.
 - b. A goodly apple rotten at the heart: An evil person using a holy text for selfish means is like a villain smiling, or a luscious apple with a rotten core. Antonio claims that

deceitful people may outwardly appear honest and good while having a corrupt heart.

3. Antonio says, 'O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!' This not only gives an insight into Shylock's deceptive nature, but also foreshadows later events when Shylock agrees to lend Bassanio money, 'This kindness will I show', and demands Antonio's pound of flesh 'in a merry sport'.
4. Antonio refers to Shylock as 'The devil' because he is aware of Shylock's manner of business and does not think it is moral to charge interest. Shylock cites the Scripture in order to justify charging interest, and Antonio believes he twists the true meaning of the parable to suit his needs. Shylock interprets the story of Jacob tricking Laban of all his particoloured eanlings as a Biblical reference to making good interest, which Antonio refutes as being 'sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven'.
5. Shylock stops Antonio by appearing to agree to the loan. He quotes the amount of money requested and then contemplates the time period and rate. 'Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum. Three months from twelve; then, let me see, the rate—'

Excerpt E

1. Antonio needs Shylock's help on behalf of his friend, Bassanio. Antonio and Bassanio have met with Shylock to ask for a loan of three thousand ducats, which is to be bound to Antonio's name.
2. Shylock has been insulted by Antonio on numerous occasions in the Rialto. Earlier in his aside, he has claimed that Antonio has abused him regarding his money-lending practices, and that Antonio also hates the 'sacred nation' of the Jews. He has been called a 'misbeliever' and 'cut-throat dog' due to his Jewish religion, and has been spat upon by Antonio.
3. Shylock has brushed these insults off with a 'patient shrug' because it is something his people have always had to endure.
4. a. void your rheum upon my beard: Antonio had spat upon Shylock's beard. Now that Antonio has come seeking

financial aid from Shylock, the latter recounts the bad treatment meted out to him in the past by Antonio.

- b. moneys is your suit: money is what you have requested.
5. Antonio says he is still likely to insult Shylock again, call him a 'misbeliever, cut-throat dog', spit on him, and spurn him. He adds that if Shylock does lend the money, he should do so to an enemy, and not to a friend. For who better to lend money to than an enemy, whereby if the loan is defaulted, Shylock would be able to exact the penalty with an easy face, and so get his revenge. Besides, there is no interest and profit between friends.

Excerpt F

1. Antonio is likely to call Shylock a 'misbeliever, cut-throat dog' again.
2. Antonio hates Shylock because he is a usurer who charges interest, which Antonio sees as immoral. Shylock also claims that Antonio 'hates our sacred nation', that is, the Jewish race. The latter reason is reflective of the underlying prejudice against the Jews in Shakespeare's time.
3. 'when did friendship take A breed for barren metal of his friend': 'barren metal' refers to money, and its 'breed' the interest it generates. This means 'when did someone ever charge his friend interest?'
4. Antonio suggests that it is better for someone to lend money to his enemy, for if that enemy defaults on the loan, it is easier for the lender to claim the penalty. Since Antonio and Shylock have mutual animosity, the latter should lend him money on that basis, for then he can exact the penalty with no sense of pain and discomfort.
5. Shylock looks upon Antonio's anger with humour, and jokingly says he would like to ignore all the times Antonio has insulted him and be friends instead. He then offers an interest-free loan. He plays upon the word 'kind', suggesting he will be 'kind' enough to have Antonio pay him back in 'kind' – with a pound of his flesh, a penalty which he calls 'a merry sport'.

Excerpt G

1. The 'kindness' that Bassanio refers to is Shylock's offer of an interest-free loan to Antonio. He does not understand the double meaning of Shylock's offer – for Antonio to pay 'in kind' would be to pay with as much pain and suffering as Shylock has suffered on his account.
2. Although Bassanio is the debtor, these conditions are intended for Antonio, to have him pay for the insults and injuries Shylock has had to suffer on his account. He calls the signing of the bond 'a merry sport' in order to trivialize the matter and veil the sinister intent behind a show of frivolity and mirth.
3. In the bond, Shylock demands a pound of flesh to be 'cut off and taken' from whichever 'part of your [Antonio's] body pleaseth me' as payment.
4. Antonio is content to sign this bond as he is confident of his merchant ships returning. Bassanio, however, does not like these conditions and says, 'I'll rather dwell in my necessity,' meaning he would rather stay in his current state of need than risk such a gruesome punishment for Antonio.
5. Shylock asks what kind of people these Christians are – their own meanness causes them to be suspicious of others. He says that he is offering this condition as a friend, 'in a merry sport', because a pound of human flesh is even less profitable than a pound of mutton. If they agree to the terms then that is great, but if not, then the deal is off. He ends by saying that because of the love and kindness that he has shown them, he hopes that they will no longer ill treat him.

Excerpt H

1. When Bassanio says 'such a bond', he means the condition that if Antonio, who is the guarantor of the agreement, defaults on the loan, Shylock will take a pound of Antonio's flesh, from whichever body part he likes, in payment.
2. When Bassanio says 'my necessity', he is referring to his current state of financial need. Bassanio, as seen in

Act 1 Scene 1, needs money to go to Belmont to try and win Portia, as he has squandered away his patrimony as well as all the money already lent to him by Antonio.

3. Antonio is confident that his ships laden with merchandise will return within two months, which is one month before the deadline to repay the debt. In Act 1 Scene 1, Antonio had told his friends, 'My ventures are not in one bottom trusted, Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate Upon the fortune of this present year: Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.'
4. Shylock is listening to the exchange between Antonio and Bassanio. He observes the way in which these Christian men have become suspicious of others due to their own unforgiving nature, saying, 'O father Abram, what these Christians are, Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect The thoughts of others!' He asks what he would gain by a pound of human flesh, which is less profitable than a pound of mutton or beef. He says that he proposes this loss-making deal to gain Antonio's favour, and as an act of friendship.
5. Shylock says Antonio's wealth is 'in supposition' because all his ships are currently at sea and not guaranteed to return. This shows Shylock's shrewd and cautious nature. On the other hand, Antonio is optimistic about his ships returning intact with his wealth, and does not believe it is too much of a risk to agree to Shylock's conditions. This shows that he is really 'foolish', a trait that Shylock has already pointed out earlier in the scene.

Excerpt I

1. Antonio will seal a bond for three thousand ducats from Shylock, for Bassanio. The condition is that if after three months Shylock does not receive his money back, he will claim a pound of flesh in payment from Antonio, from whichever part of his body he wishes. Under the garb of such a bond, which he calls 'a merry bond, Shylock wishes to quench his deep-seated grudge against Antonio.

2. Shylock calls the bond a 'merry bond' to trivialize the affair, while looking forward to being able to punish Antonio for having insulted him in the past. Earlier too, Shylock has said that the bond is to be signed 'in a merry sport', only to hide his true intention of exacting vengeance on Antonio for humiliating him on several occasions.
3. From the given extract, one can see that Shylock is worried about the safety of his house. Shylock plans to see that all is well in his house because he has left it under the supervision of 'an unthrifty knave'. Therefore, he wants Antonio and Bassanio to go to the notary's, while he arranges the money, and checks on the security of his house before joining them.
4. The 'unthrifty knave', under whose 'fearful guard' he has left his house, is Launcelot. Shylock considers him unreliable, and this causes him anxiety, which is why he wants to go and check whether everything is sound and secure. His derogatory opinion of Launcelot continues later in Act 2 Scene 5, where Shylock claims that Launcelot is a gormandizing fool and a 'drone', and one who sleeps all day, more than the wild cat.
5.
 - a. purse the ducats straight: put the ducats in the purse right away; arrange the money immediately
 - b. fearful guard: unreliable (and therefore causing anxiety) watch.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

Excerpt A

1. Morocco is offering his argument to Portia. He has come to woo her for her hand in marriage, and to compete in the test set by her father. Aware that he might not be favoured by Portia because of his complexion, Morocco exhibits his conceit, claiming to take on anyone to 'prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine'.
2. The 'shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun' is a metaphor, wherein the dark complexion of the Prince of Morocco is called a dark livery (uniform) that is given by the sun. It refers to hot, tropical climate of Morocco that gives a dark complexion to the natives of the land.
3. 'Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles' is a reference to the coldest place on earth, where even Phoebus (the sun god in classical mythology) cannot melt the ice, that is, where even the hottest rays of the sun cannot warm the place. Unlike the people of Morocco, bred under the hot sun, the natives of such a cold place would be quite fair complexioned. It is such a person that the Prince of Morocco would like to challenge to prove his prowess.
4. 'And let us make incision . . . To prove whose blood is reddest . . .' is an attempt by the Prince of Morocco to prove that he is just as courageous and worthy of Portia's hand as any of her other suitors of a pale, northern complexion. He says, 'let us make incision', that is, cut open and reveal their blood. The Elizabethans believed that a rich red blood is the sign of a courageous man. The Prince of Morocco is confident that, despite his dark complexion, his blood is the reddest and he is the worthiest suitor.
5. Portia is not impressed by the qualities that the Prince of Morocco boasts of. She has already expressed disdain and contempt for her other suitors who have boasted of similar qualities, such as the Neapolitan prince, who boasted of his courageous horsemanship, and the County Palatine, who boasted that he was the best match for Portia. Portia

expresses her feelings again in this scene, saying, 'In terms of choice I am not solely led By nice direction of a maiden's eyes.' She also repeats that her free will has been taken away from her, showing that she is just as averse to being wooed by any man as she was in the earlier scene.

Excerpt B

1. Portia has been barred from freely choosing her husband by her father's will. Prior to his death, her father had willed a casket test as the means of choosing a husband for Portia. One of three caskets of gold, silver, and lead, would carry the portrait of Portia. The suitor who would successfully choose the casket that holds the picture of Portia would be eligible to marry her. In this way, Portia's father has imposed the condition that restrains her freedom of choice.
2. The word 'lottery' is used because of the nature of the challenge set by Portia's father. Portia is referring to the the casket test in her father's will that will decide her fate. It implies the role of 'chance' rather than voluntary choice in the course that Portia's fate will take.
3.
 - a. nice direction: astute guidance. Portia tells the Prince of Morocco that she is not solely guided by what her astute eyes tell her.
 - b. hedged me by his wits: Portia's father has restricted her choice with his will – the ingeniously devised casket test.
4. The Prince of Morocco has been arguing that his dark complexion is an advantage rather than a disadvantage – his blood is redder than the 'fairest creature northward born', and finishes his argument with 'The best-regarded virgins of our clime Have loved it too', boasting that he is considered very attractive and desirable by the most esteemed maids of his land. He also says that he would not change this colour except to win Portia's affections.
5. Portia is contemptuous of the Prince of Morocco's attempts to win her affections, and remains unimpressed with him as a possible suitor. She says, 'Yourself, renowned prince, then

stood as fair . . . For my affection.’ Portia could be punning on the word ‘fair’ to mean Morocco’s complexion as well as his good chance of winning. The double meaning could also point to the fact that none of the other suitors had a fair chance of winning Portia’s affections, although they all had a fair chance of winning her hand, for which she is helpless, being bound by her father’s will. This mirrors what Portia had said earlier, ‘if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.’

Excerpt C

1. Morocco is in a room in Portia’s house in Belmont. He is with his train, and he is conversing with Portia, who is accompanied by Nerissa and other attendants.
2. Hercules was a hero in Greek mythology, known for his superhuman strength, and Lichas was his servant. Morocco cites them as a comparison between himself and a less worthy suitor who may beat him against the odds. In a lottery, the weak have an equal chance of winning with the strong. Just as Lichas could defeat Hercules, so could a weak, unworthy suitor beat Morocco to win Portia’s hand.
3. The quoted phrase means that the winning throw (of the dice) may come by luck from a weaker man. Morocco means to say that in a lottery, the weak have as much chance of winning as the strong. So, although he is a strong and worthy suitor, he may lose the test to a weaker opponent because of bad luck.
4. Fortune was commonly represented as a blindfolded goddess to symbolize the wayward, seemingly blind way in which she dispensed fortune – good and bad to mankind. Morocco says ‘blind Fortune’ in order to strengthen his point that despite his strength and ability, he may still lose the challenge.
5. Morocco argues that just as the stronger Hercules was defeated by the weaker Lichas, he, too, may be beaten by a weaker man, led by ‘blind Fortune’. Morocco makes a mistake in thinking that the choice of the right casket depends upon ‘blind Fortune’ and not upon character, of which the lottery

is really a true test. Morocco does not delve into the deeper meaning of things; he goes by outward show and chooses wrongly. Later, Arragon's pride and arrogance similarly makes him choose the wrong casket. A sound character that gives careful consideration to the caskets would be able to choose correctly. So the test is not driven by blind luck.

Excerpt D

1. Morocco must take the chance of choosing the right casket. If he chooses the correct casket, he will win Portia's hand. If he chooses the wrong casket, he must never speak of marriage to another woman.
2. Portia is warning Morocco of the risk he is taking by going ahead with the challenge. If he walks away like the other suitors, he will not be taking the risk of choosing an incorrect casket. However, if he goes ahead and chooses a wrong casket, he would not be able to approach a lady for marriage, and would have to remain celibate for the rest of his life.
3. By temple, Portia really means her private chapel. She uses the word temple because Morocco, being a non-Christian, would understand it to mean a place of worship. This choice of word may be more agreeable to him. She invites him there to take an oath to observe the conditions of the test.
4. A few lines earlier Morocco says, 'If Hercules and Lichas play at dice Which is the better man, the greater throw May turn by fortune from the weaker hand: So is Alcides beaten by his page; And so may I, blind Fortune leading me, Miss that which one unworthier may attain, And die with grieving.' He gives the example of Hercules and Lichas to make the point that if he is unlucky, he may choose the wrong casket, and so lose Portia to a weaker opponent. Fortune or luck is blind, and does not bestow her favour on the basis of merit.
5. The outcome of Morocco's choice does make him 'cursed'st among men'. Going by outward appearances, he chooses the gold casket. But the casket reveals a skull with a scroll that says 'All that glisters is not gold' and 'Gilded tombs do worms

infol'd'. Had Morocco been as wise in his choice as he is valourous, his reward would not have been thus presented.

ACT 2 SCENE 2

Excerpt A

1. Launcelot is a servant to Shylock. Shylock is the master he debates running away from.
2. The conflict is whether Launcelot should stay as Shylock's servant, or run away. Launcelot talks of this dilemma: while the 'fiend' is at his elbow, tempting him to run away, his conscience asks him to 'take heed' and 'scorn running with thy heels'.
3. Launcelot's conscience tells him to stay, be honest and scorn the thought of running away, 'My conscience says, 'No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,' or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' The Devil, on the other hand, advises him to be brave and run away from his master, 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.'
4. Launcelot finally follows the advice of the Devil, and decides to leave Shylock. His reasoning is that Shylock is like the Devil himself, and if his conscience is telling him to stay with the Devil then it is 'a kind of hard conscience'. The Devil that advises him to leave is therefore kinder, 'The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.' Launcelot's father, Old Gobbo, enters the scene soon after. Launcelot hasn't seen him in many years, and decides to dupe Old Gobbo and confuse him, as he is almost completely blind and cannot recognize his son.

Excerpt B

1. Launcelot's dilemma is whether he should follow the advice of his conscience and remain a servant of Shylock, whom he regards as the Devil himself, or follow the advice of the fiend and run away from his master.

2. Launcelot means to call Shylock the Devil Incarnate, meaning the devil in flesh. 'Incarnation' is a malapropism (confusing one word for another for comic effect) for 'incarnate'. This shows Launcelot to be part of the comic relief of the play, as well as reinforces the Shylock's character as the antagonist of the play.
3. Launcelot calls his conscience 'a kind of hard conscience' because his conscience advises him to stay with Shylock. Launcelot views Shylock as the Devil in the flesh himself, and therefore considers the advice of his conscience harsh.
4. The quoted phrase implies that Launcelot has decided to abide the advice of the fiend and leave Shylock. He means that his feet, and therefore his actions, are at the command of the fiend – he will do as the fiend commands.
5. Launcelot says, 'to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who—God bless the mark!—is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself.' He is implying that because Shylock is the Devil himself, following the fiend's advice and leaving Shylock is no worse than staying on and continuing to work for Shylock, because they are both sinful acts. Leaving his master is sinful but working for the Devil i.e. Shylock, is just as sinful.

Excerpt C

1. Gobbo is Launcelot old and blind father. He says 'twill be a hard way to hit' because Launcelot has confused him with convoluted directions, and he thinks it will be a hard job finding Shylock's residence where his son works. Moreover, old Gobbo is almost completely blind.
2. Launcelot dwells with his master, Shylock, the Jew. Gobbo has brought a gift for Launcelot's master, a dish of doves, which was a common present in Italy.
3.
 - a. By God's sounties: By God's saints
 - b. now will I raise the waters: Launcelot decides to bring tears to his father's eyes by telling him that his son (Launcelot)

is no more. It could also mean that he will create a storm (emotional upheaval) with this news.

4. Gobbo says 'No master, sir, but a poor man's son' because Launcelot has emphasized the word 'Master' when referring to Gobbo's son (Launcelot himself). Launcelot pretends he is above his station to confuse the old man, and Gobbo tries to clarify that he means to find Launcelot, his (a poor man's) son, not a Master Launcelot.
5. Launcelot tells his father that 'Master Launcelot' is dead, saying, 'the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three, and such branches of learning, is, indeed, deceased . . .'. By this news he intends to 'raise the waters', that is, create a storm (emotional upheaval) and bring tears to Old Gobbo's eyes.

Excerpt D

1. Launcelot asks this question, 'Do you not know me, father?' because Old Gobbo is almost completely blind, and fails to recognize him. Besides, he has informed his father that he (Launcelot) is dead. He wishes to end his deception and reveal his true identity, while making his father feel stupid for not recognizing him.
2. Prior to the arrival of Gobbo, Launcelot was thinking whether to abide by the counsel of the fiend and leave his master, Shylock, or abide by his conscience and stay. He finally decided to leave Shylock.
3. Launcelot inverts the proverb, 'It is a wise child that knows his own father' into 'it is a wise father that knows his own child'. Launcelot tries to sound more educated and of a higher standing than he actually is. It is an example of Launcelot's habitual lapse into malapropisms and inappropriate use of language, which marks him as the 'fool' of this Shakespearean comedy.
4. The truth that will not be hidden for long is that Launcelot is alive and is, in fact, the man Old Gobbo is speaking to. Launcelot had concealed his identity on purpose to have some fun at the expense of his old father, 'I will try confusions with him'.

5. The exchange between Launcelot and Old Gobbo in this scene serves to provide comic relief. It shows Launcelot as a comic figure, who is silly and plays games for no reason. It also shows that he is not particularly intelligent, using malapropisms and incorrectly citing proverbs. Furthermore, Launcelot's conversation with Gobbo gives an insight to Shylock's miserly character, 'My master's a very Jew . . . give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.'

Excerpt E

1. Gobbo has asked, 'How dost thou and thy master agree?' meaning how well do Launcelot and his master, Shylock, get along with each other. It is to this question that Launcelot replies.
2. Launcelot is referring to the dish of doves which Gobbo has brought as a present for Launcelot's master, Shylock. Launcelot, however, tells his father to give Shylock a halter because he is 'a very Jew' and treats Launcelot badly, 'I am famished in his service'. He views Shylock as the Devil himself, and wishes a halter (rope) for him so that he can hang himself.
3. Launcelot says, 'you may tell every finger I have with my ribs' mixing up fingers with ribs. He means 'you may tell every rib I have with your fingers.' Earlier in the scene, Launcelot had said, 'it is a wise father that knows his own child', inverting the proverb, 'It is a wise child that knows his own father.'
4. Bassanio enters the scene here. Launcelot hopes to work for him. Earlier in the scene, we have seen Launcelot contemplating whether to continue working for Shylock or leave him, and finally deciding to quit. Now he looks forward to working for Bassanio, 'who, indeed, gives rare new liveries', a sign that he treats his servants well.
5. Launcelot urges his father to talk to Bassanio on his behalf and request him to employ him. Launcelot worries that if he continues working for Shylock, he will become a Jew as well. Gobbo and Launcelot accost Bassanio, mistaking many words

and randomly speaking one after the other, in an effort to urge him to employ Launcelot. Bassanio interrupts, ordering just one of them to speak as he cannot comprehend what they want. Finally, they make their case, and Bassanio agrees to employ Launcelot. He says that Shylock has already spoken about Launcelot to him. He asks Launcelot to take leave of his old master Shylock and find the way to his house, and tells his attendants to give Launcelot a livery more richly trimmed with gold and silver braid that those worn by his fellow servants.

Excerpt F

1. Bassanio knows well Launcelot well, having spoken with Shylock earlier. The 'suit' that Bassanio grants is Launcelot's request to leave Shylock and become a servant for Bassanio.
2. a. *preferr'd*: recommended. Bassanio tells Launcelot that Shylock has already recommended him.
b. *preferment*: promotion. Bassanio takes Launcelot in his service asking if he thinks it a 'preferment' (promotion) to 'leave a rich Jew's service' and become the 'follower of so poor a gentleman'.
3. Launcelot is eager to leave the rich Jew's service because he is very unhappy serving Shylock, and thinks him to be the Devil incarnate. Launcelot believes he is not fed well and says that he is starving. He claims that one can feel every single one of his ribs with one's finger, 'I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.'
4. Bassanio says Shylock recommended Launcelot as a servant when he spoke with him earlier. However, Launcelot may be the servant whom Shylock referred to as an 'unthrifty knave'. Later in the act, Shylock tells Jessica that he was a lazy servant, 'a huge feeder, Snail-slow in profit', and that he is glad to be rid of him. So it could be that Shylock recommended Launcelot to Bassanio to get rid of him as a servant.
5. 'The old proverb' refers to the proverb 'The grace of God is gear (possessions) enough' – the man who has the grace of God has all he needs for salvation. As a Christian, Bassanio

has the 'grace of God'; as a wealthy man, Shylock has 'enough' meaning riches.

Excerpt G

1. Launcelot pretends to be a palmist, looking at his palm and pretending to interpret the lines upon it. When he says 'a fairer table' he means a more favourable palm. He is showing his palm to his father, Old Gobbo.
2. The 'good fortune' that Launcelot is happy about is his leaving Shylock's service and gaining employment as Bassanio's servant.
3. By 'simple coming-in for one man' Launcelot is referring to a modest income. He is probably thinking of the dowry his many wives will bring him.
4. Launcelot and Bassanio are both powered by their emotions rather than their intelligence. Bassanio enters a risky loan in order to woo the wealthy Portia so he can build up his wealth again. Launcelot leaves Shylock because he hates him for being a Jew, and praises his fortune in being able to gain employment at Bassanio's, predicting many wives and gaining riches from the dowries they shall bring him. The prospect of marriage for financial gain, customary in the Elizabethan society, is common to both men, though they are class apart.
5. The phrase that is now in common use to mean 'immediately' is 'in the twinkling of an eye.'

Excerpt H

1. Bassanio is referring to his friend Gratiano when he says, 'Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice.'
2. In Act 1, Gratiano is very forthright with Antonio, telling him to stop being so melancholy. He tells Antonio, 'I love thee, and it is my love that speaks . . .' meaning that he loves Antonio enough to speak truthfully and frankly with him. He also tells Antonio that often men use melancholy as a bait to fish the reputation of being wise. He advises Antonio not to do the same. This is mirrored in Bassanio's response here, telling Gratiano that he too brash and bold sometimes, which among

friends is well taken, but may be regarded as lacking etiquette by others.

3. Bassanio says that Gratiano's brashness and loudness 'in such eyes as ours appear not faults' because Gratiano is his friend, and therefore his flaws do not appear as faults. However, this may not be the case with people who do not know him, who may consider Gratiano rude.
4. By 'Something too liberal', Bassanio means that Gratiano may be thought of as too free and easy, and devoid of all etiquette.
5. Gratiano has asked Bassanio to take him to Belmont with him, where Bassanio intends to woo Portia, 'You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.' However, Bassanio does not want Gratiano to embarrass him with his rude and loud talk, as he wants to make a good impression on Portia. He feels such behaviour on Gratiano's part may hinder his marriage prospects. So he cautions him here and in the next lines: 'Pray thee, take pain To allay with some cold drops of modesty . . . lest, through thy wild behaviour, I be misconstrued in the place I go to And lose my hopes', he cautions him.

Excerpt I

1. Bassanio is speaking to Gratiano, who has requested to accompany Bassanio to Belmont. Since Gratiano is 'too wild, too rude, and bold of voice', Bassanio asks him to restrain his brashness.
2. Bassanio thinks Gratiano is too loud and rude and bold, and he needs to tone down his high spirits. He does not mind Gratiano's faults himself nor do other friends of Gratiano, for they like Gratiano as a friend and are not disturbed or annoyed by his loudness. But he is afraid of how Gratiano may appear to others. He cautions him about his behaviour in Belmont, where it may hinder his marriage prospects.
3. 'To allay with . . . skipping spirit': to tone down Gratiano's boisterous spirit with drops of decency. This uses a metaphor – modesty is denoted by medicine, which, when administered, will temper and restrain Gratiano's loud and unruly spirit. His

'skipping spirit' is his boisterous demeanor, which may not be agreeable with people who do not know him.

4. Bassanio hopes to woo Portia and marry her, and thereby recover his fortune. He fears he might lose his chance with her through the unruly behaviour of Gratiano. Portia, a stranger to Gratiano, may object to his brashness, and misunderstand Bassanio too for keeping in Gratiano's company: 'through thy wild behaviour, I be misconstrued in the place I go to And lose my hopes.'
5. Gratiano promises that he will 'put on a sober habit' implying both respectable clothes (habit may denote garments) and decent behaviour. He will talk with respect and swear only now and then, carry prayer books to give the impression of a devout man, look serious and grave, wear a hat at meal times as was the custom for high-ranking men, and hood his eyes with it when saying prayers before meals, and, and overall, show an outward appearance of civility as if he was trying to please his grandmother.

Excerpt J

1. Gratiano wants people to think he is a civil and serious man, by appearing devout and behaving as if he were trying to please his grandmother. He promises Bassanio to 'put on a sober habit', that is, both respectable clothes and decent behaviour, to talk respect, swear minimally, carry prayer books to give the impression of a devout man, look sober and grave, say prayers before meals, and wear a hat at meal times as was the custom for high-ranking men.
2. Bassanio doubts Gratiano's ability to behave well in Belmont. Gratiano wishes to accompany Bassanio to Belmont, and has to promise he will be on his best behaviour in order to impress Portia and not ruin Bassanio's chance to woo her.
3. a. sober habit: Gratiano implies both 'respectable clothes' and 'decent behaviour.' He promises Bassanio that he would 'put on a sober habit', as a precondition to accompanying Bassanio to Belmont.

- b. sad ostent: a serious appearance. Gratiano assures Bassanio that he would behave very properly in Belmont, and put on such a serious appearance as if he were trying to please his grandmother.
4. Gratiano and Bassanio's friends are anticipating a night of entertainment, with Bassanio throwing a party. Gratiano wishes to be in high-spirits for this occasion. And Bassanio agrees, saying that it would be a pity to be grave on such an occasion. Instead, he entreats Gratiano to wear his 'boldest suit of mirth' for they will have friends who expect merriment.
5. Gratiano is a bold and outspoken man, who appreciates good life and fun, and is often very frank and honest with his friends. This is shown early on in the play when he openly asks Antonio not to use the bait of melancholy to gain the reputation of being wise. He argues with Antonio that silent, serious people are rarely as wise as they look. In this scene too Bassanio's assessment of Gratiano's personality which makes him caution Gratiano to rein in his boisterous spirits. Clearly, Gratiano's manners rub people the wrong way. Though his outspoken, garrulous manner is overlooked by his friends, it can become a liability to his friends interests.

ACT 2 SCENE 3

Excerpt A

1. Launcelot is referring to Jessica, Shylock's daughter, as 'Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew!' Jessica is a 'pagan', that is, a non-Christian, a Jew. However, she is a 'sweet Jew', that is, in spite of belonging to the Jewish race, she is not stingy and cruel like her father, or others of her race. Although this is said in appreciation of Jessica, it highlights the Elizabethan prejudice against the Jews. It also serves the function of delineation of character, as the sweet nature of Jessica throws into greater relief Shylock's harshness.
2. Launcelot bids adieu because he is leaving Shylock's household to work for Bassanio. As seen in the last scene,

Launcelot decides on leaving Shylock, whom he considers the Devil incarnate, and serving Bassanio, whom he holds in high regard for being generous to his servants.

3. The Christian is Lorenzo, the man whom Jessica intends to elope with. Lorenzo will 'play the knave' by making Jessica will elope with him.
4. By saying, 'these foolish drops do somewhat drown my manly spirit,' Launcelot means the tears he is shedding for leaving his sweet mistress Jessica makes him feel less manly.
5. Launcelot says, 'tears exhibit my tongue.' It should be 'inhibit' rather than 'exhibit' as he means that his tears are inhibiting his ability to speak. Another example of such word confusion can be seen in Act 2 Scene 2, in which Launcelot says 'fruitify' instead of 'notify'. He tells Bassanio, 'the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you'.

Excerpt B

1. The 'heinous sin' Jessica refers to is the shame she feels to be her father's daughter, 'Alack, what heinous sin is it in me To be ashamed to be my father's child!' She justifies her feelings in the next line by saying that although she is Shylock's child, she is unlike him in manners, 'But though I am a daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners.'
2. Jessica is ashamed to be Shylock's daughter because she does not like her father's cruel and stingy behaviour. She is unlike him in manners, and does not possess a 'thrifty mind' like her father. It seems she does not care being a Jew and wishes to marry Lorenzo and become a Christian, 'I shall end this strife, Become a Christian and thy loving wife!' She wishes to be free from the tedium and 'hell' of Shylock's household.
3. Earlier in the scene Jessica describes her household as 'hell', and Launcelot 'a merry devil', saying, 'Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil, Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.' She considers her father's household to be boring and stifling, where only Launcelot brought in any note of merriment.

4. The 'strife' Jessica wishes to end is the conflict between her duty to her father and her love for Lorenzo. She is unhappy at being isolated within Shylock's household, as she is not like her father in manners, and also she wishes to be free by marrying Lorenzo, whom she loves.
5. This scene describes an unhappy and austere household in which Jessica feels trapped and lonely, only finding cheer from one of the servants, Launcelot. He is like 'a merry devil' who expels the gloom from 'hell', which is her father's house. This completes the negativity of Shylock's character, showing him in the light of his domestic arena, and described by none other than his own daughter.

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Excerpt A

1. Lorenzo is accompanied by Gratiano, Salarino, Salanio, and Launcelot in this scene. They have two hours to prepare for the masquerade that is to be part of the banquet thrown by Bassanio. Within these two hours they will have to provide themselves with the disguises and torch-bearers.
2. The occasion is a masquerade that is to be part of the banquet thrown by Bassanio. To furnish means to get ready. Lorenzo and his friends have planned that they would sneak out of the banquet, disguise themselves, and return in a torchlight masquerade, to surprise Bassanio and his guests.
3. They have not yet arranged for torch-bearers, attendants carrying torches, who walk in front of the men participating in masquerades. By the end of the scene, Lorenzo realizes that Jessica will be able to play the role of his torch-bearer, once she has escaped from her home, disguised in a page's costume.
4. The 'fair hand' belongs to Jessica, Shylock's daughter. In the letter Jessica has outlined a plan to escape from her father's house in order to marry Lorenzo. Her letter is meticulously detailed, informing Lorenzo how she would dress up as a page

(young boy servant), take her father's gold and jewels, and wait for him to come and take her away.

5. Lorenzo expresses his amazement at Jessica's meticulous planning. He wishes misfortune to never fall upon such a fair woman, unless under the excuse that she is the offspring of a Jew. At the same time, he believes that if ever Shylock, the Jew, goes to heaven, it will be on account of being the father of such a gentle daughter.

Excerpt B

1. 'She' is Jessica, Shylock's daughter. She is planning to run away and marry Lorenzo so that she can escape the isolation and unhappiness she feels in her father's house.
2. Lorenzo is speaking to Gratiano, who has enquired if the letter brought by Launcelot is from Jessica. Lorenzo reveals to Gratiano that he greatly admires Jessica, particularly for her resourcefulness and planning. He tells Gratiano that if ever Shylock goes to heaven, it will be for his gentle daughter's sake. He wishes no misfortune to befall Jessica unless it be under the excuse that she is the daughter of a faithless Jew.
3. The page's suit will not only help Jessica elope with Lorenzo in disguise, but also enable her to fill in for the role of a torch-bearer for Lorenzo, as they make their way in the masquerade to Bassanio's banquet.
4. Of the gold and jewels that Jessica takes from her father, she later squanders 'fourscore ducats' (eighty ducats) in one night, and gives away in exchange for a monkey the turquoise ring that Shylock's deceased wife, Leah, had given him during their days of courtship.
5. Lorenzo tells Gratiano that Jessica has directed how she will elope with Lorenzo with her father's gold and jewels, in the uniform of a page. Clearly, Jessica is intelligent and resourceful, and has no qualms about directing the manner of her escape.

ACT 2 SCENE 5

Excerpt A

1. Shylock is talking to his former servant, Launcelot, who has left his service to work for Bassanio. Shylock says Launcelot will see and judge for himself how Bassanio treats his servants compared to Shylock. Shylock advises that Launcelot will not be able to overeat as he has done in Shylock's household. He will not be able to 'sleep and snore' and wear out his clothes, something he had done freely as Shylock's servant.
2.
 - a. gormandize: overeat. Shylock claims that Launcelot ate enormous quantities of food in his service, which he will not be able to do in the service of Bassanio.
 - b. rend apparel out: wear out one's clothes. Shylock says that in Bassanio's service Launcelot will not be able to wear his clothes out as he did in his service.
3. Launcelot views Bassanio as a much better employer than Shylock. He hates Shylock for being a Jew, and thinks him as the Devil incarnate. He views Bassanio's offer of employment as a redeeming opportunity. He has heard that Bassanio gives fancy and new uniforms to his servants, and is enamored with the prospect of getting one himself. In Act 2 Scene 2, at Bassanio's comment that it may not be a promotion for Launcelot to leave the service of a rich Jew and follow a poor gentleman, Launcelot observes that Bassanio has the 'grace of God', while Shylock 'hath enough'.
4. Shylock is calling Jessica to leave her in charge of the household while he goes out to dinner with Bassanio. Shylock feels uneasy as he dreamt of money-bags the night before, an ill-omen in popular superstition. He asks Jessica to lock up all doors and windows after he leaves.

Excerpt B

1. Shylock has been invited to supper by Bassanio. He says, 'I am right loath to go: There is some ill a-brewing . . . of money-bags to-night.' Shylock is reluctant to go because he

senses some evil being plotted against him for he dreamt of money-bags. It was a popular superstition of the time that to dream of money boded ill for the dreamer. Moreover, he knows that he has not been invited out of love but rather out of appeasement for he is the supplier of the much needed loan.

2. Earlier, Shylock had refused to eat with Bassanio and Antonio because he had suffered many insults and injuries from them for being Jewish. He hates them for being Christians as they hate him for being Jewish. He had stated that while he is happy to do business with them, he would not dine with them and 'smell pork', food which is forbidden to the Jews.
3. Shylock says, 'I am not bid for love; they flatter me; But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian.' He intends to go in hate, to eat at Bassanio's, the prodigal Christian's, expense.
4. Bassanio and Antonio have requested Shylock for a loan of three thousand ducats, to which Shylock has agreed. They wish for cordial relations to exist between them, now that so much money is at stake. The invitation to have dinner with them and be a part of the merriment is a way to forge this relationship.
5. Shylock dreams of money-bags. It was a common superstition of the time that to dream of money was an ill omen. Because of his dream, he suspects that he is being plotted against, which makes him reluctant to go out to dinner. His dream does come true when Jessica elopes with Lorenzo taking his money and jewels with her.

Excerpt C

1. Shylock is talking about the masquerade party that is to be part of Bassanio's banquet. The 'Christian fools with varnish'd faces' are the masqueraders who will be wearing masks for the party.
2. a. wry-neck'd fife: A fife is a small, high-pitched flute. This is an example of transferred epithet – it is the player who gets a twisted (wry) neck playing the instrument as it has to be held sideways to be played. But the epithet 'wry-neck'd' is transferred to the instrument, fife.

- b. my house's ears: Shylock is referring to the windows of his house. He implores Jessica to shut the windows to keep out the sounds of revelry from the masquerade.
3. In Act 2 Scene 3, Jessica calls Shylock's house 'hell'. Here Shylock describes it as 'sober'. He sees it as a chaste and goodly place compared to the debauchery of the 'Christian fools'. In contrast, Jessica sees it as an isolated fortress, full of 'tediousness'.
4. Jessica does not follow her father's instructions. Instead, she steals his gold and jewels and escapes disguised as a page. Contrary to his instruction not to gaze upon 'Christian fools with varnish'd faces', Jessica elopes with one such – Lorenzo, who is part of the masquerade.
5. The masque does not take place. Shakespeare uses the masque as an excuse to help stage Jessica's elopement with Lorenzo. Jessica disguises as a page to escape the 'tediousness' of her house, and Lorenzo plans to employ her as his torch-bearer in the masquerade. However, after they elope, there is no need to show the masque. So we have news of the wind turning favourable for sailing and Bassanio intending to set sail that very night. The feast is cancelled, and the scene of action moves to the other main location, Belmont.

Excerpt D

1. Shylock is going out to dine with Bassanio. He does not wish to go as he hates Bassanio and his mentor, Antonio, who are Christians and hate him as a Jew. He has also had ominous dreams about money-bags, and suspects an evil plot being hatched against him.
2. Launcelot tells Jessica to look out of the window for a 'Christian', meaning Lorenzo. He says that the Christian is 'worth a Jewess' eye' in reference to the proverb 'worth a Jew's eye' to indicate someone or something of great value.
3. Shylock had told Jessica to look after the household while he was away, as he had dreamt of money bags the night before and suspects some mishap happening. He had also told her not to look out of the window at the foolish Christian

revellers and keep all the doors and windows shut against the masquerade revelry, as he did not want the sound of shallow frivolity to enter his 'sober' house.

4. Shylock has a negative opinion of Launcelot. He thinks 'The patch is kind enough' but has 'gormandized' in his service, worn out his clothes far too quickly, and slept more than worked. He says, 'drones hive not with me', and is glad to be rid of him. 'Hagar's offspring' is in reference to Genesis, Chapter 21. Hagar and her son were expelled into the wilderness by Abraham. Hagar was the maid of Abraham's wife, Sarah, and the mother of Abraham's first-born, Ishmael. The Jews believe themselves to be the descendants of Sarah. The non-Jews are thought to belong to the line of Hagar. So Launcelot is called 'Hagar's offspring'.
5. Jessica and Launcelot are involved in a conspiracy against Shylock. When he commits his household to the charge of Jessica, he does not realize that she is at the heart of the deception that he has dreamt of. The situation, therefore, has very different meanings for those who are present in it – those who are in on the secret, that is, Launcelot and Jessica, and those who are not, that is, Shylock.

Excerpt E

1. The 'patch' is Launcelot, and it means he is a clown. He is called so because his manners and speech are mostly devoid of logic and sense. He fools about and has been a useless servant for Shylock.
2. Shylock thinks Launcelot is harmless enough, 'The patch is kind enough.' However, he is gluttonous and lazy, wears out his clothes quickly, and sleeps by day. He is unprofitable for Shylock, who is glad to be rid of him, and more so to Bassanio, whose money Shylock is sure he will help to waste.
3. a. drones hive no with me: Drones are male bees that do not work, so in this context it means a person who is lazy. 'Hive' means live. Therefore, Shylock is saying that lazy people have no place in his home.

- b. borrow'd purse: Shylock refers to Bassanio's loan of three thousand ducats from him. Launcelot, Shylock is certain, will help waste Bassanio's money.
 - c. Fast bind, fast bind: a proverb meaning 'if one takes care to lock up what he has, he will find it safe'.
4. Shylock will profit doubly in parting with Launcelot because he will get rid of a lazy servant who ate too much and worked too little, while passing him on to the man who owes him money. Launcelot will waste Bassanio's money, and this will help Shylock's plan of revenge against Antonio.
 5. Shylock will return immediately after attending Bassanio's banquet. He does not want to linger there because he senses some misfortune to befall him as he had dreamt of money bags the night before.

ACT 2 SCENE 6

Excerpt A

1. Lorenzo's friends have gathered beneath Shylock's house where Jessica lives. Lorenzo had asked his friends to assemble there as part of Jessica's plan to elope with him.
2. The hour which Lorenzo specified he would come has almost passed. It is surprising because he is in love with Jessica, and lovers are always before time to keep their appointments.
3. Gratiano says 'lovers ever run before the clock' because they are eager to meet their loved ones, and always reach their meeting place before the appointed hour.
4. When Salarino says, 'O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont To keep obliged faith unforfeited!', he means that lovers are always in a greater hurry to keep promises made to new found loves than they are to keep unbroken the vows already pledged. Perhaps Lorenzo is not worried about breaking his promise because he does not doubt Jessica's love for him. The chariot of Venus, the Roman goddess of love, was drawn by doves.

5. Lorenzo says he has been held up by his business affairs, and that when his friends will be in need of help to steal wives for themselves, he will be at their service and wait just as long for them.

Excerpt B

1. Gratiano is responding to Salarino. It is the truth that 'ever holds', because Gratiano agrees that the reason Lorenzo is late is because Lorenzo is sure of Jessica's love and does not feel the need to make haste.
2. The occasion is Jessica's escape from Shylock's house with Lorenzo. While Gratiano and Salarino are waiting beneath Shylock's household, Lorenzo himself is late.
3. Gratiano gives the example of a man sitting down to a feast. He says, 'who riseth from a feast With that keen appetite that he sits down?', meaning who leaves the table at a feast with the same craving for food as he had when he sat down to eat. He also compares the situation to 'Where is the horse that doth untread again His tedious measures with the unbated fire That he did pace them first?', meaning where is the horse that retraces its movements with the same energy as it had the first time he made them.
4.
 - a. unbated fire: unabated energy. A horse does not retrace its movements with the same unabated energy as it had the first time.
 - b. scarfed bark: a ship decorated with flags and streamers. A ship that sets sail from its native port is all decked and ornamented with flags and streamers.
 - c. wanton wind: Wanton means immoral or unfaithful. The wind is compared to a 'wanton' woman, since it changes so easily.
5. The ship sails from her native port, richly decked with flags and streamers, favoured by the wind. But, like the prodigal son, returns home impoverished with a weather beaten body and torn sails, battered by the very wind that had favoured it. The reference is to the parable of the Prodigal Son in the Bible (Luke 15:11-32), where the younger son finally returns home after squandering all his money.

Excerpt C

1. This scene is taking place below Shylock's house. Apart from Jessica and Lorenzo, Gratiano and Salarino are also present.
2. Jessica cannot recognize Lorenzo because he is masked in anticipation of the masquerade that is to be part of the banquet hosted by Bassanio that evening. She needs to confirm Lorenzo's identity as she is attempting to run away from home with him. Also, she must pass down to him valuable gold and jewels that she has taken from her father, Shylock.
3. Lorenzo has come for Jessica because they are in love and plan to elope, so that Jessica can escape from the 'hell' that is Shylock's household. Jessica has planned and organized the elopement, and has notified Lorenzo of the details through a letter sent by Launcelot's hand.
4. Jessica appears in a boy's clothes, disguised as a young servant (a page) in order to protect her identity and help her escape. She feels self-conscious appearing this way in front of her lover. She is glad that it is night and Lorenzo cannot see her, for she is quite ashamed of her transformed look and attire.
5. What Jessica and Lorenzo are about to do will impact the main action of the play because their elopement and stealing of Shylock's gold and jewels will infuriate Shylock and make his hatred towards Antonio, and Christians in general, increase manifold times. This will harden his decision to claim his pound of flesh, and will thus impact the climactic scene of the play.

Excerpt D

1. Jessica will descend from Shylock's penthouse. She must be Lorenzo's torchbearer because he has failed to organize one to lead him in the masquerade. Moreover, it will give Jessica the perfect cover for her escape.
2. The shameful thing that Jessica is referring to is her attire as a boy. She needs the disguise in order to escape unnoticed from Shylock's house.
3. Jessica's clothes of a page are 'too, too light'. Jessica fears her

disguise is too obvious. It is also a pun on the word 'light' meaning frivolous. She is ashamed of her frivolous disguise as a page.

4. Jessica feels self-conscious in her disguise as a boy. In such attire she does not want to be revealed to her lover by the torchlight. She also fears it will disclose her disguise because her disguise is thin at best. This could ruin her plans of escape.
5. By 'an office of discovery', Jessica means the duty (office) she will undertake as a torchbearer, which is to light up and lead the way. Such an office carries the risk of revealing her true identity. She means to say that the duty of a torch bearer is to hold up the torch, but this will expose her to others. It is important for her to remain obscured because her disguise is imperative to her escape.

Excerpt E

1. Bassanio and his friends are waiting for Gratiano at Bassanio's party. They wait for him because the wind has changed to a more favourable direction, and Bassanio has decided to set sail for Belmont that very night. Gratiano is to go along with him.
2. The masque has been cancelled because the wind has changed favourably, and Bassanio has decided to take advantage of it and set sail immediately. The masque had been arranged to celebrate Bassanio's upcoming departure for Belmont. In the play, moreover, the masque serves the purpose of aiding Jessica's escape. Now that this has been achieved, the masque can be dropped and the plot can move forward to the next scene of action.
3. Bassanio is to 'presently go aboard' because the wind is blowing in the right direction for him to sail to Belmont. He wants to leave immediately while the conditions are still favourable. He will be accompanied by his friend, Gratiano.
4.
 - a. the wind has come about: This means that the wind has changed to a favourable direction. This will aid Bassanio's ship to Belmont.
 - b. Bassanio presently will go aboard: Bassanio will immediately board his ship. Bassanio intends to leave for Belmont without any delay.

5. These lines reinforce the theme of hazard and gambling in the play because Bassanio drops his masque in favour of setting sail for Belmont, towards the challenge he faces to win Portia's hand. He has been waiting for favourable conditions, not willing to risk his ship and his life on poor weather conditions. The wind suddenly changing direction, that brings to naught all plans for the masquerade and feast, reminds one of the unforeseen. It also reminds us of Antonio hazard – taking the loan on the assumption that his ships, which are completely dependent on the wind and the weather, will return safely.

ACT 2 SCENE 7

Excerpt A

1. Morocco is in a room at Portia's house in Belmont where the three caskets of gold, silver, and lead are kept. He is attempting the challenge set by her father – to choose the correct casket that holds her likeness (portrait) to win her hand in marriage, or forever be alone.
2. The lead casket says, 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath', meaning that the one who chooses this casket must give and risk everything he has to get whatever it contains. Morocco reads this superficially, thinking he must risk everything for the most worthless metal of the three.
3. Morocco dismisses the lead casket because he believes that no man would risk everything for a worthless metal. Men hazard all in the hope of profits. A golden mind such as his can scarcely be taken in by 'shows of dross'. Morocco interprets the message on the lead casket superficially – as Portia is far from worthless, highly desirable even, he does not believe that her portrait can be contained within that casket.
4. Morocco attributes to himself a 'golden mind', which hints at his choice of the gold casket. He considers gold to be the most valuable metal, and because Portia is also valuable in his estimation, the gold casket must be the correct one. His 'golden mind' also underlies his belief that he deserves

Portia, as he says on reading the message on the silver casket, 'Why, that's the lady: I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes, In graces and in qualities of breeding'.

5. These lines tell us that Morocco is a superficial man who cannot look below the surface for deeper meaning. He is swayed by riches, jewels, and ambition. He holds himself in such high esteem that he cannot look beyond himself. His sense of profit and loss, 'fair advantages', is also measured by material gain. That there may be more to lead than just the worth of the metal completely bypasses him.

Excerpt B

1. The 'silver' refers to the silver casket. The silver casket says in its inscription that whoever chooses it will get as much as they deserve.
2. Morocco believes he deserves a lot, but that could fall short of deserving Portia. However, to think such a thing is weakness, and his personal accomplishments and royal blood, his fortunes and good breeding do make him deserving of Portia. A few lines earlier, he had described himself as having a 'golden mind' that does not stoop to 'shows of dross'.
3. Morocco says, 'yet enough May not extend so far as to the lady', meaning that while Morocco may deserve a lot, it may not extend to Portia. That is, Morocco's merit may not be enough to make him deserving of Portia.
4. A few lines earlier, Morocco had said that although he deserves a lot, his deserts may not extend as far as Portia. However, he says immediately after, 'And yet to be afraid of my deserving Were but a weak disabling of myself.' This means he thinks that to be afraid and unsure of what he deserves is a sign of weakness that will only discredit him.
5. Morocco gives the following reasons, 'I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes, In graces and in qualities of breeding; But more than these, in love I do deserve.' He thinks that because he is of noble birth, being a prince, and has wealth and noble qualities, he is deserving of Portia. But more than all

these qualities, Morocco thinks that it is his love for Portia that makes him the most deserving of her.

Excerpt C

1. Morocco believes that his noble birth, his graces and noble qualities, and above all, his love for Portia, make him deserving of her.
2. Morocco does not deserve Portia in love because he does not truly love her. He does not know her, and the real reason he thinks he deserves her are the reasons he has previously stated. He has shown himself throughout the scene to be superficial, reasoning and interpreting each inscription in a very narrow-minded way. This goes to show that his perception of situations and people is shallow.
3. For a moment, Morocco decides to choose the silver casket and not move further to the gold casket, when he says, 'What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?' But he does not stop there, his curiosity for the gold getting the better of him: 'Let's see once more this saying graved in gold'. He reconsiders the inscription on the gold casket, and makes his choice there. This tells us he is a fickle man, easily swayed by desirable possessions rather than true and honest attributes.
4. Ultimately, Morocco deserves what he gets when he opens the gold casket: 'A carrion Death, within whose empty eye There is a written scroll'. The scroll reads, 'All that glisters is not gold . . . Had you been as wise as bold . . . Your answer had not been inscroll'd.' The message rightly sums up Morocco's weakness to judge things by outward appearance only. He reacts with sorrow, saying, 'Cold, indeed; and labour lost: Then, farewell, heat; and welcome, frost!', implying his lifelong celibacy, which was a precondition, should he fail to choose the right casket. He claims to grieve his loss of Portia, which stops him from a formal and lengthy leave-taking.

Excerpt D

1. The suitors come from all four corners of the world; the shrine they seek is Belmont, which contains the 'mortal-breathing saint', Portia.

2. The suitors come from all over the world to win Portia's hand in marriage. They must complete the task set by her father to be successful. But they risk their happiness forever by entering the challenge. If they win, they gain Portia in marriage. If they lose, they must rescind all future prospects of marrying another person. Besides this condition, they are also enjoined not to tell anyone else which casket they choose, and, if they lose, to leave Belmont immediately.
3.
 - a. the vasty wilds Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now: Difficult terrains such as the Hyrcanian desert and the vast wilderness of Arabia are now like mere roads to the princes (suitors) who come to meet Portia.
 - b. The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head Spits in the face of heaven: The ocean, whose waves rise up so high as to spray water on the skies. The high, dangerous waves of the ocean are no obstacle to the suitors from abroad, who cross the waters as if it were a stream, to see Portia.
4. In Act 2 Scene 1, Morocco claims to have held the scimitar that 'slew the Sophy and a Persian prince' who had 'won three fields of Sultan Solyman'. He also claims that he can look defiantly into the boldest eyes, surpass the most daring person in bravery, and steal a cub from a female bear.
5. Morocco describes Belmont as a shrine where the 'mortal-breathing saint' Portia resides. This shows Morocco's reverence for Portia. He says suitors come to see Portia from four corners of the earth, overcoming hardships and obstacles as if they were nothing but minor troubles. They cross the 'Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds Of wide Arabia', as if they were mere roads, and face the tumultuous waves of the ocean as if they were but a stream. Portia is a priceless treasure or a beacon that draws everyone to it.

Excerpt E

1. The Prince of Morocco speaks these lines. He is in Belmont at Portia's home, taking the test of the caskets to win Portia's

hand. Morocco is debating which casket to choose between gold, silver, and lead that contains the portrait of Portia.

2. It is 'so base' to think that Portia's portrait could be held within the casket made of the 'too gross' metal, lead.
3.
 - a. rib her cerecloth: This refers to the cloth used to enshroud the dead. He means that lead would be too inferior a substance to cover even Portia's shrouded body when she is buried. So it is inconceivable how her portrait could be there.
 - b. tried gold: genuine, pure gold
 - c. thrive I as I may: whatever my success may be
4. The 'sinful thought' is that Portia's portrait could be contained in a casket made of a metal less than gold. He says, 'Never so rich a gem Was set in worse than gold', meaning that a precious jewel like Portia has never been set in metal less valuable than gold.
5. Morocco goes through each casket and each inscription, contemplating them all. He considers lead too base a metal to contain Portia's portrait and dismisses it with 'Twere damnation To think so base a thought'. He then does the same to silver, 'shall I think in silver she's immured . . . O sinful thought!' He sees gold as the only metal worthy of containing Portia's portrait, 'Never so rich a gem Was set in worse than gold', and in the end that is the casket he incorrectly chooses.

Excerpt F

1. The lines in the quotes have been found within the gold casket, on a scroll embedded in the eye of a human skull. Morocco finds this scroll when he opens the gold casket while trying to win Portia's hand in marriage.
2. Morocco had expected to find Portia's portrait within the gold casket. He sees gold as the only worthy metal to contain Portia's portrait, dismissing lead as too base and silver 'ten times undervalued to tried gold'. A priceless gem like Portia was never set in any metal less valuable than gold. This reasoning makes Morocco choose the gold casket in the end.

3. a. Gilded tombs do worms infold: Even gilded-plated tombs, like any other ordinary tomb, enclose worms.
b. your suit is cold: Morocco's attempt to woo Portia has come to an unsuccessful end.
4. Morocco is grief-stricken. He considers his heart too heavy to give a lengthy and formal farewell, so he takes his leave rather quickly. He concedes that he has been a loser, 'thus losers part'. The Prince of Arragon, on the other hand, is less humbled, more offended by the loss: 'Still more fool I shall appear By the time I linger here' (Act 2 Scene 9). He questions his reward of a blinking idiot, 'Did I deserve no more than a fool's head? Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?', inviting the gentle censure from Portia, 'To offend, and judge, are distinct offices, And of opposed natures.'
5. How appearances can be deceptive is expressed in the first line of the scroll, 'All that glisters is not gold'. Morocco thinks that gold, being a precious metal, would be worthy of encasing the portrait of Portia, only to find a skull inside. The saying is further exemplified in 'Gilded tombs do worms infold'. Like any other ordinary tomb, those plated with gold also enclose worms. The example is appropriate to the content of the casket, i.e. the skull. The outside appearance of things does not reflect what is inside.

ACT 2 SCENE 8

Excerpt A

1. The Jew raised the Duke with his cries because his daughter, Jessica, had run off with Lorenzo. The elopement was an extreme disappointment for Shylock, as his only child had eloped with a Christian, taking all of his gold and jewels with her.
2. Bassanio is Lorenzo's friend. Naturally, they suspected that the lovers, Lorenzo and Jessica, would be hiding in his ship, which was bound for Belmont.
3. Lorenzo and Jessica reach Belmont, not in Bassanio's ship, but with Salerio. As Lorenzo tells Bassanio in Act 3 Scene 2, he

and Jessica had not intended to come to Belmont. But they met Salerio on their way who entreated them to come to Belmont with him.

4. The ship sailed earlier than the appointed time since the winds changed direction and were favourable. The masque and the banquet had to be cancelled so Bassanio could start his journey without delay.
5. The willingness of the Duke to go with Shylock in search of Jessica and Lorenzo suggests that the rights of foreigners were under the protection of Venetian law. In Venice, foreigners and citizens had equal claims to justice. This was important so that the trade and commerce of the city, which enjoyed the support of foreign merchants, could flourish.

Excerpt B

1. Shylock's cries are described as 'variable' because he complains about different things at a time: his daughter, her running off with a Christian, his ducats and jewels which Jessica has stolen, and justice for the wrong done to him.
2. Shylock's only daughter has eloped, and that too with a Christian. Furthermore, she has stolen his money and jewels. Shylock also suspects help given to the fleeing lovers by their Christian friends like Antonio and Bassanio. It was on Antonio's ship that Bassanio set sail for Belmont, and Shylock suspects Lorenzo and Jessica on the same ship making their escape.
3.
 - a. my Christian ducats: Shylock's ducats have been stolen by his daughter Jessica, who has eloped with a Christian. Therefore, the ducats now belong to the Christian, Lorenzo.
 - b. double ducats: Two denominations of ducats probably existed, the value of one being double that of the other.
4. Apart from the ducats, Jessica has stolen her father's jewels, including a turquoise ring gifted to Shylock by his deceased wife, Leah. Shylock's extreme distress over the loss of this ring suggests that it could be a symbol of love and commitment to his wife, just as Portia's and Nerissa's rings are to them. It also shows a softer side to his flinty character.

5. With his loss of wealth to a Christian, Shylock's outrage is expected to shift to Antonio, as Salanio tells Salarino, 'Let good Antonio look he keep his day, Or he shall pay for this.' Antonio, who has borrowed a large sum of money from Shylock for Bassanio, is reported to have lost his ships and fortunes. Shylock is expected to use Antonio's failure to repay the loan to take revenge for his daughter's elopement and treachery, as well as for his debtor's past insult of him.

Excerpt C

1. All the boys of Venice follow Shylock in order to mock him. The children follow him around and mimic his cries which are so 'variable'. Shylock expresses his outrage in a confused, jumbled manner at his daughter, his ducats, his jewels, and justice, 'My daughter!—O my ducats!—O my daughter! Fled with a Christian!—O my Christian ducats!—Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!'
2. The Frenchman told Salarino that a merchant ship of Venice, which carried a large amount of expensive cargo, had been wrecked in the English Channel.
3. Upon hearing the news of the shipwreck, Salarino immediately thought of Antonio, whose ship was supposed to be sailing in that direction. He wished that the wrecked ship was not one of his Antonio's.
4.
 - a. keep his day: repay the debt at the appointed day
 - b. reason'd: spoke to
 - c. richly fraught: richly laden with expensive cargo
5. Antonio shall pay for Jessica's theft and elopement with a Christian. He will suffer the consequences because Shylock is already in a bad mood over his daughter's deception and theft. He also suspects that the lovers may have fled in Antonio's ship with Bassanio. Antonio and Shylock have a history of mutual resentment, so if Antonio fails to repay the loan, Salanio suspects that he will be made the scapegoat for Shylock's misfortunes.

Excerpt D

1. Salarino is talking to Salanio. Prior to these lines, they were talking about Shylock for he had created quite a ruckus on the streets of Venice crying out for his eloped daughter, his stolen wealth, and justice. Shylock was doubly anguished because he had lost his wealth and daughter to a Christian. Both Salarino and Salanio are now afraid for Antonio for they feel that he may have to bear the brunt of Shylock's anger.
2. Antonio and Bassanio have parted because Bassanio must go to Belmont and seek Portia's hand in marriage.
3.
 - a. Slubber not business for my sake: Don't hurry through the business (of wooing Portia) for my (Antonio's) sake.
 - b. stay the very riping of the time: Stay on till the time is opportune (for winning Portia's hand).
4. Antonio tells Bassanio to focus on his courting of Portia instead of worrying about him. Bassanio should not think about the bond that Antonio has signed for Shylock. He should not hurry through the business of winning Portia's hand but stay on till the time is right. He advises Bassanio to be merry and concentrate on courtship and shows of love as shall bring credit to him there. Such advice portrays Antonio in a positive light. He is selfless when it comes to Bassanio's happiness, willing to stake his all for his friend, even if his racist bias against Shylock is less than admirable.
5. Bassanio is setting off to Belmont, on a mission to win Portia's hand in marriage. Although it is ostensibly a mission of love, it can also be described as a 'business'. Bassanio borrows a huge sum of money from Shylock to compete with the high profile suitors for Portia. Portia is herself 'richly left', thus making the marriage a profitable arrangement for both parties. In Act 1 Scene 1, Bassanio clearly mentions to Antonio that by borrowing money to compete for Portia's hand, he would be able recover his fortune and pay off his old debts.

ACT 2 SCENE 9

Excerpt A

1. Arragon is the Prince of Arragon (Spain). He is at Portia's house at Belmont. He has come to choose from the caskets of gold, silver, and lead as part of the test to win Portia's hand in marriage.
2. Lead, of which one of the three caskets is made, must 'look fairer' before Arragon gives or hazards everything for it. The Prince of Morocco had earlier rejected the same casket, expressing his unwillingness to risk everything for 'shows of dross'.
3. Arragon interprets 'many' as the 'fool multitude', the foolish masses. According to him, they make choices based on appearance, and look no further than what the eye sees.
4.
 - a. fool multitude: the foolish masses – the general public that foolishly goes only by outward appearances.
 - b. fond eye: The eye is foolish (fond) because it judges only by outward show.
5. Arragon dismisses the gold casket because he believes it sets him apart from the 'fool multitude', who are wont to go for the most obvious choice. He will not choose what many men desire, as he is a man who appreciates the deeper value of things. However, his own choice ultimately proves him to be part of the 'fool multitude'. He may not have chosen gold, 'what many men desire', but he chooses silver, 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves', because he thinks he is deserving of Portia. However, the casket reveals the portrait of a blinking fool – Arragon proves himself a fool because of his arrogance and self-conceit.

Excerpt B

1. The speaker of these lines is the Prince of Arragon. He finds the inscription on the silver casket, one of the three from which he must choose to win Portia's hand in marriage.
2. Arragon considers the inscription well said because he believes

that no one can cheat fortune and be honourable without merit. He says that had estates, degrees, and offices not been accorded through dishonest means, had merit been the only reason for such honours, then many who now serve would be served, and many who are now commanded would command.

3. If estates and offices were not derived corruptly, but obtained through honest means and pure merit, then all the undeserving men who hold high positions would have to go about bareheaded without their hats (as a sign of respect to superiors), while those who deserve honour would be elevated, even from their lowly situation.
4. Arragon's remark is a reference to the cultural significance of wearing hats. In an interaction, the superior men would keep their hats on, while the lesser party would take theirs off as a mark of respect. In a world run on merit, only the truly deserving would keep their hats on, and those whose offices and positions are derived by corruption would stand bareheaded.
5. In this part of his speech, Arragon presents himself as a man who values the worth of others based on their merit, not position. He speaks out against a corrupt and superficial society, where unworthy men, who have earned their positions through corrupt means, are treated with respect. However, Arragon's only fault, as made clear in the next few lines, lies in his vanity and his complacency that he is the most deserving man of all.

Excerpt C

1. This inscription is written on the silver casket. It has been quoted once before this passage, when Arragon goes through all the three caskets, and it will be quoted again later in the scene, after he opens the silver casket and questions if he deserved 'no more than a fool's head'.
2. Earlier in this scene, Arragon had praised the inscription because it valued real merit, not surface achievements: 'for who shall go about To cozen fortune, and be honourable

Without the stamp of merit?’ As a firm believer of giving respect and recognition only where it is due, ‘Let none presume To wear an undeserved dignity’, Arragon, however, uses his interpretation of the inscription to conclude that he deserves Portia the best.

3. By this line, Arragon means that he will take that which he deserves, that is, Portia. Arragon’s confidence in his own merit is proof of his vanity, rather than worthiness. He assumes, as well as declares that he is the most deserving suitor for Portia, without any show of the true merit that he has just praised in an eloquent and passionate speech.
4. As suggested by Portia’s dialogue, Arragon’s reaction on opening the silver casket is an overlong pause of confusion and disbelief.
5. Arragon finds the portrait of a ‘blinking idiot’, presenting him a scroll to read. He expresses his shock at how different the portrait is from Portia, and how unlike it is from his hopes and deservings. He questions the fairness of the reward by exclaiming whether he deserves no better than a fool’s head, and whether his rewards should be no better.

Excerpt D

1. Arragon finds the portrait of a blinking idiot in the silver casket. He had hoped to find Portia’s portrait there, as proof of his success in the casket test.
2. Arragon has chosen the silver casket on which is inscribed, ‘Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.’ He calls the inscription ‘well said’ for he believes no one can cheat fortune and ‘wear an undeserved dignity’. Interpreting the reward to mean Portia, and assuming that he alone possesses true merit and is therefore deserving of her, Arragon selects the casket.
3. Arragon had earlier rejected the lead and gold caskets. The former was dismissed no sooner than its inscription was read: ‘You shall look fairer, ere I [Arragon] give or hazard’ all. The latter was mocked by Arragon because its message

'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire' signified the desire of the 'fool multitude' who do not go beyond what their eyes make them see. Arragon decided that he will not choose what many men desire and rank himself with the 'barbarous multitudes', and so rejected the gold casket.

4. In response to Arragon's exclamation at discovering a fool's head as his reward, Portia tells him 'To offend, and judge, are distinct offices, And of opposed natures.' She reminds him that having agreed to the terms of the competition, he cannot now criticize the outcome, because he has failed the test.
5. By speaking out against the competition, Arragon flouts the condition that one must leave immediately without further speech, if he fails the test.

Excerpt E

1. Silver has been tried seven times – silver is refined seven times in a furnace for purification. A judgment that has been tried and tested seven times like silver, that is, a judgment that given after much consideration and reflection, never goes wrong.
2. These lines are addressed to the Prince of Arragon. They are written on a scroll which he finds in the silver casket. Arragon had to choose from three caskets of gold, silver, and lead to see if he deserved to marry Portia. However, he chooses the silver casket, which reveals that his judgement is not well thought out, and that he has been a fool to choose thus.
3.
 - a. I will ever be your head: In this context, it means: You will always be a fool. The 'I' is the portrait of a 'blinking idiot', which Arragon finds inside the silver casket.
 - b. You are sped: You have had your chance; you are done. A reminder that Arragon has failed and has to leave Belmont.
4. Arragon, the speaker, is admitting in this line that he came with 'one fool's head', meaning he was already a fool before he arrived in Belmont. Now, he must leave with 'two' because he has won the portrait of a 'blinking idiot'. In short, Arragon accepts with some bitterness that he is not so different from the 'fool multitude' he had derided a few moments ago in the scene.

5. Arragon had belittled the golden casket, describing it as an obvious prize for the 'fool multitude' that looks no deeper than the surface of things. He had declared that he will not jump with the 'common spirits' and rank himself with the 'barbarous multitude'. The silver casket appealed to him because it promised him 'as much as he deserves'. Arrogantly, he assumes that he richly deserves Portia, and chooses the casket. However, he opens it to reveal the portrait of a blinking fool which says, 'I will ever be your head.' Arragon's reasoning behind his choice of silver reveals his vanity – he is really as superficial as the common masses he had disparaged.

Excerpt F

1. Arragon has just left the scene, having chosen the wrong casket, and thereby failing to prove himself worthy of Portia. As per the conditions of the competition, he was obliged to depart without complaint.
2. The young Venetian is Bassanio's 'fore-spurrer'. He has come to signify the arrival of his lord Bassanio, and has brought lavish gifts and greetings from him.
3. The servant compares the 'fore-spurrer' to an early day in April that promises a 'costly summer', that is, a beautiful and dazzling summer season. The month of April precedes summer, just as fore-spurrers ride ahead of their lords to herald their arrival. Bassanio's messenger gives a promising idea of how grand his master's arrival is going to be.
4. In response to the servant's extravagant praise of Bassanio's fore-spurrer, Portia begs him to halt. She jests that she is half-afraid the messenger might turn out to be the servant's relative because he accords such high praise to him.
5. a. regreets: A combination of 're' and 'greet'. 'Regreets' imply fresh greetings. It suggests that Portia and Bassanio have met earlier, as Nerissa had said in Act 1 Scene 2, when Portia's father was alive.
b. fore-spurrer: A messenger who rides his horse faster to arrive before his master and inform all about his coming.

ACT 3 SCENE 1

Excerpt A

1. Salarino is talking to Salanio, who had asked him what the latest news from the Rialto was. The 'news' is a reference to Antonio's ships, one of which is rumoured to have been lost in the English Channel.
2. What remains unchecked is a certain rumour about one of Antonio's ship being wrecked upon the Goodwinds in the English Channel. Salarino and Salanio had discussed this rumour in Act 2 Scene 8. Here, the rumour or gossip is personified as an old woman called 'Report'.
3.
 - a. dangerous flat: a description of the Goodwins, a dangerous sandbank in the English Channel
 - b. carcasses of many a tall ship: the wreckages of many mighty ships destroyed in the Goodwins
 - c. gossip Report: 'Report' is a personification of gossip in the image of an old woman.
4. Salanio replies that he wishes Salarino's 'gossip Report' is as harmless and full of falsehood as an old woman chewing ginger and making neighbours believe that she wept for a third husband. In other words, Salanio hopes the report of the wreckage of Antonio's ship turns out to be false.
5. The wrecking of a ship means a great loss of fortune for Antonio, something he cannot afford at the moment because he has borrowed three thousand ducats from Shylock. Upon failure of repayment, Antonio will have to compensate with a pound of his flesh. Therefore, the wrecking of a ship is a matter of life and death for Antonio.

Excerpt B

1. The 'flight' being referred to here is the elopement of Jessica, Shylock's daughter. She has run off with Lorenzo, who is a friend of Salanio and Salarino.
2. Prior to the news of Jessica's elopement, there was the discussion of a rumour regarding Antonio's merchant ship

being lost at sea. This particular information would not be as bad as Jessica's elopement for Shylock. On the contrary, it would make him happy as Antonio's loss of fortune would make the possibility of Shylock exacting his revenge more definite.

3. The metaphor contained in this line is that of a young bird outgrowing its mother's protection once it has got wings. Shylock knew that his daughter had grown up (knew the bird was fledged), and that she would soon leave his care. Jessica had grown old enough to want a lover and marry him.
4. The pun in the given lines is Shylock's 'damned', which he uses in his response to Salanio's 'dam'. While the latter means 'mother', Shylock's utterance is a curse against his daughter for betraying him.
5. After these lines, Salarino tells Shylock that there is more difference between his character and that of his daughter's than between 'jet and ivory', more difference in their bloods than red wine and Rhenish (a white wine) could have. In short, Salarino tells Shylock that he and his daughter are opposite in their nature.

Excerpt C

1. The two people being spoken of in the first two lines are Shylock and Jessica. Jessica is Shylock's daughter.
2. This exchange has been brought on by Jessica's recent elopement with Lorenzo, a friend of Salanio and Salarino. She has also stolen ducats and jewels from her father. Shylock accuses them of knowing about his daughter's elopement. They respond by saying that he should have known that his daughter had grown up and would soon leave his care.
3. The person whom Salarino is speaking to, Shylock, had alleged that Salarino knew of his daughter elopement with his friend, Lorenzo. Salarino does not deny the allegations; he says he has known 'the tailor that made the wings she flew withal', that is, he had fully known what was going to happen. He also says

Shylock and his daughter are very different, like jet and ivory, and red wine and white (Rhenish) wine.

4. Salarino uses metaphors of skin colour and blood to draw comparison between Shylock and Jessica. Jessica's and Shylock's skins are more different than ivory and jet can be; in the same way, the colour of their blood are more dissimilar than Rhenish (German white wine) and red wine. Since the comparisons provided are between opposites, Shylock cannot claim Jessica is his own flesh and blood.
5. To Salarino's last question, Shylock gives the reply that he has made another bad investment by loaning money to a 'bankrupt' and 'prodigal' man – Antonio. He says that Antonio now scarcely comes to the Rialto, where previously he used to come looking very pleased with himself. He mutters darkly about how Antonio must 'look to his bond', implying that in the event of failing to repay the debt, Antonio will suffer grave consequences. This confirms for the moment that Antonio has indeed lost a merchant ship.

Excerpt D

1. Shylock is responding to Salarino's question. The latter had asked him if he has heard any report about Antonio losing a merchant ship at sea.
2. The 'bad match' is Antonio. He has become bankrupt because one of his merchant ships has been wrecked in the Goodwins. A 'prodigal' is a waster; Shylock insults Antonio by calling him a spendthrift, since Antonio is generous in lending money, free of interest, and thus wastes rather than 'breeds' money.
3.
 - a. dare scarce show his head on the Rialto: Shylock mocks Antonio for not having the courage to show his face in the Rialto, having suffering heavy losses.
 - b. used to come so smug upon the mart: According to Shylock, Antonio used to come to the stock exchange looking self-satisfied.
4. Shylock resents Antonio for many reasons. The latter has lent money free of charge, and thus brought down the rate of

interest in Venice. Antonio has criticized Shylock in the past for being an usurer – one who lends money on interest – thus affecting his business. A more serious matter is Antonio's attack on Shylock's 'sacred nation', the Jewish race. He has called Shylock a 'misbeliever, cut-throat dog' and spat on his Jewish attire. His hatred of the Jews is so intense that he tells Shylock to lend him three thousand ducats as he would to an enemy. The bitterness sown by all these condemnations will now rise to the surface, putting Antonio in serious trouble.

5. Shylock's repeated phrase 'let him look to the bond' is a dare to Antonio to take care of his bond. He knows, as the others suspect, that Antonio has lost a ship at sea and suffered heavy losses. Antonio is not in a position to repay the loan of three thousand ducats. In order to satisfy the bond, he will have to give a pound of his flesh to Shylock, who thirsts for revenge.

Excerpt E

1. Shylock has been asked that surely he would not take a pound of flesh from Antonio if he defaults on the loan, for what good is a pound of human flesh for. This question is asked by Salarino.
2. Shylock will 'bait fish' with a pound of human flesh, if nothing else. He will obtain it from any part of Antonio's body he desires, as penalty for the loan of three thousand ducats, if Antonio fails to pay it on time.
3. In the past, Antonio had affected Shylock's reputation and business by criticizing his usury in the Rialto, in front of other businessmen and traders, and condemning his faith and nation. Antonio has called him a 'misbeliever, cut-throat dog' and spat on his Jewish attire. He has 'laughed at my [Shylock's] losses, mocked at my gains . . . thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies'. Circumstances have further soured their relationship. First, Jessica steals her Shylock's money and jewels and elopes with Lorenzo, who happens to be Antonio's friend and a Christian. Now, one of Antonio's ships is rumoured to

have been lost at sea, which implies that he could be another 'bad match' for Shylock.

4. a. hindered me half a million: prevented me (Shylock) from earning profits amounting to half a million
b. thwarted my bargains: Antonio has defeated Shylock's good bargains in business.
5. Although Shylock now says he will use Antonio's flesh to feed his revenge, he had said in Act 1 Scene 3 that a pound of man's flesh is 'not so estimable, profitable neither, As flesh of muttuns, beefs, or goats.' This suggests that Shylock had led Antonio into a false sense of security with his comforting argument that he has no use for the pound of flesh, and that it had been put in the bond in a 'merry sport'.

Excerpt F

1. Shylock had begun this speech by declaring that he would use Antonio's flesh as fish bait, and if that fails, at least it would 'feed my [Shylock's] revenge'. He had mentioned the several ways in which Antonio had harmed his business interests and humiliated his Jewish race. It showed us that he intends to make Antonio pay for his misfortunes. Shylock's motive, from the very beginning, has been to take revenge on Antonio; he has only been waiting for an opportunity to catch him 'upon the hip'.
2. Shylock accuses Antonio of disgracing him in public and preventing him from earning a profit of half a million. Antonio has also laughed at Shylock's losses and mocked at his gains, cost him his friends and encouraged his enemies. Worst of all, Antonio has vented spite on his Jewish race.
3. The very next line of this extract is 'and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?' The figure of speech employed by Shylock in these lines is climax, where words or ideas are arranged in an increasing order of importance for dramatic effect.
4. Shylock's argument is that he has been taught cruelty by Christians who condemn his religion. Shylock has been mocked for being a Jew and thwarted in his business and society because of it. He swears to 'better the instruction', that

is, be harsher than the animosity the Christians have shown towards him. He is going to cause the Christians greater harm.

5. The two people who enter the scene after Shylock's monologue is Tubal, his friend and fellow Jew, and a messenger. While the messenger tells Salanio and Salarino that Antonio seeks their company, Tubal informs Shylock about Antonio's further losses and that several of Antonio's creditors are of the opinion that he has no choice but to go bankrupt. Tubal also informs Shylock about Jessica's excesses, that in Genoa in one night she spent eighty ducats and exchanged for a monkey his father's turquoise ring.

Excerpt G

1. The thief referred to here is Jessica, Shylock's daughter. She has stolen money as well as jewels from her father, one of which is a diamond which alone cost him two thousand ducats.
2. Jessica has already stolen a large sum of money and jewels from her father. She is going to cost him even more because he is having to spend further money in searching for her.
3. Shylock feels as though he has been singled out to suffer great misfortune. Only he has all the 'ill luck'; the only sighs of despair that can be heard and the only tears that are shed are his. For him, there is 'no satisfaction, no revenge'.
4. Tubal, another Jew, is a friend of Shylock's, who has been trying to trace Jessica. He informs Shylock that Jessica – the thief – has spent 'fourscore ducats' in one night in Genoa, and exchanged for a monkey the ring that her mother had given to Shylock.
5. Antonio has lost a ship coming from Tripolis and has no choice but to declare bankruptcy. Shylock receives this news with relish, asking Tubal to hire an officer of the law, and swearing he 'will have the heart of him [Antonio]'. Shylock is ecstatic because Antonio's removal from the stock market will help him gain more profit in future.

Excerpt H

1. Tubal is a friend of Shylock who has been entrusted with the task of tracking down Shylock's daughter, Jessica. Shylock gave him this task because Jessica stole his jewels and money and eloped with a Christian, Lorenzo.
2. Shylock has lost a turquoise ring that was very precious to him. As this ring was a token of love from his deceased wife, Leah, it symbolized his commitment to her. This shows that Shylock is not completely heartless; he is a man who loves his wife and stays loyal to her even after her death. This is perhaps the only instance in the whole play, where a softer side of Shylock is revealed to the reader.
3. Tubal is certain that Antonio is undone because he has met many of Antonio's creditors who are sure that Antonio has no choice but to declare bankruptcy.
4. By asking Tubal to hire him an officer, Shylock is preparing to charge Antonio with the crime of defaulting on his loan. His attitude shows that he cannot wait to punish his old rival; revenge is the only source of comfort left to him.
5. Shylock will have Antonio's heart. While Shylock hungers for revenge, a part of him is still functioning as a shrewd businessman. If he can get rid of Antonio in this way, he will be free to earn more profit from his debtors by levying what interest he chooses.
6. Although Tubal appears in this scene briefly, his exchange with Shylock lends complexity to his character. He has both good news and bad news for his friend, which he conveys alternately to balance out the two opposing effects of happiness and distress that Shylock is sure to experience. We cannot detect any personal pleasure in his line 'other men have ill luck too'. Tubal, unlike the Christian characters, who openly rejoice at Shylock's misfortunes, is more guarded and reserved in his reaction to events.

ACT 3 SCENE 2

Excerpt A

1. Portia asks Bassanio to 'tarry'. He has come to try his luck at winning her hand in marriage.
2. Bassanio must take a serious risk for Portia. If he fails to choose the right casket, he not only loses Portia, but is obliged to remain a bachelor for life.
3.
 - a. And yet a maiden hath no tongue, but thought: A young maiden chooses to hide her feelings rather than express them. Portia means that in matters of love, a woman cannot express her feelings as freely as a man can.
 - b. Hate counsels not in such a quality: Hatred does not give this kind of advice. Portia means to say that she wishes Bassanio to delay taking the test out of love.
4. In this scene, Portia is no longer her composed and cautious self. Her admiration of Bassanio has clearly made her anxious; if he chooses the wrong casket, he must leave immediately. Her speech is full of hasty disclaimers such as 'but it is not love' and 'yet a maiden had no tongue, but thought' that contradict her other exclamations. She would not lose him; she also openly declares that she would rather detain Bassanio at her house 'some month or two' before he takes the test. This excessive show of affection has not been observed in previous scenes, where Portia has appeared as a lady with a lot of poise and control who is able to objectively evaluate all suitors.

Excerpt B

1. Portia is addressing Bassanio, whose eyes have 'o'erlooked' and 'divided' her. She uses the two terms to accuse him of bewitching her and, thus, dividing her in the sense that she no longer wholly belongs to herself.
2. A few lines prior to the extract, Portia wishes she could break her oath to her father and 'teach' Bassanio how to choose the right casket so that he is able to win her hand in marriage.

She makes this desperate wish because she does not want to lose Bassanio, whom she loves.

3. The 'owners' in these lines is Bassanio, and 'rights' is his right to marry Portia, which he enjoys because she loves him.
4. In Act 1 Scene 2, Portia is a woman weary of the fate her father designed for her, and dissatisfied with all the suitors she has met so far. She censures each of them with cold logic and sarcasm. In this scene, although it is not mentioned what makes Bassanio so commendable, in Act 1 Scene 2, he has been described as 'a scholar and a soldier', the Elizabethan ideal of an accomplished man. It is because of his qualities, Portia attitude has changed completely, as she does not want to lose him. She is nervous, anxious and almost pleading with him to detain the test.
5. Portia's speech is full of contradictions, and these two statements are a good example of that. It is obvious that she highly favours him, but modesty and decorum prevent her from expressing her feelings openly. The repetitive cycle of confessions and disclaimers makes it easy to see that she would marry Bassanio without hesitation, if it were not for the test. In love, Portia thus loses the composure and logic of her former self.

Excerpt C

1. Bassanio is impatient to choose because he is worried he might not get Portia. To 'live upon the rack', in this context, is to be tortured by waiting.
2. Portia's line is a response to Bassanio's 'I live upon the rack'. While Bassanio means that to wait any further in choosing the casket is comparable to being tortured upon the rack, the reference to 'torture' is interpreted by Portia as an undesirable situation.
3. Portia has been stopping Bassanio from choosing because she wants to prolong his stay in Belmont. If Bassanio makes the wrong choice, he is obliged to leave immediately without

further delay.

4. Portia's reply to Bassanio is full of amusement. Manipulating Bassanio's metaphor of the rack, she comments that he could be speaking 'upon the rack, Where men enforced do speak any thing.' Her response is a proof of her sharp wit, which seems to be returning since Bassanio has just confessed his own fear of losing her.
5. The opening lines of the scene portray Portia as a girl suffering from a distinct conflict: she loves Bassanio so much she does not want him to take the test, yet she attempts (unsuccessfully) to hide her feelings with disclaimers. The anxiety that was so palpable in the opening lines is replaced by amusement in this extract. She responds with easy wit.

Excerpt D

1. Portia is talking to Bassanio. A portrait of her is locked in one of the caskets; it will determine the winner.
2. Portia wants Bassanio to appear dignified in failure or victory. His failure would be accompanied by music that gives him a 'swan-like' end, and his victory will be celebrated with music fit for a 'new-crowned monarch'.
3. Apart from these lines, Portia describes the music as the sweet tunes playing in the bridegroom's ears that wakes him up and summons him to marriage.
4. Portia's proclamation could be a sign of desperate hope, as she is well bound by her father's oath. In Act 1 Scene 2, Nerissa had said that refusing a man who chooses the right casket is tantamount to refusing the terms of the test, something Portia would not allow herself to do.
5. The message of the song that accompanies the music is that the power of 'fancy' is short-lived. Attraction based on mere appearances does not last. It is a message that helps Bassanio make the right decision.

Excerpt E

1. These lines are spoken by Portia. Bassanio 'goes' to pick his

choice from the three caskets of gold, silver, and lead.

2. Alcides, also known as Hercules, was a Greek hero who rescued a Trojan princess from being sacrificed. Portia uses the allusion to highlight Bassanio's gallantry. The 'fight' and 'fray' in this passage are references to the test set by Portia's father.
3. Alcides, or Hercules, saved a Trojan princess, Hesione from being sacrificed to a sea monster in exchange for her father's horses. Portia likens herself to the heroine, about to be sacrificed to fulfil the conditions of the test. If Bassanio does not choose correctly and win her hand, she will be condemned to either a maiden's life, or marriage to a man she does not love. So she likens Bassanio to 'young Alcides', that is, Hercules, who will become her saviour by choosing the right casket.
4.
 - a. Dardanian wives: Another name for the Trojan women; the Trojans were descendants of Dardanus. As Portia compares herself to Hesione, she likens Nerissa, Gratiano, the attendants, etc. to the Dardanian wives, who stand apart (aloof), to witness her fate.
 - b. bleared visages: Faces smeared with tears. Just like the Dardanian wives with tear-stained faces stand to witness Hesione's fate, Nerissa, Gratiano, and the attendants stand to witness Portia's fate.
 - c. The issue of the exploit: The outcome of the brave and daring act. Bassanio's act to undertake the lottery of the caskets is like Hercules's brave act of saving Hesione.
5. Portia will view the fight with much more dismay because her happiness and future hangs on Bassanio's choice. Fortunately for Portia, Bassanio chooses the right casket and proves himself deserving of her hand. She receives the news with joy and excessive humility, declares herself to be not worthy enough for Bassanio, and hands over her inheritance to her prospective husband.

Excerpt F

1. The speaker in this passage is Bassanio. He is speaking to

Portia and the rest of the people gathered at the chamber. He is about to pick his choice of the three caskets, to try and win Portia's hand in marriage.

2. The main idea that Bassanio wishes to convey in this part of his speech concerns the deceptiveness of appearances. Eloquence can present corrupt cases, and the Bible can be misused by a pious-looking person to pardon a great sin. Bassanio is responding to the song that has just been sung to encourage him. The song has warned him about the brevity of fancy.
3. Bassanio uses two examples in his speech to elaborate on how deceptive appearances can be. In the field of law, a corrupt case can be won through the use of eloquent argument; in religion, pious-looking people can justify and pardon a great sin by quoting the Bible. Bassanio, therefore, is not about to make his choice based on appearances alone.
4.
 - a. sober brow: a serious and pious looking person. In religion, one can be excused by a pious-looking person who quotes the Bible to justify the sin.
 - b. approve it with text: to justify (the sin) with the use of the Bible. Bassanio means how a sin can be pardoned by a 'sober brow' by quoting a religious text (the Bible).
5. Bassanio uses two other examples in the same speech to back up his argument. He criticizes cowards who wear the beards of Hercules, the Greek hero with superhuman strength, and Mars, the Roman god of war, without possessing any heroic qualities. Those whose nature is the 'lightest' (most immoral), feign beauty by making excessive use of cosmetics; others, whose heads are adorned by 'crisped snaky golden locks', are only wearing wigs, made from the hair of the dead.

Excerpt G

1. Bassanio is talking to Portia and the rest of the people gathered at the chamber to witness his test. The first two lines of the extract means that the most foolish and plain vices usually wear the appearance of virtue.

2. The idiom 'livers white as milk' signifies a weakling. According to Elizabethan belief, the liver was the seat of courage. As such, a liver that is white instead of the expected red, suggested that the person was weak and cowardly.
3.
 - a. stairs of sand: As stairs made of sand would not hold, the expression implies a deceptive and unreliable nature, that is not stable.
 - b. valour's excrement: An outward sign of valour, rather than the actual possession of courage. This harks back to the theme of appearance versus reality.
4. Bassanio cites two other examples in the passage that continues the theme of deceptive appearances. There are people of 'lightest' (most immoral) character whose beauty is 'purchased by the weight', i.e. they use cosmetics to appear beautiful. Others wear wigs, obtained from the head of a dead person, so they can have a head full of 'crisped snaky golden locks'.
5. The speech from which the extract has been taken focuses on the unreliability of appearances. A lot of ugliness is hidden by a glossy exterior. Men who are actually cowardly on the inside don the appearance of a Hercules or a Mars, desperate to appear as imposing and as courageous as the characters they imitate. Yet they still have 'livers white as milk'.

Excerpt H

1. The 'weight' in this line is a reference to the amount of cosmetics applied to make someone appear beautiful. Beauty, so to speak, is measured by how heavy the make-up is. However, the people with the 'lightest' of character (the most immoral) wear the weightiest of make-up.
2. The description 'crisped snaky golden locks' paints the image of curled, unrealistic golden hair that can only be wigs. It is also an allusion to Medusa, a monster in Greek mythology, who had slithering snakes for hair and had the power to turn those who gazed upon her into stone. These wigs are made from the hair

of the dead people that lie in their 'sepulchre'.

3. a. make such wanton gambols with the wind: to bounce in the wind as though they were playing in a lively manner. Bassanio describes the playful movement of the 'crisped snaky golden locks' waving in the wind.
b. the dowry of a second head: the legacy of another person's head, i.e. a wig. The 'crisped snaky golden locks' which are used as wigs by a living person are actually made from the hair of a dead one.
4. Bassanio's tirade against adornment suggests he values natural beauty to one built upon cosmetics and wigs. To him, anyone who purchases beauty 'by the weight' is bound to be immoral and treacherous. A truly beautiful person would not hide behind 'ornament', which to him leads to 'a most dangerous sea'.
5. Bassanio's speech is a meditation on how appearances can falsify and deceive. The examples given by him in the speech from which the extract has been taken all elaborate how people manipulate their exteriors to hide how rotten they are inside. Cowards wear the beards of Hercules or Mars, beauty is 'purchased by the weight', and officers of law and men of piety abuse their positions.

Excerpt I

1. 'Hard food for Midas' is an allusion to King Midas' story from Greek mythology. The greedy king was granted a wish that turned everything he touched into gold. To his dismay, even the food he touched turned into gold, and thus became too 'hard' to eat. Presenting this argument against gold, Bassanio rejects the gold casket.
2. Bassanio is referring to coins made of silver. Silver coins pass from man to man in their financial transactions, which makes them the 'pale and common drudge 'Tween man and man'.
3. The lead threatens rather than promise anything because it requires the suitor to give and hazard all he has. Gold, on the other hand, promises that the suitor shall 'gain what many

men desire’.

4. Bassanio had rejected gold earlier because ‘gaudy gold’ is all about appearance. In his speech, Bassanio had condemned the deception and unreliability of exterior attractiveness, such as cowards who wear the beards of Hercules and Mars, people who wear heavy make-up and showy wigs to hide their ugliness and immoral characters, and law officers and priests who abuse their positions for sinners. The gold casket, with its outward beauty and impressive promise, ‘Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire’, is as treacherous as ‘the beauteous scarf Veiling an Indian beauty’.
5. Yes, ‘joy’ indeed is the consequence of Bassanio’s choice, as in choosing lead, he makes the correct choice. Portia responds to her extreme joy with caution. She wants wishes for her happiness to come in moderation, lest she has to pay for it with much suffering.

Excerpt J

1. The speaker here is Bassanio. He found the ‘gentle scroll’ inside the lead casket. The scroll congratulates the suitor on winning Portia by not favouring outward appearances. It asks him to seek no other fortune, for Portia herself is worthy enough. Then, it instructs the suitor to claim his bride with a ‘loving kiss’, if he is pleased with the outcome of the test.
2. Bassanio means that he approaches Portia for a ‘loving kiss’, as instructed by the scroll inside the lead casket.
3. Bassanio compares his feelings to that of an anxious competitor who is partly reassured by the cheering of the spectators, ‘one of two contending in a prize, That thinks he hath done well in people’s eyes Hearing applause and universal shout’, and partly doubtful of his own victory, ‘still gazing, in a doubt /Whether those peals of praise be his or no’. He tells Portia he will not believe it until she confirms it for him.
4. a. contending in a prize: competing for a prize. Bassanio says that he is a contender who is reassured of his victory by ‘applause and universal shout’.

- b. giddy in spirit: to be dazed (by happiness). Reassured of his victory by people's applause and praise, Bassanio's spirit is so dazed by happiness that he cannot believe he has won.
5. Although the portrait and the scroll have confirmed Bassanio's victory, he still begs Portia to reassure him. This shows that Portia's feelings and acceptance are important to him, an attitude that sets him apart from her previous suitors.

Excerpt K

1. Portia transfers all her possessions to Bassanio. She wishes she were ten thousand times richer for him, who has won her hand.
2. In the previous lines, Portia compares Bassanio to Alcides (Hercules), and herself to Hesione. Hesione was a Trojan princess that the hero Alcides saved from being sacrificed to a sea monster. The difference between the two heroes is that Bassanio saves Portia for love, while Alcides saves Hesione in exchange for her father's horses.
3. Portia gives Bassanio her ring as a token of her love and commitment; if ever he loses it or gives it away, it shall mean that he loves her no longer. Bassanio assures her with the declaration that only death will part the ring from him.
4.
 - a. presage the ruin of your love: to foretell the end of [Bassanio's] love. Portia gives Bassanio her ring with the condition that if he ever loses it or gives it away, it will be the end of his love for her.
 - b. my vantage to exclaim on you: [Portia's] opportunity to accuse Bassanio of loving her no longer. If Bassanio loses the ring Portia has given him, it will be her opportunity to accuse him of no longer loving her.
5. Bassanio is left with no choice when, at the end of Act 4 Scene 1, Antonio begs him to gift the ring to Balthazar, the young lawyer from Rome who has just saved the latter's life and insisted to be given the ring as payment for his service. Since the lawyer is Portia in disguise, Bassanio does not lose the ring permanently, and get it back from his wife herself.

Excerpt L

1. The mistress and maid in this passage are Portia and Nerissa, respectively. Bassanio is referred to as 'my lord' by Gratiano. They are together because Gratiano accompanied Bassanio in the latter's mission to win Portia's hand in marriage.
2. Gratiano claims that he and his master do not waste time in the matters of love: 'for intermission No more pertains to me, my lord, than you'.
3. As Gratiano accompanied Bassanio, his romantic union with Nerissa depended entirely on his master winning the test for Portia. He could only get Nerissa when '[Bassanio's] fortune Achieved her mistress'.
4. Gratiano courted Nerissa while his master was waiting for the test. He 'beheld the maid' as Bassanio 'saw the mistress [Portia]'. He obtained Nerissa's promise that he can have her love only when '[Bassanio's] fortune Achieved her mistress'.
5. By saying that he has been 'swearing till my very roof was dry', Gratiano reminds us of an oath he had taken earlier in Act 2 Scene 2. On being told by Bassanio that he is 'too wild, too rude, and bold of voice', Gratiano had sworn that he would 'swear but now and then'. In Act 3 Scene 2, however, he claims his swearing has dried his mouth. So, he does not keep his oath, although it must be said that he breaks it for love.

Excerpt M

1. Portia is referring to the letter that Antonio has sent Bassanio. It has been brought by Salerio. Lorenzo and Jessica have accompanied Salerio.
2. The word 'shrewd' in this context means 'unpleasant'. Portia thinks that the letter might have bad news because Bassanio has turned pale. Nothing but the saddest news, like the death of a friend, can change so drastically 'the constitution Of any constant man'.
3. a. turn so much the constitution: to change the complexion of a person drastically. By reading Antonio's letter, Bassanio's constitution has changed drastically.

- b. What, worse and worse!: The change in Bassanio's complexion has gone from bad to worse after reading Antonio's letter.
4. Portia says that she has the right to know the contents of the paper because she and Bassanio are now united by love, and are soon to be married. She tells him, 'I am half yourself'.
5. Bassanio's reply to Portia's request serves as a full confession of how he got his means to fund his trip and courtship. He reveals that he had engaged his dearest friend to an enemy to procure a loan, making his state 'worse than nothing'. Although he does not yet tell her what has happened, his words suggest that something horrible is about to happen to his friend.

Excerpt N

1. The paper refers to Antonio's letter that Salerio has delivered to Bassanio.
2. Bassanio's wealth 'Ran in his veins' – he belongs to the nobility. He claims it is his only wealth because he has long since run out of money. In Act 1 Scene 1, he reminds Antonio how much he has 'disabled [his] estate' by spending more than his 'faint means would grant continuance'. The only thing of value he still completely owns is his noble blood.
3. Even though he has confessed to having nothing, Bassanio calls himself a braggart because he is ashamed of dragging his friend, Antonio, into trouble. To put himself at the same level as the other suitors, he requested a loan from Antonio, who in turn borrowed the money from Shylock. Now that Antonio is being sued by Shylock, who demands Antonio's pound of flesh, Bassanio feels guilty and calls himself worthless.
4. Bassanio describes the letter as 'the body of my friend, And ever word in it a gaping wound, Issuing life-blood'. The metaphorical language is used to describe the fatal payment Antonio has to make to Shylock – a pound of his flesh.
5. Antonio's letter is a dejected account of his losses, his creditors growing 'cruel', his drained resources and the forfeiture of his loan to 'the Jew'. Since his repaying Shylock's debt will claim his life, he tells Bassanio that the debt between them

is automatically cleared. He wishes to see Bassanio one last time, but only if his love (Portia) allows him to.

Excerpt O

1. These lines are spoken by Salerio and they are about Shylock. Apart from Salerio, the characters present in the scene are Bassanio, Portia, Nerissa, Gratiano, Lorenzo, and Jessica.
2. Salerio has brought the news of Antonio's recent heavy financial losses, and the forfeiture of his loan from Shylock. He believes the 'creature' – Shylock – wants to 'confound a man' because Shylock will only accept a pound of flesh as payment, not monetary compensation.
3. This 'creature' demands justice, i.e. he wants Antonio to pay him the pound of flesh, as agreed in their bond. If he does not receive this payment, he is ready to accuse the state of denying him an equal claim to justice, which was granted to all foreigners in the state of Venice.
4. The phrase 'freedom of a state' denotes certain privileges and rights enjoyed by its citizens. In this context, it refers to the right of justice, which was enjoyed by both citizens and foreigners alike, in Venice. In the next scene, Antonio tells Salarino that denying Shylock justice would deter other foreign businessmen from continuing trade relations with Venice.
5. Jessica informs the others that she overheard her father tell his friends, Tubal and Chus, that 'he would rather have Antonio's flesh, Than twenty times the value of the sum That he did owe him'. If 'law, authority, and power' does not intervene on Antonio's behalf, Jessica is certain that he will suffer a terrible fate at the hands of her father.

Excerpt P

1. Portia's exclamation is uttered upon hearing the amount of the loan. This is probably for two reasons: she is extremely wealthy, and the sum of three thousand ducats seems petty in comparison to a pound of human flesh, especially when the life of Bassanio's best friend is at stake.

2. Bassanio describes his friend as the 'kindest man', one who tirelessly and generously helps those who are in need. According to Bassanio, no one in Italy exemplifies the 'ancient Roman honour' of loyalty better than Antonio.
3. Portia's insistence on getting married before Bassanio leaves for Venice shows her presence of mind. She ensures that Bassanio legally inherits, and thereby, utilizes her finances as her husband. On an emotional level, she secures Bassanio for herself before any misfortune befalls his friend and takes Bassanio away from her.
4. Portia instructs Bassanio to marry her first. Then, she will give him gold worth twenty times the loan, so that he can free his friend from Shylock's clutches. Once that has been accomplished, Bassanio is to bring Antonio over to Belmont. In the meantime, she and Nerissa will live like 'maids and widows'.
5. Portia appears to have disregarded Jessica's comment about Shylock, 'That he would rather have Antonio's flesh Than twenty times the value of the sum That he [Antonio] did owe him'. Although the characters take her at face value, when she says she and Nerissa will 'live as maids and widows', the audience soon learns that she has other plans. As the play progresses, it transpires that she has in fact taken note of Shylock's obstinacy and thought of a plan to thwart his endeavours. It is still important for her to pretend otherwise, since she is planning to fight Antonio's case by disguising herself as a male lawyer.

ACT 3 SCENE 3

Excerpt A

1. Shylock is speaking these lines to Antonio, who appears before Shylock in chains. He is in this condition because, having lost his fortune at sea, he has defaulted on Shylock's loan and is awaiting trial.
2. Shylock's feud with Antonio is old and predates the forfeited

loan of three thousand ducats. They are two rival businessmen with opposing values – Antonio ‘lent out money gratis’ while Shylock is a usurer. Antonio has also fuelled Shylock’s bitterness with his vocal criticism of ‘the Jew’, whom he has apparently called a ‘dog’. The final straw in their already strained relationship comes with Jessica’s elopement with Lorenzo, a Christian and a friend of Antonio.

3. Shylock’s ‘fangs’ are a metaphor for his legal power, as a lender, over Antonio in the circumstances. He, though a foreigner, enjoys equal rights to justice in Venice and knows that he can get the payment he desires from Antonio.
4.
 - a. naughty: In this context, the word means good-for-nothing. Shylock accuses the jailer as ‘naughty gaoler’ for having brought Antonio out of prison on Antonio’s request.
 - b. fond: In this context the word means, foolish. Shylock says the jailer is foolish for granting Antonio’s request of bringing him out of prison.
 - c. abroad: In this context, bringing Antonio outside of the prison.
5. Shylock is confident that the Duke will grant him justice because he cannot be denied his right to justice. According to the law of Venice, both foreigners and citizens alike enjoyed an equal claim to justice. This shows that Venetian law took an unbiased position when it came to protecting the rights of those living in the city, citizen or alien.

Excerpt B

1. Shylock will not listen to Antonio. Antonio addresses the person he formerly called a dog ‘good Shylock’, which suggests that he is attempting to appeal to Shylock’s humanity for mercy. Salarino and the gaoler are also present in the scene.
2. The ‘Christian intercessors’ have been trying to persuade Shylock to relent and forgive Antonio, perhaps even convince him to accept money as payment. In Act 3 Scene 2, Salerio reported that ‘twenty merchants, The duke himself, and the magnificoes Of greatest port’ have attempted to sway Shylock. They could be the ‘Christian intercessors’ that Shylock refers to here.

3. Salarino, who is present in this scene, calls Shylock 'the most impenetrable cur That ever kept with men.' The reason behind this is Shylock's adamant attitude that he will not hear Antonio at all, and stubborn insistence, 'I will have my bond.'
4. Antonio knows that Shylock will never listen to his appeal because he has helped many people who approached him to save them from Shylock's forfeitures. Shylock's resentment, however, goes deeper than this, which is Antonio's humiliation of him and the Jewish race, as well as Antonio's criticism of his business dealings.
5. At the end of the scene, Salarino expresses hope that the duke will not allow Shylock to exact his payment the way he desires it. Antonio squashes this hope by reminding Salarino that the duke 'cannot deny the course of law'. Shylock, although a foreigner, has every right to get justice, like a Venetian.

Excerpt C

1. Antonio is talking to Salarino, who had expressed the hope that the duke 'Will never grant this forfeiture to hold' and stop Shylock from taking a pound of flesh from Antonio.
2. Antonio squashes Salarino's hope on the ground that the duke 'cannot deny the course of law'. The law in Venice granted both citizens and aliens an equal claim to justice. If the duke favours Antonio, a citizen, it will shake the confidence of foreign businessmen who has trade investments in Venice. This will result in a decline of trade and commerce.
3. Right after these lines, Antonio tries to brighten up the mood by making a joke about his unfortunate conditions. He has lost so much weight due to his recent losses and the prospect of impending death that he can 'hardly spare a pound of flesh' to Shylock.
4.
 - a. commodity: In this context, the term refers to legal rights. Antonio speaks of the legal rights of the foreigners in Venice, which cannot be denied to them.
 - b. strangers: Aliens or foreigners; those who are not a citizen of a particular state.

c. impeach: to cast doubts on the integrity of the law.

If foreigners are denied their rights in Venice, it will cast doubts on the laws of the state.

5. Antonio's final wish is that Bassanio comes to see him pay his debt, i.e. die in making the payment of a pound of flesh. This shows that Antonio loves his friend very much, and does not resent Bassanio for putting him in this unfortunate situation. He also says in the previous lines that his misfortunes have wasted him so much that he can 'hardly spare a pound of flesh To-morrow to my bloody creditor'. This attitude shows his courage to laugh and make jokes in the face of danger.

ACT 3 SCENE 4

Excerpt A

1. Lorenzo is addressing Portia in these lines. Antonio, who borrowed a sum of three thousand ducats from Shylock to help Bassanio court Portia, is about to give his creditor a pound of flesh in payment. Bassanio has gone to Venice to convince Shylock to accept monetary compensation.
2. Portia has sent relief to Antonio. She has given her husband, Bassanio, a sum of money equal to twenty times the principle of the loan.
3. This gentleman, Antonio, has helped Bassanio when he needed money to compete with Portia's other suitors. Antonio himself borrowed the money from Shylock, an old rival, upon the agreement that he shall pay a pound of flesh upon forfeiture of the bond. However, Antonio's fortunes are lost at sea, and his condition is precarious; having defaulted on his loan, Shylock is bent on claiming Antonio's pound of flesh.
4.
 - a. true conceit: In this context, 'conceit' means 'understanding'. Lorenzo praises Portia for having a good understanding of the reason for Bassanio's departure.
 - b. god-like amity: higher understanding. Portia has a superior understanding of the exigencies of the situation, and so is able to bear the departure of Bassanio even at such a juncture.

5. The phrase 'customary bounty' suggests that Portia has a natural inclination towards generosity. So far, Portia has proved to be a cautious, clever and witty woman, who knows what she wants and values loyalty. Although her speech about being unworthy of Bassanio is problematic, it is in keeping with the mindset of the age she lives in.

Excerpt B

1. Portia is speaking to Lorenzo. Lorenzo had praised her for her generosity, which shows not only in the liberal fund she had provided Bassanio to help repay Antonio's debt, but also in her willingness to send him away so soon after marriage to comfort his friend.
2. The 'companions' referred to here are Antonio and Bassanio. Portia has sent Bassanio to comfort and help Antonio who is in grave peril. She has also provided her husband a large sum of money to try and pay off Shylock.
3.
 - a. waste the time together: to spend the time together. Lorenzo is referring to Antonio and Bassanio as best of friends, who spend their time with each other.
 - b. bear an equal yoke of love: to be joined by the same bond of love (affection and friendship) as oxen are bound by the same yoke. Lorenzo describes Antonio and Bassanio's affection and friendship as 'an equal yoke of love'.
4. When Portia declares she has saved 'the semblance of my soul', i.e. Antonio, she wants Lorenzo and Jessica to believe that she is referring to the generous sum of money she gave Bassanio to pay off Shylock. However, it will emerge soon that she has a far more fail-safe plan in mind – one she intends to carry out covertly with Nerissa.
5. To change the topic, Portia says that her speech 'comes too near the praising of myself'. She then informs Lorenzo that she is entrusting him and Jessica with the management of her house until she and Bassanio returns, as she plans to 'live in prayer and contemplation, Only attended by Nerissa'.

Excerpt C

1. Portia commits the 'husbandry and manage' of her house to Lorenzo and Jessica. The phrase 'husbandry and manage' means the care and management of the household. Lorenzo and Jessica are to look after the day-to-day affairs of Portia and Bassanio's household.
2. To ensure Lorenzo's authority is accepted by her servants and housekeepers, Portia has already informed them of her plans to leave Lorenzo in charge until she and her husband, Bassanio, return.
3. Portia's and Nerissa's husbands have left because Bassanio's good friend, Antonio, is in danger of losing his life. To fund Bassanio's trip to Belmont, Antonio had borrowed a sum of three thousand ducats from Shylock, his rival. Having lost his fortune at sea, Antonio is left bankrupt. Since the loan is forfeited, Shylock demands Antonio to pay him with a pound of flesh, as previously agreed. Bassanio and Gratiano have gone to Venice to help Antonio.
4. In the eye of others, Portia plans to move to a monastery and 'live in prayer and contemplation Only attended by Nerissa' until Bassanio and Gratiano return. In reality, she and Nerissa are leaving for Venice, disguising themselves as a lawyer and his clerk, respectively. Portia's mission is to fight Antonio's case and save him from Shylock.
5. Portia says that she and her maid Nerissa will be staying at a monastery two miles off from her home. In the last Act, however, Portia's servant, Stephano, says that his mistress has been wandering about small shrines in the city and praying for a happy married life.

Excerpt D

1. Portia has always found her servant, Balthazar, honest and truthful. She expects him to act accordingly at the moment to make her plan successful.
2. Portia instructs Balthazar to go to Padua as swiftly as possible

and meet Doctor Bellario, her cousin. Balthazar is to hand over Portia's letter, bring 'what notes and garments' the gentleman gives him to Portia, who will be waiting at the port, ready to leave for Venice via the common ferry.

3.
 - a. all the endeavour of a man: all the effort that a man can muster. Portia asks Balthazar to use the best speed a man can gather and go to Padua.
 - b. imagined speed: All conceivable speed, i.e. as swiftly as Balthazar is capable of. With all conceivable speed, Balthazar should go to Padua to Doctor Bellario.
4. The 'garments' that the cousin could provide Portia are the robes of a lawyer. The 'note' will later turn up, in Act 4 Scene 1, as a letter from Bellario, informing the Duke of his illness, and his intention to have Portia (the disguised young lawyer) fight Antonio's case in his stead.
5. Balthazar's name appears in the play again, in the climactic Act 4 Scene 1, when Portia arrives at Venice dressed as a young man. She uses his name to pose as the lawyer that Bellario has sent in his place to help the Duke with Antonio's case.

Excerpt E

1. The 'work' that Portia had told Lorenzo she and Nerissa would be doing was to live in quiet contemplation in a monastery. Now, she is telling Nerissa that the two of them would be 'accoutred like young men' and make up tales of breaking the hearts of 'honourable ladies'.
2. Portia's and Nerissa's husbands, Bassanio and Gratiano, respectively, will be seeing them as young men, a lawyer and his clerk. They will be wearing men's clothes, and carry daggers.
3.
 - a. we are accomplished With that we lack: Portia and Nerissa will be endowed with the masculinity that they do not possess as women. This is a hint to the men's attire that they are going to don.
 - b. accoutred: to be dressed up. Portia and Nerissa will dress up as men and visit Venice.

4. Portia wagers that when she and Nerissa will dress up as young men, she will 'prove the 'prettier fellow of the two' and wear her dagger 'with the braver grace'. Her voice would be that of a boy who is growing into adulthood and her stride 'manly'. She will give accounts of fighting 'Like a fine bragging youth' and tell lies of how 'honourable ladies' died of heartbreak when she refused their love. Portia guarantees that when the others observe her behaviour, they will assume she has left school only a year before.
5. We see Portia and Nerissa next in Venice. While Portia is dressed as Balthazar, the young lawyer of Rome and Bellario's friend, and Nerissa is dressed as the lawyer's clerk. In Venice, they do not exhibit any of the behaviour they have aspire to in this scene, but sincerely play the role of a fair lawyer and his obedient clerk.

ACT 3 SCENE 5

Excerpt A

1. Launcelot is speaking to Jessica. He has just been telling her about how the sins of the father are 'laid upon the children'. Launcelot fears that Jessica is damned, and she must suffer for her father's (Shylock's) cruelty. Launcelot claims to speak honestly, but he could be teasing her.
2. Lorenzo is to be blamed more. By marrying Jessica, he has converted her to Christianity and added to the Christian population. This will in turn cause the price of pork to rise, with an increase in pork-eaters.
3. In this context, 'This making of Christians' refers to conversion to Christianity by marriage. Lorenzo has made his wife, Jessica (a Jew), a Christian by marrying her. It will save Jessica from damnation – a fate she was to suffer otherwise, due to her Jewish father's (Shylock's) sins.
4. a. we were Christians enow before: There were enough of us Christians before Jessica was added to the population.

- b. if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money: If all the Jews, who are forbidden to eat pork, convert to Christianity, and begin to eat pork as well, then the Christians will not have a slice of bacon left for cooking on the fire.
5. Lorenzo enters the scene after this exchange. He tells Launcelot that he will grow jealous if the latter keeps talking privately to Jessica. He then dismisses Launcelot to prepare dinner, which is responded to by Launcelot's wit of a 'fool'.

Excerpt B

1. Lorenzo and Launcelot are in a garden in Portia's house, Belmont. Jessica is also with them.
2. Lorenzo is the temporary master of Portia's house at Belmont. Portia has given him this role, which he must fulfil until she and her husband, Bassanio, return from Venice.
3. By saying that the servants all have 'stomachs', Launcelot means that they all have appetites. Lorenzo had asked him to bid the servants 'prepare for dinner'; Launcelot deliberately misreads his words and answers that the servants, being hungry, are ready for dinner.
4. Lorenzo is playing with two different meanings of the word 'cover' here. To 'cover' is to lay the table for a meal, and to 'cover' is also to put on one's hat.
5. In this exchange, Launcelot puns on the word 'cover'. To 'cover' is to lay the table for a meal; to 'cover' is also to put on a hat. Both meanings are appropriate in the context. Lorenzo wants the servants to get the dinner ready, and lay (cover) the table, 'Will you cover, then, sir?', he asks Launcelot. The latter, however, deliberately misconstrues it as wearing a hat. He replies that he knows his place as an inferior and cannot therefore cover his head in the presence of his master, 'Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.'
6. After Launcelot leaves, Lorenzo marvels at his ability to use words with different meanings, effectively. He says that he has

known professional fools who try for the same effect, and end up confusing their joke. Lorenzo is clearly praising Laucelot for his (twisted) wit. A few lines earlier, he has told Launcelot, ' . . . what a wit-snapper are you!'

Excerpt C

1. Jessica gives this answer to Lorenzo. Portia, Bassanio's wife, is 'past all expressing', that is Jessica cannot express in words how good Portia is.
2. Lorenzo and Jessica are sitting in a garden in Portia's house at Belmont. They have been entrusted with the management of the house until Portia and Bassanio return. This arrangement became necessary because both of them have left for Venice to help Antonio.
3. Jessica argues that Bassanio is a lucky man for winning Portia's hand and should 'live an upright life' to deserve her. If he fails to live an honourable life, then he should never go to heaven.
4. According to Jessica, Portia is unique, and cannot be described in words. If two gods were to play a game and wager two earthly women on the outcome, one being Portia, then a few more qualities would have to be added to the other woman to raise her to Portia's level. This 'poor rude world' has no equal for Portia.
5. Lorenzo immediately replies that he has the same qualities as a good husband that Portia has as a good wife. In the previous scene, he had praised Portia for her understanding of the value of true friendship shared by Antonio and Bassanio, and her generosity in allowing her husband to leave for Venice so soon after marriage for the sake of his dear friend.

ACT 4 SCENE 1

Excerpt A

1. Antonio addresses the Duke as 'Your grace'. The Duke has just told him that he feels sorry for him, since Antonio has come to defend himself against a heartless opponent who is incapable of showing mercy.
2. This scene is taking place at a court of justice in Venice. The Duke has taken 'great pains' trying to invalidate Shylock's rigorous appeal for justice, probably by looking for loopholes, and also trying to persuade Shylock to reconsider his demand for the pound of flesh.
3. Shylock stands obdurate. The 'rigorous course' followed by him is his relentless pursuit of justice. Shylock's fury has been caused by a combination of reasons: his long-standing rivalry with Antonio and the recent elopement of his daughter with a Christian, who is a friend of Antonio, and the subsequent loss of wealth due to Jessica's theft, which includes a ring gifted by his dear deceased wife, Leah.
4. Although Antonio talks of 'patience' and 'quietness of spirit' in his hour of great distress, these are qualities that he has not shown towards the person who now stands obdurate. Apart from publicly criticizing Shylock at the Rialto for charging interest, Antonio has called him a 'cut-throat dog', and belittled the Jew for his religion. On being called out, Antonio admits that he would abuse him in the same fashion again (Act 1 Scene 3). Antonio clearly does not practise what he preaches in times of good fortune.

Excerpt B

1. The 'fashion' of Shylock's malice is his cruel demand to Antonio to pay back his loan as per the terms agreed between them. Antonio had signed the bond on the condition that he would give Shylock a pound of his flesh, if he failed to clear the debt on time.

2. The Duke, as well as others, hopes that Shylock intends to change his mind at the last minute. They expect him to keep up the 'act' of demanding a pound of flesh till the last hour, and then, moved by 'human gentleness and love', refuse to accept the penalty of a pound of flesh, and give up a portion of the principal, in consideration of the heavy financial losses that Antonio has recently suffered.
3.
 - a. strange apparent cruelty: The strange cruelty that Shylock is presently showing towards Antonio, i.e. the demand for a pound of flesh.
 - b. loose the forfeiture: to refuse to accept the penalty of a pound of flesh from Antonio. In other words, the Duke and the others hope that Shylock will relieve Antonio of the harsh terms of their bond.
 - c. moiety of the principal: a portion of the amount owed by Antonio. The Duke hopes that Shylock would pardon a small portion of the amount Antonio owes him.
4. The Duke says that Antonio's condition is so unfortunate that even Turks and Tartars, who generally do not exhibit 'tender courtesy', would be moved to pity. Antonio has suffered financial losses that would ruin a 'royal merchant'. The Duke expects Shylock to change his terms and give a 'gentle answer'.
5. Shylock's immediately reminds the Duke that he has made his position clear on the matter. He will have the original terms of his bond fulfilled. If he is denied justice, it would only mean danger to the freedom and rights of Venice.

Excerpt C

1. Shylock is responding to the Duke in these lines. This person had asked him to give a 'gentle answer'. In this context, a 'gentle answer' means Shylock's withdrawal of his demand for the pound of flesh he seeks from Antonio, and a reduction of the principal of the loan to be repayed.
2. If he is denied justice, Shylock says that it will put into danger the freedom of Venice. Venice was an independent

state, but Shakespeare likens it to an English city holding a charter from the Crown.

3. When Shylock says 'it is my humour', he means that his desire to see the terms of his bond fulfilled is merely the wish of his emotions. To justify himself, he gives the examples of men who dislike 'a gaping pig', and others who might hate cats or the sound of a high-pitched bag-pipe. There is no justification for one's personal choice to loathe something.
4.
 - a. city's freedom: The freedom of a city holding a charter from the English Crown. Although Shakespeare used this expression in the play, this was not true about Venice, which was an independent state.
 - b. weight of carrion flesh: the pound of (rotten) flesh which Shylock will receive from Antonio. Shylock shows his stubborn nature, as he demands to have a pound of Antonio's 'carrion flesh than to receive Three thousand ducats'.
 - c. it is my humour: Shylock's preference for a pound of flesh to money is simply his desire to see a personal wish (humour) fulfilled.
5. The 'humour' revealed by Shylock at the end of his speech is nothing more than 'a lodged hate and a certain loathing I bear Antonio'. It clearly indicates that his demand for justice is, in reality, a pursuit of vengeance.

Excerpt D

1. The speaker of these lines is Antonio, and he is speaking to Bassanio.
2. Bassanio, to whom Antonio is speaking, seeks to soften Shylock's 'Jewish heart'. To describe the futility of such an endeavour, Antonio tells Bassanio that he might as well stand at the beach and bid the ocean to reduce the height of its tide, question the wolf as to why he makes the ewe mourn the death of its lamb, or forbid the mountain pines from moving and making a noise when blown about by the wind, for these tasks are easier than softening Shylock's 'Jewish heart'.

3.
 - a. *bate*: to reduce. Antonio tells Bassanio it is easier to ask the flood to reduce its height than soften Shylock's heart.
 - b. *use question with*: to ask a question. Bassanio can very well question a wolf why he let the ewe mourn the lamb, than seek mercy for Antonio from Shylock.
 - c. *fretten*: to be blown about. It is easier to tell the mountain pines not to make noise when blown by the wind than expect to soften Shylock's 'Jewish heart'.
4. In the preceding lines, Shylock uses the metaphor of allowing a serpent to sting twice before it is killed. The metaphor, used to justify his 'hardness', suggests that Antonio has done grievous harm to Shylock in the past and must be destroyed to prevent further suffering at his hand. Shylock's reasoning is that Antonio has injured him by attacking his reputation, and has always hated his Jewish race. While Antonio is not completely blameless, these reasons are not strong enough for Shylock to demand Antonio pay for such wrongs with his life.
5. At the end of his speech, the speaker, Antonio, requests the Duke to pass the judgement he deserves and let Shylock have his justice, as Antonio believes that the most difficult of tasks can be done than soften Shylock's 'Jewish heart'.

Excerpt E

1. Shylock is speaking to the Duke. The Duke has asked Shylock how he expected to be shown mercy in the after-life, since he is unwilling to show it to others. He is warning Shylock to relent.
2. In the following lines, Shylock tells the Duke that the pound of flesh he demands from Antonio has been bought by him at a high price. It is his by right.
3. In these lines, Shylock justifies his demand by comparing it to the use of slavery. The rich in Venice purchase slaves and make them do lowly and degrading tasks. Just as Shylock would not ask them to supply their servants with

freedom, luxury, and the choice to marry their heirs, they should not ask him to give up his right to obtain what he has 'dearly bought'.

4. a. abject and in slavish parts: to put (the servants) to tasks that are degrading and lowly. Shylock questions the Venetians about their treatment of their servants.
b. let their palates Be season'd with such viands: to let (the servants) taste the same delicious food that the masters eat. Shylock says he has never asked the rich Venetians to let their servants taste exquisite dishes, so they shouldn't ask him to forgo of his right to Antonio's pound of flesh.
5. Shylock's agreement is based on cold logic and underlying vengeance. He has lent Antonio three thousand ducats, and therefore 'dearly bought' his pound of flesh. That does not, however, mean that his reasoning is acceptable. He has been offered six times the principal owed to him. But his refusal of the generous sum shows he is only after revenge, and not justice, and that makes him a petty and cruel person.

Excerpt F

1. Antonio says this to Bassanio. Bassanio had asked him to have 'Good cheer' and 'courage', encouraged by the arrival of news from Padua. Bellario, whom the Duke has requested for help, has sent letters through a messenger.
2. Just before the lines, the Duke is told that a messenger has arrived with letters from Bellario, the lawyer from Padua who is helping the Duke in the case.
3. Antonio describes himself as a diseased ram among a flock of sheep, and as a rotten fruit that is the first to fall from the tree. The metaphors imply that Antonio is doomed; he has been marked for death, so he will die, also reflecting his pessimistic attitude in the situation.
4. This extract brings out Antonio's occasional pessimism and melancholic nature. He has plenty of supporters (while Shylock has none), yet his only request is for the Duke to pass the

sentence quickly. He is very despondent and morbid, and lacking in fighting spirit, has completely surrendered to the situation. He even tells Bassanio, 'You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio, Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.'

5. If Bassanio were to write an epitaph for Antonio under the present circumstances, it would be a praise of his generosity. At the end of Act 3 Scene 2, Bassanio had described his friend as 'The dearest friend to me, the kindest man, The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit In doing courtesies'. Of all the men in Italy, it is in Antonio in whom the 'ancient Roman honour' appears best.

Excerpt G

1. Gratiano calls Shylock 'inexcrable dog'. Shylock had been sharpening his knife to 'cut the forfeiture', that is, the pound of flesh, from Antonio. He had also declared that no prayers would change his decision. It is Shylock's stubborn and ruthless attitude to exact the pound of flesh from Antonio that makes him an 'inexcrable dog'.
2. By 'for thy life . . . accused', Gratiano blames justice for allowing Shylock to live. Upon seeing Shylock so eager to take Antonio's pound of flesh, and thereby kill the man, Gratiano expresses anger at the law which allows Shylock to live, in spite of his cruelty.
3. Gratiano is referring to his Christian belief when he uses the words 'my faith'. Pythagoras, ancient Greek philosopher theorized that the souls of some men pass into animals in the afterlife, and vice versa. Gratiano believes that Shylock is one of those men who have the soul of an animal, because of his cruel attitude.
4. The word 'inexcrable' means unyielding. Shylock cannot be moved by any means. His inhuman thirst for revenge and his bloodlust has reduced him to the status of an animal, confirming Pythagoras's belief that the soul of an animal has passed into the body of a man. Thus he is an 'inexcrable dog'.

5. At the end of the speech, Shylock advises Gratiano to 'repair his wit', lest it falls to 'careless ruin'. Unless Gratiano's shouting can break the legality of Shylock's bond, his ranting will only succeed at harming his own lungs. Although he was right in what he said about Shylock, Gratiano deserves this rebuke to some extent. His speeches are often insincere or useless, and he can be immodest and rude. Even Bassanio has had to warn him to tame his 'wild behaviour' before leaving for Belmont (Act 2 Scene 2).

Excerpt H

1. The speaker of these lines is Bellario, the lawyer of Padua. He has addressed these lines in a letter to the Duke, who had asked for his help with the case.
2. The Duke had requested Bellario to help him with the case. Bellario's expertise is required to find some loophole that would save Antonio from certain death.
3. Balthazar is a young lawyer of Rome, who is actually Portia in disguise. Bellario has instructed Balthazar to defend Antonio in his stead. In preparation for the case, Portia has disguised herself as Balthazar, looked through many law books with Bellario and has also been given Bellario's expert opinion on the matter to present in the case.
4. a. loving visitation: a friendly visit. Balthazar (the lawyer) was paying a 'loving visitation' to Bellario, when the Duke's letter arrived at Bellario's.
b. at my importunity: at my earnest request. Bellario's letter says that the lawyer, Balthazar, has taken up the case at his 'importunity'.
5. Bellario praises Balthazar for his considerable learning and wisdom at the end of these lines. Although the young lawyer has been 'furnished' with Bellario's expert opinion, it has been 'bettered with his own learning'.
6. Apart from the young lawyer, one of Portia's servants is known by the name of Balthazar. Since the lawyer is Portia herself

in disguise, she has taken the name of the real Balthazar, her servant.

Excerpt I

1. Portia is at the court in Venice where Antonio's trial is being held. She is disguised as 'Balthazar', a young lawyer from Rome, in this place. She says these lines to Shylock, who wants to know why he should show mercy to Antonio.
2. When Portia says 'The quality . . . strained', she means that mercy is a virtue that must come naturally. Her argument is a response to Shylock, who has asked her 'On what compulsion' must he show mercy towards Antonio.
3. Mercy is 'twice blessed' because it blesses both he who gives and he who receives it.
4. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest' means that mercy shown by the most powerful is the greatest, and also the most powerful weapon possessed by the mightiest of men is mercy.
5. Mercy becomes the throned monarch better than his crown because it is the greatest virtue a king could possess. A crown is a symbol of temporary power and dread, but mercy is 'an attribute to God himself'.
6. A king comes closest to God when the justice he gives is merciful. God is kind and forgiving; people pray to him for hope and salvation. A king who shows mercy is therefore godlike in his ruling.

Excerpt J

1. Portia's argument prior to these lines likens mercy to 'the gentle rain from heaven', which drops on the giver and the receiver as a blessing. It is a quality that comes naturally, and is thus part of being human. Mercy shown by the mightiest of men is the greatest, and also the most powerful weapon of the mightiest of men is mercy. It suits the king better than his crown, since the crown is only a symbol of temporal power, while mercy is 'an attribute to God himself'. Therefore, the

king whose justice is seasoned with mercy is one who comes closest to being godlike.

2. Before reiterating his demand for justice, Portia asks Shylock to consider the consequences of getting absolute justice. Nobody is perfect; humans are bound to commit a wrong at some point or the other. If justice were to take the strictest course, no one would receive salvation. Therefore, Shylock should be wary of casting the first stone.
3. Portia maintains that the Jew 'must' be merciful because the justice he seeks involves the death of a human being. Shylock has been offered six times the loan amount; his acceptance of this sum should resolve the case, if he so desires. A few lines prior to her speech, she has described Shylock's suit as one that has 'a strange nature'.
4. No, the bond is not foolproof that mercy has to be the only recourse. Portia is the only person who has seen the loophole in the terms. While Antonio has agreed to give Shylock a pound of his flesh, nowhere is it mentioned that Shylock is entitled to a 'jot of blood' from Antonio, a fact that Portia will use to Antonio's advantage. Since flesh cannot be cut without blood, Shylock has no choice but to withdraw.

Excerpt K

1. Before these lines, Bassanio had offered to pay Shylock 'twice the sum', that is six thousand ducats. If not sufficient, he would pay ten times the amount of loan or lose his hands, head and heart.
2. By 'malice bears down truth' Bassanio means that hatred overcomes everything, even the truth. He makes this conclusion because Shylock has been offered payment that far exceeds the amount he loaned to Antonio. Even then he insists on having the pound of flesh instead. Such cruelty and hatred cannot be cured by anything.
3. Bassanio's words 'To do . . . little wrong' are a direct request to Balthazar (Portia) to misuse the law and refuse Shylock justice.

Although this would be wrongful, it would accomplish a great deed by saving Antonio's life.

4. A few lines earlier, Gratiano had cried the following words: 'for thy life let justice be accused'. As justice is responsible for sparing Shylock's life, it is to be blamed. So there would be no harm in defying the law, as Bassanio now suggests.
5. Portia's response to Bassanio's suggestion is that no power in Venice can alter a sealed agreement; Shylock cannot be denied justice. It will act as a bad precedent and allow further errors in judgement in future.
6. Shylock reacts enthusiastically to Portia's suggestion, calling her a 'Daniel' who has come to secure justice.

Excerpt L

1. Antonio responds 'But little' when asked to speak for himself. His words are addressed to Balthazar (Portia). He expresses his despondency and lack of fighting spirit here, surrendering to the worst of his fate.
2. Antonio's words 'Grieve not . . . for you' are addressed to Bassanio, a reference to how he fell to this misfortune. Bassanio's urgent need of money had resulted in the loan from Shylock, and therefore the bond of a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio, however, does not want Bassanio to feel responsible and guilty for his sorrow fate.
3. The usual custom of Fortune is to let the 'wretched man' lose all his wealth and live to old age in desperate poverty. By giving Antonio an early death, she has spared him from the 'lingering penance Of such misery'.
4. After these lines, Antonio asks Bassanio to commend him to Portia and tell her that he, Bassanio, was truly loved by him (Antonio). He then asks Bassanio not to repent for him, for he does not repent paying his beloved friend's debt.
5. Antonio ends the speech by asking Bassanio to commend him to Portia and to avoid repenting for him, since he does not regret losing his life to pay his dear friend's debt. This shows

us the selflessness of Antonio, a quality also proved by his not charging interest on his debtors. Whatever shortcomings Antonio may have, he is a generous and loyal friend, and selfless in not wanting to jeopardize the happiness of his friend after his own death.

Excerpt M

1. Shylock is at the court in Venice where Antonio's trial is being held. The Christian husbands he is referring to are Bassanio and Gratiano, who, according to Shylock, belittle their wives' worth. Bassanio has said that his wife, and all the world are 'not esteem'd above thy [Antonio's] life', while Gratiano wishes his wife were dead and gone to heaven to beg some power there to change 'this currish Jew [Shylock]'.
2. Shylock's exclamation is uttered after Bassanio and Gratiano declare what they would sacrifice to save Antonio and curse him (Shylock). Bassanio states that he would gladly sacrifice everything, even his wife who is 'as dear to me as life itself' to deliver Antonio, as his 'wife, and all the world, Are not with me [Bassanio] esteem'd above thy [Antonio's] life. Gratiano remarks that he would rather his wife (Nerissa) were dead and gone to heaven so she could 'Entreat some power to change this currish Jew', i.e. change Shylock's mind. Portia and Nerissa reply that Bassanio and Gratiano are lucky their wives are absent. Portia maintains that Bassanio's wife would not be thankful to hear such a declaration, while Nerissa remarks that it would result in an unhappy home.
3. Shylock wishes that his daughter, Jessica, had married 'the stock of Barrabas' (a descendant of Barrabas) instead of a Christian. Barrabas was a criminal in the Bible. When the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, asked the mob to choose between Barrabas and Jesus, the mob chose Barrabas to be freed and Christ to be crucified. However, after hearing Bassanio's and Gratiano's statements, to put Antonio's life above their wives, he wishes his daughter had married one from 'the stock of Barrabas, instead of a Christian.

4. Shylock asks Balthazar (Portia) to 'pursue sentence'. The latter's sentence awards him his bond of flesh, which he can take from Antonio as long as his knife does not draw a single drop of blood.

Excerpt N

1. Portia asks Shylock to 'Tarry a little'. Shylock is preparing to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh, as per the term of the contract.
2. The point that changes the entire course of the play is Portia's (Balthazar's) citing of the loophole in the bond: Shylock can cut a pound of flesh as long as he does not shed 'One drop of Christian blood'. Now, the play sees the tables turned on Shylock, as he loses his bond and fortune, while Antonio is given a half of Shylock's wealth as penalty, and walks safely out of court.
3. If a drop of blood is shed in cutting the flesh from Antonio's body, then Shylock's lands and goods, 'by the laws of Venice', will be confiscated by the state, as exacting blood was not a proviso in the contract.
4. The next charge that Portia brings against Shylock when she says 'The law hath yet another hold on you' is the accusation against the alien, Shylock, for seeking the life of a citizen, Antonio. As penalty, half of his fortune is awarded to Antonio, and the other to the state. As for his life, it lay at the sole mercy of the Duke.
5. The stress on 'Christian' blood is significant in the context of the play. Jews were perceived as shrewd and calculating businessmen in the Elizabethan era, while Christianity was perceived as the upholder of values such as mercy and honesty. Shylock is always condemned for his religion; even his daughter wants to be saved from the sins of her father by her Christian husband. It is an example of anti-Semitic prejudice prevalent in the Elizabethan times.

Excerpt O

1. Shylock has been spared his life by the Duke. Half of his

wealth has been given to Antonio, and the other half to the state, which the Duke has reduced to a fine. Portia insists that Antonio's share will not be deducted, so Shylock has only a meagre portion left to his name.

2. Shylock had been charged with the crime of seeking the life of a citizen. As an alien, guilty of such an accusation, he must lose half of his wealth to the party against whom he had contrived (Antonio), and the other half to the state. As for his life, it is left to the mercy of the Duke.
3. Shylock's words are a sarcastic reply to the 'pardon' he receives from the Duke. There is no point to being spared his life when the major share of his wealth has been taken away from him. It is akin to having a house without the necessary 'prop' (pillar), as without his wealth, Shylock has to live a life of near penury.
4. Antonio's conditions are to transfer his share of the compensation as well as Shylock's remaining assets to Lorenzo upon Shylock's death. The final 'mercy' shown by him is the forced conversion of Shylock to Christianity.
5. While Shylock's hatred for Antonio is fuelled by the latter's prejudice and humiliation of him, as well as criticism of his business dealings, his thirst for revenge is extreme. He deserves to lose his assets to the state and pay Antonio a large amount in damages, as he has sought the life of Antonio. The forced conversion to Christianity, however, is racist and unnecessary, which reflects the Elizabethan attitude towards the Jews. It is not Shylock's religion that makes him cruel, but his vengefulness, so forcing him to change his religious affiliations is an undeserved punishment in itself.

Excerpt P

1. Portia is talking to Antonio and Bassanio. The payment being offered to her (as Balthazar) is the sum of three thousand ducats that was originally due to Shylock. The payment has been offered for saving them from 'grievous penalties', namely Antonio's death.

2. Portia considers herself 'well paid' because she is satisfied with what she has achieved. Portia has been successful at saving Antonio's life and punishing Shylock for his severe demands. That is a good enough payment for her.
3.
 - a. delivering you: saving you. To deliver is to save someone, and Portia has been satisfied in saving Antonio's life.
 - b. mercenary: commercial; having interest in monetary gains. Portia claims that saving Antonio's life was payment in itself and she has no interest in other monetary gains.
4. On the surface, Portia's request to the two gentlemen to 'know' her the next time they meet seems to be a request to maintain their new friendship. Masquerading as Balthazar, the lawyer, she expects Antonio and Bassanio to remember her when they meet again. However, what she actually means is that Bassanio has failed to see through her disguise so far, and she hopes he will recognise her (as Portia) when they meet again.
5. Portia finally takes Antonio's gloves and Bassanio's ring as payment. She insists on being given the ring because it is the same ring she had given Bassanio as a token of her love. Bassanio had sworn never to lose it or give it away. Portia wants to test that oath. Bassanio is trapped between his friendship and honour for Antonio, and love and commitment towards Portia. He ultimately chooses the former, upon much persuasion.

Excerpt Q

1. The ring referred to in this passage is the one Portia had given to Bassanio. He does not want to give it to Balthazar (Portia) because he has sworn to his wife that he will neither lose it, nor sell it, nor give it away.
2. Bassanio offers Portia (Balthazar) the costliest ring in Venice, which he will obtain through a public announcement. He is willing to go to such lengths since he cannot give Portia's ring away, which is a symbol of his wife's love.
3. Portia responds that Bassanio first teaches her to beg

(for payment), and then shows her how beggars should be answered, by refusing her the ring. By telling Bassanio that he is 'liberal in offers', she means that he makes generous claims in offering a payment, but is unwilling to give her the thing she wants as the payment (the ring).

4. Bassanio's defence is that the ring was given to him by his wife. When Portia put the ring on his finger in Belmont, she made him swear that he should 'neither sell nor give nor lose it'. However, as Balthazar, Portia retorts that such an excuse is often made by men who want to 'save their gifts'. If Bassanio's wife knew what service Balthazar had rendered (by saving Antonio), she would not begrudge him for giving this ring away.
5. Portia (Balthazar) asks for the ring to test Bassanio's faith. Bassanio refuses to give her the ring, with apologies and offers of alternative gifts. It is Antonio's coaxing that changes his mind. Bassanio is guilty of breach of faith, since he had sworn to his wife not to part with the ring. However, he deserves forgiveness, as he does it all for Antonio's sake; it is because of Antonio that he could win Portia's hand. Since Antonio has just escaped a grievous fate that he would have suffered on account of Bassanio, awarding the ring to the man who saved Antonio's life (Balthazar) justifies Bassanio's parting with the ring.

ACT 4 SCENE 2

Excerpt A

1. Portia is talking to Nerissa, who is disguised as her clerk. They are in a street in Venice. They will return to Belmont, now that their mission of saving Antonio is accomplished.
2. Portia had asked for the deed to be drawn up. The deed will 'be well welcome to Lorenzo' because it states that he is the heir to Shylock's remaining wealth, in addition to receiving the compensation that is due to Antonio.
3. Portia's and Nerissa's husbands are Bassanio and Gratiano, respectively. They will reach home a day before their husbands

arrive at Belmont. They had left their home with the excuse that they were going to spend some time at a monastery till their husbands return from Venice.

4. Gratiano enters the scene immediately after these lines. He has come to deliver a message from Bassanio, who has not only sent Portia's ring to the lawyer, but also sent an invitation to dinner.
5. Gratiano's errand leads to his giving Portia's and Nerissa's rings to the lawyer and his clerk, who are Portia and Nerissa, respectively, in disguise. This 'betrayal' leads to a domestic quarrel in the next scene, in which Nerissa pretends to accuse Gratiano of gifting her ring to a woman. Their argument in turn leads to Portia realizing Bassanio having committed the same crime, and the two women have fun at their husbands' expense, just as they plan to in this scene.

Excerpt B

1. The invitation to dinner 'cannot be'; Portia is refusing Bassanio's invitation to dinner, since she and Nerissa have to leave for Belmont as soon as possible. They intend to reach home a day before Bassanio, Gratiano, and Antonio.
2. The 'youth' here is Nerissa, disguised as Balthazar's (Portia's) clerk. 'He' has to be shown Shylock's house because the latter needs to sign the deed that names Lorenzo heir to his wealth.
3. Nerissa, as the lawyer's clerk, intends to coax Gratiano to give her the ring that she had, as his wife, presented to him as a symbol of their love.
4. Portia and Nerissa expect that Gratiano will give up his ring, just as Bassanio has given his, and the two husbands will later swear that they had gifted the rings to men, not women. When that happens, the two women intend to 'outface' and 'outswear' their husbands, accusing them of having lovers, whom they have gifted their rings.
5. Both Portia and Nerissa are courageous and smart women, and impeccable actors to boot. They have successfully kept

up their disguises of lawyer and clerk through the whole trial and even after it is over. Their demand of the two rings shows that they want to test their husbands' resolve. The two men fail to stick to their respective oaths. However, Portia and Nerissa manage to take the situation lightly instead, probably because they are the ones the rings are given to, and they pretend to be men at the time they receive the rings. This also reflects their characters as witty and fun-loving, who play pranks on their husbands to test their love, and continue with the act in the next scene.

ACT 5 SCENE 1

Excerpt A

1. Lorenzo and Jessica are at Belmont, in the garden of Portia's villa. They are discussing various ill-fated lovers in mythology, while taking a romantic stroll in the garden.
2. Troilus was a son of King Priam of Troy. In the medieval retelling of the story of the Trojan War, Troilus and Cressida (Cressid) were lovers, who had vowed eternal fidelity to each other. After Cressida was taken into the enemy (Greek camp during an exchange of prisoners, she fell in love with Diomedes. However, Troilus would stand on the walls of Troy every night, looking at the Greek camp, where his beloved stayed.
3. Thisbe is the tragic heroine, who loved Pyramus in a Babylonian story, retold by the Roman poet Ovid in *Metamorphoses*. The lovers could only communicate through a chink in the wall between their houses. Defying their parents' refusal to their union, the lovers decided to elope and meet at night under a mulberry tree. Thisbe arrived first, but heard the roar of a lion and ran away, dropping her scarf which the lion tore to pieces with jaws stained with the blood of a recently killed ox. Seeing the blood-stained scarf, Pyramus thought Thisbe had been killed, and stabbed himself. Upon returning, Thisbe saw Pyramus's body and stabbed herself.
4. The next character mentioned by Lorenzo is Dido, the Carthaginian queen who fell madly in love with the Trojan hero, Aeneas. However, when Aeneas left her to found the city of Rome, Dido killed herself out of grief. Lorenzo tells Jessica that it must have been on a night like this that Queen Dido walked sadly on the seashore with a willow in her hand and waved to her lover Aeneas to come back to her.
5. The last characters alluded to by Jessica and Lorenzo are Medea and Aeson, father of the Greek hero, Jason. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid recounts the story of how Medea

restored Aeson to life. Gathering herbs by the moonlight, Medea used her spells on them, restoring old Aeson to life as a youth. Elizabethans believed that certain herbs gained special qualities when gathered on a moonlit night.

Excerpt B

1. The word 'steal' is a pun on both the literal meaning of theft, and also to 'steal' as in to run away. Jessica has not only stolen herself (eloped) from her father, Shylock, but also stolen (robbed) money and jewels from him in her escape. Among all the valuables she has stolen was a turquoise ring, a cherished possession of Shylock, given to him by his dear deceased wife, Leah.
2. There is a pun on 'unthrift love', meaning both 'careless devotion' and 'penniless lover', that is Lorenzo.
3. The 'unthrift love', Lorenzo, had helped Jessica escape from her house, dressed as a page boy. The masquerade had helped them escape unnoticed, coupled with the fact that Shylock had gone to dine at Bassanio's, leaving the charge of the house to Jessica.
4. Jessica is not being serious when she accuses Lorenzo of making false vows. She only responds in a witty banter to Lorenzo's playful accusation of her of stealing 'from the wealthy Jew', and eloping 'with an unthrift love'. It could perhaps also refer to his late arrival at her house the night of her planned escape. Lorenzo responds by calling her a shrew, a nagging woman, and says that he forgives her false accusation.
5. Lorenzo and Jessica both refer to four classical stories, in Graeco-Roman mythology. The first allusion is to Troilus, a son of the Trojan King Priam, who fell in love with Cressida. However, Cressida was taken into the enemy (Greek) camp, and Troilus would stand on the walls of Troy every night, looking at the Greek camp, where his beloved stayed. Pyramus and Thisbe were also ill-fated lovers, forbidden by their parents to meet each other. However, the night they decide to elope,

Pyramus comes late and finds Thisbe's blood-stained scarf, which she had dropped in her flight from a lion. Believing her to be dead, he stabs himself to death, and she follows suit. The Carthaginian Queen Dido also suffered heart-break, when she fell in love with the Trojan hero Aeneas. However, Aeneas left her to found the city of Rome, and she killed herself out of grief. Shakespeare has beautifully portrayed the picturesque scene of the moonlit night through these allusions, as Jessica and Lorenzo take a romantic stroll in the garden of Portia's villa..

Excerpt C

1. Stephano responds to Lorenzo's question, 'your name, I pray you, friend?' Jessica is also present. The scene is taking place at Belmont, in the garden of Portia's villa, in the night.
2. Stephano brings a message that his mistress, Portia, will arrive at Belmont before dawn. He then asks if Lorenzo knows whether his master, Bassanio, has returned. Stephano needs to know if he must make preparations to welcome his master. However, to the audience the question holds more significance, as it is necessary that Portia and Nerissa return home before Bassanio and Gratiano, to conceal the true identity of Balthazar, the lawyer, and his clerk.
3. According to Stephano, Portia, accompanied by 'a holy hermit and her maid', has been stopping at small shrines where she has been praying for a happy married life.
4. Portia and Nerissa have been to Venice disguised as a young lawyer, Balthazar, and his clerk, respectively. This disguise has opened the path to a fortuitous start to their married lives, as all the problems have been resolved. Had Antonio suffered the worst, Bassanio would have been too guilty to lead a happy married life, since it was for his courtship that Antonio had mortgaged his 'pound of flesh'. Now that Portia has salvaged Antonio, she and Bassanio can start a happy married life, free of any guilty conscience.

5. Launcelot enters to give news of his master's return. The master is Bassanio.

Excerpt D

1. Lorenzo is speaking. By 'we' he means Jessica and himself. They will sit outside on the bank in the moonlight and listen to Stephano's music.
2. The lines 'soft stillness and the night Become the touches of sweet harmony' mean that the stillness and silence of the night suits the music. Later, as Portia hears 'sweet music' coming afar from her house, she expresses the same feeling that music is something that is enjoyed more in the stillness of night than during the commotion of the day, when many a sound combine to create a cacophony, 'Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.'
3. The 'patines of bright gold' and the 'orb' are the stars and planets, respectively. The Elizabethans believed that each planet or star created a harmonious sound with their movements in the universe. This theory is said to have originated with Pythagoras and described by Plato as 'the music of the spheres'.
4. This is the notion said to have originated with Pythagoras and described by Plato as 'the music of the spheres'. The Elizabethans believed in this theory that the motion of each planet or star produced a sound, the combination of which created harmony in the universe.
5. Lorenzo says, 'Such harmony is in immortal souls; But whilst this muddy vesture of decay Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.' He means to say that such harmonious and angelic music, as created by the heavenly bodies, is also produced by our immortal souls. But so long as our impure mortal human body encloses the immortal soul, we cannot hear it.

Excerpt E

1. Lorenzo is speaking to Jessica when he says her spirits are

attentive. By this he means to say that because she is so pure and fair, her soul is receptive to the music produced by our souls. Jessica had said that she feels sad rather than cheerful when she hears beautiful music.

2. The effect of music on a 'wild and wanton herd' is similar to its effect on Jessica. Lorenzo says that 'If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound, Or any air of music touch their ears, You shall perceive them make a mutual stand . . . by the sweet power of music' meaning that even undisciplined wild animals may be calmed by music.
3. a. Fetching mad bounds: jumping about madly. Lorenzo describes the behaviour of wild animals which can only be tamed by sweet music.
b. make a mutual stand: all stand still together. The wild beast stand still together, their untamed nature swayed by the power of music.
4. Lorenzo immediately refers to the Roman poet, Ovid. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid wrote of Orpheus, a famous musician in Greek mythology and the son of the Muse Calliope. Presented with the lyre of the god Apollo, Orpheus sang and played music so beautifully that animals, plants, and even lifeless objects moved from their places and followed the sound of his music.
5. A man who has no appreciation for music is a man 'fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affections dark as Erebus: Let no such man be trusted.' This is a direct slight on Shylock's character. In Act 2 Scene 5, Shylock had given explicit orders to Jessica to close all windows and let no music enter his house: '. . . stop my house's ears, . . . Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter My sober house.'

Excerpt F

1. Lorenzo refers to the Roman poet, Ovid. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid wrote of Orpheus, a famous musician in Greek mythology and the son of the Muse Calliope. Presented with the lyre of

the god Apollo, Orpheus sang and played music so beautifully that animals, plants, and even lifeless objects moved from their places and followed the sound of his music. It proves that music has the ability to tame and calm even the wilderness of nature.

2. The power of music is the power to move the spirits of all living things. Lorenzo uses the example of Orpheus's ability to sway plants and animals with his music, and even move lifeless objects from their places. He also describes how the power of music can tame and bring to a standstill wild animals, despite their unpredictable nature.
3. 'Since naught so stockish, hard . . . doth change his nature' means there is nothing so stubborn, unfeeling, and full of anger, whose nature cannot be changed by music, at least for some time.
4. A man who is not moved by music is capable of treachery, suspicious plots and evil-doing. He is not to be trusted. Lorenzo describes such a man as 'fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils . . . Let no such man be trusted.' His affections being as dark as Erebus, home of the dead in Greek mythology.
5. Lorenzo's description is close to Shylock, who had sworn Jessica to lock out the sound of music and merriment from his house when he went out to meet Bassanio. In Act 2 Scene 5, Shylock says, 'when you hear the drum And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife . . . stop my house's ears, I mean my casements'.

Excerpt G

1. Nerissa had said in the previous line, 'When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.'
2. Portia says, 'So doth the greater glory dim the less: A substitute shines brightly as a king, Until a king be by; and then his state Empties itself, as doth an inland brook Into the main of waters.', meaning that a deputy will shine

as brightly as a king until the real king returned and outshone him. Then the glory of the deputy will vanish at once, just like a small brook flows into the sea, losing itself into the main water body.

3. Portia had seen a candle shining from her house afar. She observes, 'How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world', meaning as the light of a small candle can shine through the darkness, the smallest good deed shines in this vast wicked world.
4. The music is coming from her house. Portia observes that nothing is good in itself unless seen in its surroundings. She thinks the music sounds much sweeter now (in the beautiful moonlit night) than it does during the day, when there is a chaos of too many sounds. She uses birdsong as an example, saying that the nightingale might not be considered so beautiful if it were drowned out by the cackling of geese by day, and even the crows sing as sweetly as the lark, when there is nobody to listen to it, that is, in the stillness of the night.
5. Portia sees Lorenzo and Jessica. She asks them not to tell anyone that she and Nerissa have been absent from Belmont. She also tells Nerissa to instruct the servants to 'take No note at all of our being absent hence'.

Excerpt H

1. Bassanio tells Portia that 'We should hold day with the Antipodes, If you would walk in absence of the sun,' meaning that they should have day here as their Antipodes (the exact opposite point of the world) would, if Portia walked at night (in absence of the sun).' This is a high compliment for Portia's radiant beauty, which can light up the darkness.
2. Portia is playing on the word 'light'. She wishes herself to be radiant (light) and good, just as Bassanio has described her in the previous lines. But she does not wish to be 'light' in character, as in unfaithful to Bassanio, as this will make her husband 'heavy' (sad).

3. Bassanio has returned home from Venice where he has been attending the trial of Antonio. This has been a happy and welcome return, as Bassanio has come back jubilant with his friend Antonio safe.
4. Antonio and Gratiano has come home with Bassanio. Gratiano had fallen in love with Nerissa and they married before he left for Venice with Bassanio. She gave him a ring as a token of her love but he gave it away to Nerissa in Venice when she was disguised as Portia's clerk.
5. Portia says, 'But God sorts all'. However, it is Portia, who had a direct hand in the climax of the play. It is her decision to go to Venice, in the guise of a man, that sort the mess created by the men. It is her ruling that Shylock may not claim his pound of flesh, nor his money from Bassanio, that ultimately saves Antonio from a gruesome death, and Bassanio from a guilty conscience. So, while there is a common theme of fate and chance throughout the play, it is human choice and human decision, along with wit and intelligence, which indeed sorts all.

Excerpt I

1. Gratiano is speaking to Nerissa. He gave the ring that she presented him after their wedding ceremony to the judge's young clerk in Venice.
2. Portia and Nerissa had pressured Bassanio and Gratiano to give up their rings while the women were in disguise. It is not the lost ring that upsets Nerissa (as it is not really lost), but the fact that Gratiano has parted with such a precious object, which is a token of Nerissa's love, so soon after receiving it.
3. Gratiano is disparaging the physical worth of the ring as a hoop of gold, a paltry ring That she [Nerissa] did give me.' Gratiano doesn't seem to care for, and see the ring as an important token of his love, and relationship with Nerissa. He does not understand the sentimental value it holds.

4. Nerissa is upset with Gratiano, and implies that he gave the ring to another woman, 'God's my judge, The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.' Gratiano, however, describes the clerk as a young boy who will certainly grow a beard when he grows into a man. He says the clerk was a talkative youth, short in stature: 'A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, No higher than thyself [Nerissa]'.
5. Portia blames Gratiano for parting so easily with his wife's gift. 'You were to blame, I must be plain with you, To part so slightly with your wife's first gift; A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger, And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.' She means to say that he was wrong to thoughtlessly give away something his wife gave him, no matter the physical worth of it. She further compares Gratiano to her husband Bassanio, and claims with conviction that he would never part with the ring she gave him for the greatest riches of the world.

Excerpt J

1. Portia is speaking to Bassanio who has just revealed that he, too, like Gratiano, has given away his ring.
2. Portia said that Bassanio should have known better than to part with the ring she gave him. He should have had the good sense to know the worth of the one (Portia) who gave it to him, and the value of his own honour in retaining it.
3. The man Portia is referring to is the man to whom Bassanio gave his ring, which is Portia herself in the guise of the young lawyer. She is speaking tongue-in-cheek, saying that any reasonable man would never accept a ring if it was defended with as much zeal as Bassanio claims he had himself shown.
4.
 - a. any terms of zeal: determination. Portia indirectly accuses Bassanio of not showing any zeal in defending his ring, and finally giving it to the lawyer.
 - b. wanted the modesty: lacking in good manners. Portia says who would be lacking in good manners as to ask for something which a person is determined not to give.

c. held as a ceremony: considered sacred and precious.

Portia says which man would be lacking in good manners as to ask for something that is held sacred by its owner.

5. Nerissa teaches Portia to believe that their husbands cannot be trusted, as they gave the rings to other women. This is, however, partly true because the women were Nerissa and Portia themselves, but in the guise of men when they took the rings. In Act 4 Scene 2, Portia had told Nerissa, 'We shall have old swearing That they did give the rings away to men; But we'll outface them, and outswear them too,' meaning that they would have their husbands swear a lot that they did give their rings to men and not women, of which Nerissa and Portia would accuse them.

Excerpt K

1. The sweet lady is Portia. She has accused Bassanio of parting too freely with the ring she gave him, and possibly to another woman.
2. Bassanio says he felt ashamed, that after the expert in civil law looked past his offer of three thousand ducats and asked only for the ring, which Bassanio refused to hand over, he had nothing else to give this man who'd miraculously saved the life of Antonio. He further adds that had Portia been there, she herself 'would have begg'd The ring of me [Bassanio] to give the worthy doctor'.
3. At the end of Act 4 Scene 1, Bassanio is convinced that the lawyer (the disguised Portia) is deserving of the ring, and Antonio also argues that this is worth more than his wife's command. Bassanio finally agrees and sends the ring to the lawyer. He does not mention this here, as he wants to save his friend Antonio from any censure, for it was Antonio who persuaded him to give the ring to the lawyer Balthazar.
4. By 'these blessed candles of the night', Bassanio means the stars. He swears by them that had Portia been there, she would have agreed that the man (the lawyer) deserved the ring for saving Antonio's life, and would have been

convinced that it was the right thing to do. The irony is that Portia was, in fact, there disguised as the lawyer Balthazar.

5. After much persuasion on his part, as well as, Antonio's intervention, Bassanio gets the ring back. When Antonio commits that Bassanio would never lose this new ring, and he himself is ready to 'bound again, My soul upon the forfeit', Portia hands it to Antonio, to give to Bassanio. As Bassanio realizes it is the same ring he gave the lawyer, Portia pretends to have acquired it from the lawyer himself.

Excerpt L

1. Portia has given Antonio both life and living. Disguised as the civil doctor, she has saved Antonio's life by turning the tables on Shylock, preventing the Jew from taking his pound of flesh. Furthermore, she has just handed Antonio a letter that reads 'for certain that my [Antonio's] ships Are safely come to road', ensuring the safety of his fortune and 'living'.
2. The 'good comforts' the clerk, Nerissa, has got for Lorenzo, is a deed of gift from Shylock, stating that all the possessions and wealth belonging to Shylock will go to Lorenzo after Shylock's death.
3. Nerissa is playing on the fact that she had been disguised as the lawyer's clerk. Since she is no longer the clerk, she will not charge Lorenzo a fee for the document (Shylock's deed of gift). However, the fee she had previously asked for as the lawyer's clerk, in Act 4 Scene 2, was the ring from Gratiano, which she had gifted him as his wife.
4. Lorenzo says, 'Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way Of starved people.' In Exodus 16:14 of the Bible, manna is described as the food that sustained the starving Hebrews after they left Egypt and wandered for 40 years before they reached the Promised Land. Gathered and used in part to make bread, it was called the 'bread from heaven', as the Hebrews believed it was sent from heaven.

5. This line deftly prevents an explanation, which can lead to the introduction of a new subject, the salvaging of Antonio's ship, in the play. This means the play is able to wrap up in a shorter amount of time. The fifth act is often the denouement in Shakespeare's plays, with the climax occurring in the fourth act. The fifth act must retain the momentum of the fourth without adding unnecessary detail that could bore the audience by stretching the play at length.