

Bitesize KS3 English Literature – Shakespeare Merchant of Venice – Plot summary transcript

The Merchant of Venice!?!? Wow! Get you Shakespeare!

You usually set plays in Italy! This is about a guy who uses his pal as a credit card, and about another guy that wants to literally cut up that credit card.

Yeah. It's a play about religious intolerance, fish bait and losing your ring to a cross-dressing lawyer.

This is an exciting place! A big trading station where all the merchants hang out.

There's Antonio, a merchant who's cash is all tied up in ships halfway across the galaxy.

Which is a pity because his buddy Bassanio asks him for 3000 ducats, so he can wow some rich chick called Portia.

What's her story? Well, her Dad died leaving her super-rich, but she can't choose her husband. Her dad set up some stupid guessing game where her suitors have to choose the right box. Was he Noel Edmunds?

"Choose the box you will!"

Back to these guys. Antonio agrees to guarantee Bassanio's loan, and they go to see a rich merchant called Shylock.

Shylock is an alien! Wow!

Is he an alien?

Hey! What are you?

A Jew?

And that's why they treat you like an alien?
That is nasty. Sorry buddy. I am shocked,
but we've got to get back to the action on Venus.

Anyway, Shylock says 'Sure you can have 3000 duckies, but if you don't pay me back, then I get a pound of Antonio's flesh'.

And whaddayaknow! Antonio's ships are all lost and the poor guy is broke. He can't pay back the 3000, so Shylock demands his pound of flesh.

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Meanwhile Bassanio chooses the right box and marries Portia.

Bassanio hears the news about Antonio and runs to help him in court.

Portia hears too, which is just as well, because she dresses up as a man-lawyer and goes to court and saves the day with the old 'If you can get your pound of flesh without spilling any blood, then you can have it', defence. But of course, he can't. So Antonio is saved, Shylock ruined.

Then Portia in disguise says to Bassanio my legal fee is your wedding ring, and he hands it over.
Later, she says, DUH. That was me you dummy.
I forgive you. And everyone is happy.
Except Shylock.

Hey Shylock, why are they so nasty to you on Venus?

WHAAAT!?? It's not Venus! It's Venice!?!?
Hundreds of years ago!
Well, at least that explains why they were so bigoted.

The Merchant of Venice. Yeah yeah, I can see how that could work.