

MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT II Scene 5

EXTRACT I.

Q: Why does Shylock accept the invitation to dinner? On what grounds did Shylock refuse to accept an invitation to dinner earlier in the play?

(i) Shylock accepts the invitation to dinner out of hatred and to eat the food of the extravagant Christian, Bassanio. In Act I, Scene 3 where Bassanio invites him for dinner he refuses to dine with Christians since they were porkeaters. He asserted then that he would ne eat, drink or pray with Christians although he is ready to do business with them.

Q: Why is Shylock unhappy to accept the invitation this time too? Who is the Prodigal Christian? Give the significance of the word: prodigal.

ii) Shylock is unhappy to accept the invitation this time too as he feels a premonition of some misfortune about to take place. The previous night he had a dream about money-bags which was considered as a bad omen. Bassanio is referred to as the prodigal Christian because he is a wasteful, who spends money extravagantly which he has borrowed from Shylock. Prodigal is a reference to the prodigal son described in the Bible who wasted his share of wealth by lavish and careless living.

Q: Give the meaning of:

(iii) (a) **I am not bid for love:** I am not invited out of love.

(b) **I am right loath to go:** I hate to accept the invitation

Q: How do Jessica and Lorenzo take advantage of Shylock's absence from home during dinner?

vi) Lorenzo taking advantage of Shylock's absence from home makes a plan to elope. Jessica uses the occasion to leave home with her father's money and jewellery. Lorenzo uses the occasion to arrange the masquerade in which Jessica will be the torch-bearer and thus easily elope with him.

Q: What sort of a bad omen did Shylock have which made him think that there is some evil being plotted against him?

(v) Shylock had a dream about money bags on the previous night. 10 dream about money and all kinds of coins was considered as bad omen. This made Shylock think that there was some evil bel plotted against him.

EXTRACT 2.

Q: Who is the speaker of the above lines? To whom is he giving his advice? Why should the doors be locked?

(i) Shylock is the speaker of the above lines. He is giving this advice to his daughter, Jessica. When Launcelot tells him about the masquerade he is alarmed for fear that such revelry may become unruly. He hates their frivolity. Hence, he asks Jessica to lock the doors of the house so that no sound of foolish displays may enter his serious house.

Q: Where is the speaker going? What reason does he give for his going out? Who was Jacob? Why does the speaker swear by Jacob's staff?

ii) The speaker is going for Bassanio's dinner party. He is going out for dinner out of hatred for the Christians and to eat the food of the extravagant, Bassanio. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race. According to Bible, Jacob, the ancestor of Shylock had a staff that proved a blessing to him. Jacob Jacob boasts that he had crossed river Jordan only with a staff yet returned with companies of men.

Q: Give the meaning of:

(a) Clamber not you up to the casements.

(b) sound of shallow foppery.

(iii) (a) Do not climb up to see from the windows; (b) shrill notes of the fife.

Q: Who are the Christian fools with varnished faces? What were they planning against the speaker? What warning did the speaker have of it earlier?

(iv) Christian fools with varnished faces refer to the Christians taking part in the masquerade at Bassanio's dinner party. They were planning to make the speaker's daughter to elope with a Christian, Lorenzo with the speaker's money and jewellery. The speaker had warning of this in the form of a 'dream where he saw money bags and coins'.

Q: Does the person to whom the advice is given, follow the speaker's advice? Why?

(v) The speaker advises his daughter, Jessica to lock up the doors. He tells her not to go upto the windows when she hears the drums and the shrill notes of the fife. He tells her not to stretch her neck out to gaze over the public street to look at Christian fools with painted faces. He instructs her to close all the windows of his house so that no sound of the foolish display enters his sober house. The advice was given to Jessica by her father, Shylock. She did not follow the advice and used the occasion of masquerade to elope with Lorenzo.

EXTRACT 3.

Q: What is meant by the patch' in the extract? What reasons does Shylock give to Jessica for parting with Launcelot?

(i) The word 'patch' in the extract means the clown or the fool or the jester. In olden days, the professional fools or jesters used to wear multi coloured patched costume. So the word patch is used in the extract for Launcelot. Shylock says that he is sending Launcelot to Bassanio as he would assist Bassanio in his spendthrift habits and waste his borrowed money.

Q: Whom does Shylock wish to be ruined? Why?

iii) Shylock wishes Bassanio to be ruined because he wants to take revenge upon Antonio and can do so if Bassanio and Antonio fail to repay the loan on a stipulated date.

Q: What does Shylock mean by saying, 'drones hive not with me'?

iii) By the given words, Shylock means that lazy people cannot live with him. Shylock says that Launcelot is lazy and cannot be his servant so he allows him to join Bassanio's service.

Q: What is meant by the 'borrowed purse'? For what purpose was it borrowed?

iv) Borrowed purse' refers to the three thousand ducats borrowed by Bassanio from Shylock on the basis of the bond signed by Antonio. The money was borrowed to enable Bassanio to go to Belmont and win Portia in marriage after participating in the lottery of caskets.

(v) (a) Shylock asks Jessica to shut the doors to make his house safe from revellers taking part in the masquerade. He quotes an old proverb 'fast bind, fast find" which means that if you lock a thing up, you will find it safe. (Leave secure and you will find all secure).

(b) In this scene, Shylock becomes an instrument of fate to further the action in the plot. On the one hand, his desire for revenge upon Antonio is revealed because he goes to the supper to help to consume Bassanio's borrowed money. He overlooks his religious principles which forbade him dining with Christians. He even ignores the premonitions of impending evil because of his revengeful nature. This provided Jessica an occasion to flee from home with money and jewellery and to elope with Lorenzo, a Christian. Thus, fate has used Shylock to further its plans.