

# Merchant of Venice

## Act - 4

### Scene – 2

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#### Extract – 1

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

**1. Which deed is referred to in the extract? What are the contents of the deed? Why will Lorenzo be happy to have the deed?**

**Answers:** The deed referred to in the extract is the legal document prepared by Portia. The contents of the deed are that Shylock's property will go to Lorenzo and Jessica after Shylock's death. Lorenzo will be happy with this deed as it is beneficial to him and Jessica.

**2. Give the meaning of:**

**(a) Inquire the Jew's house out.**

**Answers:** Find out the house of Shylock. Portia asks Nerissa to ask someone to direct her to Shylock's house.

**(b) you are well o'erta'en.**

**Answers:** I am glad to have overtaken you.

**3. Where is Portia going that night? Why should she reach home before her husband? Under what pretext was she away from home?**

**Answers:** Portia is going to Belmont that night. She should reach home before her husband so that he may not doubt her absence from Belmont. She was away from home under the pretext of going to a convent to do religious exercises and holy meditation all the arrival of their husbands.

**4. What comedy follows later because of Bassanio having given the ring to Portia?**

**Answers:** In Act V Scene 1, the comedy occurs due to Bassanio having given the ring to the lawyer. Portia accuses Bassanio for this saying if he knew the special qualities of the ring the virtue of the one who gave the ring and his honour in keeping vows, he should not have parted with it. He defends himself saying that he parted with it reluctantly and gave it to the lawyer, who saved Antonio's life.

**5. How does the ring episode become a part of the love episode?**

**Answers:** The ring episode is an integral part of the love episode. It adds humour to the play and further promotes the love and commitment of the couples. Antonio agrees to be the

guarantor for Bassanio that he will never again deliberately break the promise made to Portia and will never part with the ring again.

## **Extract - 2**

**1. To what does Portia refer when she says. "That cannot be"? Why do you think she says so?**

**Answers:** By saying "That cannot be", Portia is referring to Bassanio's request to her to have dinner with him. Portia tells Gratiano that it is not possible for her to accept Bassanio's request to come for dinner. She says so because she is in the disguise of a lawyer and did not want Bassanio to know her identity at this stage. Secondly, she wants to return to Belmont before the arrival of her husband.

**2. Who is the youth' referred to in the extract? Why should the youth be shown Shylock's house?**

**Answers:** The 'youth' referred to here is Nerissa. The youth should be shown Shylock's house so that she could give the draft deed to Shylock for his signature.

**3. What trick is Nerissa planning? How would Portia and Nerissa challenge their husbands about their rings? How will this incident later on have a comic effect in the play?**

**Answers:** Nerissa is planning to get the ring from Gratiano. Portia says that their husbands will keep swearing that they have given the rings to men as a gift but Portia and Nerissa will contradict them and swear just as vehemently that they are deceiving them. This incident provides a comic effect in the play in Act V Scene 2. Both Nerissa and Portia accuse their husbands for parting with their rings. But Bassanio and Gratiano swear that they have given the rings to boys and that too to express their gratitude to them for their service in saving Antonio from Shylock. They swear never to part with the rings again. The ring-episode provides comic relief after the serious trial scene.

**4. How does Act IV of the play end? How does it prepare the audience for the final Act?**

**Answers:** Act IV of the play ends with Nerissa and Gratiano going to search for Shylock's house to make him sign the deed and with Nerissa's plans to get the ring from Gratiano, Loss of the rings is complete and the consequences are seen in Act V. Act IV prepares the audience for the final resolution of conflict in Act V.

**5. Comment on the leadership shown by Portia in Act IV.**

**Answers:** Portia's intellectual ability and leadership are shown in Act IV. She considers herself perfectly justified in what she is doing. Throughout the act, she is calm and composed. She has learnt Dr. Bellario's instructions so well that she seems to know how to act the role of a lawyer. She coolly proceeds from one point to another. She has provided herself with all the necessary documents and law books for the case to be made against Shylock if he does not relent. She makes Shylock to commit himself in the court that he will

accept nothing but the penalty in the bond and ensures that Shylock is judged as per the law as he wanted and ally managed to save Antonio from his evil designs.