

Act IV, scene i – lines 250 - 309

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| Portia | It is so. Are there balance here to weigh The flesh? | Comment [i1]: Indicative of justice and explains the scales from the use of balance. The use of weighing shows how specific the laws are. |
| Shylock | I have them ready. | Comment [i2]: At your expense. |
| Portia | Have by some surgeon, Shylock on your charge, To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death. | Comment [i3]: Indicative that he is law abiding, this is about to change. |
| Shylock | Is it so nominated in the bond? | Comment [i4]: Highlights upon the theme of bondage and the willingness to abide by the law. Shylock takes his rule abiding very seriously, yet it foreshadows what's about to change. |
| Portia | It is not so expressed, but what of that? 'Twere good you do so much for charity. | Comment [i5]: Possessive pronoun, highlights on the fact that she is able to exorcise her power which is now enhanced as she is in disguise as a man. Her level of command startles Antonio and catches him off guard. Her short sharp sentence shows her quick wit and her dominance over the men. Fast pace, direct. |
| Shylock | cannot find it, 'tis not in the bond. | Comment [i6]: This relates to the theme of justice as in court though she is the judge, she is still equal she asks Antonio for his thoughts. |
| Portia | You, merchant: have you anything to say? | Comment [i7]: This war imagery of going into a battlefield, echoes the theme of scarification that Antonio is undergoing in order to save Bassanio. The fact he says well prepared shows that he has accepted his fate and he willing to sacrifice his life and suffer at Bassanio's cost. |
| Antonio | But little; I am armed and well prepared. Give me your hand, Bassanio. Fare you well. Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you For herein Fortune shows herself more kind Than is her custom: it is still her use To let the wretched man outlive his wealth, To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow An age of poverty; from which ling'ring penance Of such misery doth she cut me off. Commend me to your honourable wife. Tell her the process of Antonio's end, Say how I loved you, in speak me fair in death, And when the tale is told, bid her be judge Whether Bassanio had not once a love. Repent but you that you shall lose you friend And he repents not that he pays your debt. For it the Jew do not cut but deep enough I'll pay it instantly with all my heart. | Comment [r8]: This calls upon the theme of scarification and Antonio says this line in such a way that he intends for Bassanio to feel guilty. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i9]: Te reference to fortune as being feminine is indicative of how Portia was taken by Bassanio, due to her level of wealth. The other line suggests her rejection of the potential suitors. |
| Antonio | | Comment [r10]: His reference to himself in the third person suggests that he wants to show Bassanio that he has a higher level of importance rather than Portia and show that his scarification for him is of higher importance than Bassanio's marriage to her. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i11]: The use of the past 'loved' gives ideas to the audience that Antonio wants to express his hurt, but also his selfishness that he was the one who loved Bassanio more than Portia. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i12]: Speak well of me, which is indicative of the love and level of relationship that is between Antonio and Bassanio. Which can give evidence that Shakespeare wants to give us a notion of a homosexual relationship. This was not an open matter during Elizabethan England. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i13]: Is this suggestive of the fact that Shakespeare wants to show to the audience the theme of self interest versus love. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i14]: The fact that he uses this suggests that he has sinned, goes into the theme of religion and justice. Karmic effect. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i15]: His selfless scarification for Bassanio is quick, shows the amount of love that Antonio has for Bassanio. He is willing to go to jail for him even though it isn't his fault. Naiveté, highlighted by Shakespeare. Selfless among the selfish. Bassanio for Portia's wealth, Shylock for his bond. Antonio doesn't need sympathy from Bassanio, he earns it from the audience. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i16]: Gives reference to the forfeit, hence the pound of flesh, but also refers to his selfless level of love for Bassanio. |
| Antonio | | Comment [r17]: This relates to the theme of scarification and the fact that Shakespeare makes references to Biblical texts. This creates the idea upon where Bassanio's answer to Antonio's plea is the releasing of him unto which he reaches salvation. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i17]: Antonio, I am married to a wife Which is as dear to me as life itself; But life itself, my wife and all the world, Are not with me esteemed above thy life. I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all Here to this devil, to deliver you. |
| Antonio | | Comment [r18]: The theme of scarification of Gratiano is for different reasons relates to the idea of a good cause, in order to change Shylock of his ways. |
| Antonio | | Comment [r19]: Present tense, denial? |
| Antonio | | Comment [i20]: The Biblical references to the robber who was set free during Christ's execution, connects to the idea of how Shylock despises the Christians and his harsh tone, indicative of his vindication, as he was the one who was law abiding, he feels that it's unjust that they are doing this to him, stripping him of his power. |
| Antonio | | Comment [i21]: She lives by the rule of the law. |
| Bassanio | Antonio, I am married to a wife Which is as dear to me as life itself; But life itself, my wife and all the world, Are not with me esteemed above thy life. I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all Here to this devil, to deliver you. | |
| Portia | Your wife would give you little thanks for that If she were by to hear you make the offer. | |
| Gratiano | I have a wife who I protest I love; I would she were in heaven, so she could Entreat some power to change this currish Jew. | |
| Nerissa | 'Tis well you offer it behind her back; The wish would make else an unquiet house. | |
| Shylock | These be the Christian Husbands! I have a daughter; Would any of the stock of Barabbas Had been her husband, rather than a Christian! We trifle time; I pray thee pursue sentence. | |
| Portia | A pound of that same merchant's flesh it thine, The court awards it, and the law doth give it. | |
| Shylock | Most rightful judge! | |

Portia And you must cut this flesh from off his breast;
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shylock Most learned **judge!** **A sentence: come, prepare.**

Portia **Tarry a little, there is something else.**
This bond doth give thee here not jot of blood.
 The words expressly are **a pound of flesh!**
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano **O Upright judge!**
 Mark, **Jew** – **O learned judge!**

Shylock **Is that the law?**

Comment [r22]: Abiding by the rules of the law and the law of the land.

Comment [B23]: The reference to the word judge is indicative of the way in which Portia holds her position and to some extent, her level of power within this scene.

Comment [r24]: His praise and the use of the explanation suggestive of his vindication coming through. He thinks he gets his wish, but Portia misleads him.

Comment [r25]: The law is justified, he feels that his time of judging the wrong has come. Absolution is final. Due to his abiding by the rules of the land.

Comment [r26]: The comma separates the sentence, and adds to the build up to the level of intensity and tension within this scene.

Comment [r27]: This adds to the climactic scene and holds the level of suspense.

Comment [r28]: She begins to methodically start stripping Shylock of his power, of his bond and of his dignity. He has begun the ultimate fall.

Comment [B29]: This is indicative of the way in which Portia abides by the rules of the law.

Comment [i30]: This is where Portia's wit emerges, she plays Shylock at his own game. He states that he is law abiding, and sticks to the letter of the law. She looks at the bond, it only allows Shylock a pound of flesh, nothing about blood. Relates to Venetian law which prevents the shedding of blood. Law abiding, one pound, nothing more or nothing less. If he doesn't follow the exact rule his can risk execution and his good will be confiscated.

Comment [r31]: The praise is resonated throughout the play at this climactic scene and shows the level of power that Portia holds in her grasp.

Comment [i32]: The references to the word Jew highlights upon the fact that though Venetian live by the law, there is still the cruelty that is abundant, such as the levels of respect that people ought to have for one another, and from this word evidently shows to the audience that there is an imbalance to that.

Comment [r33]: The fact that Shakespeare chooses to include in explanation marks sounds like it's argumentative and the praise is rather stark and fast.

Comment [i34]: Suddenly the tables have turned on Shylock and now he has fallen off the powerful pedestal that he once held himself upon. It's ironic because the fact that he was the one who started out as being the lawful character has now been stripped of his power due to a fatality in his statement of the bond. His character is now stripped down to a dumbfounded fool due to his inability to pay attention to detail. In a way it's like him repenting, for his deeds. Foolishness leads him to being powerless.

Introduction:

In act IV scene 1 lines 251-309
 Shakespeare has plunged us into a climactic scene whereby we bear witness to a trial whereupon a pound of flesh is to be removed as part of the forfeit from Antonio to pay to Shylock. Certain negotiations and epic speeches, are exchanged among the characters but it is at this point where emotions are explored, the shifting of power emerges and the iron fist of the law is merciless to those who do not abide by them.

Operating principle:

Certain areas of this extract which I will attempt to cover will be