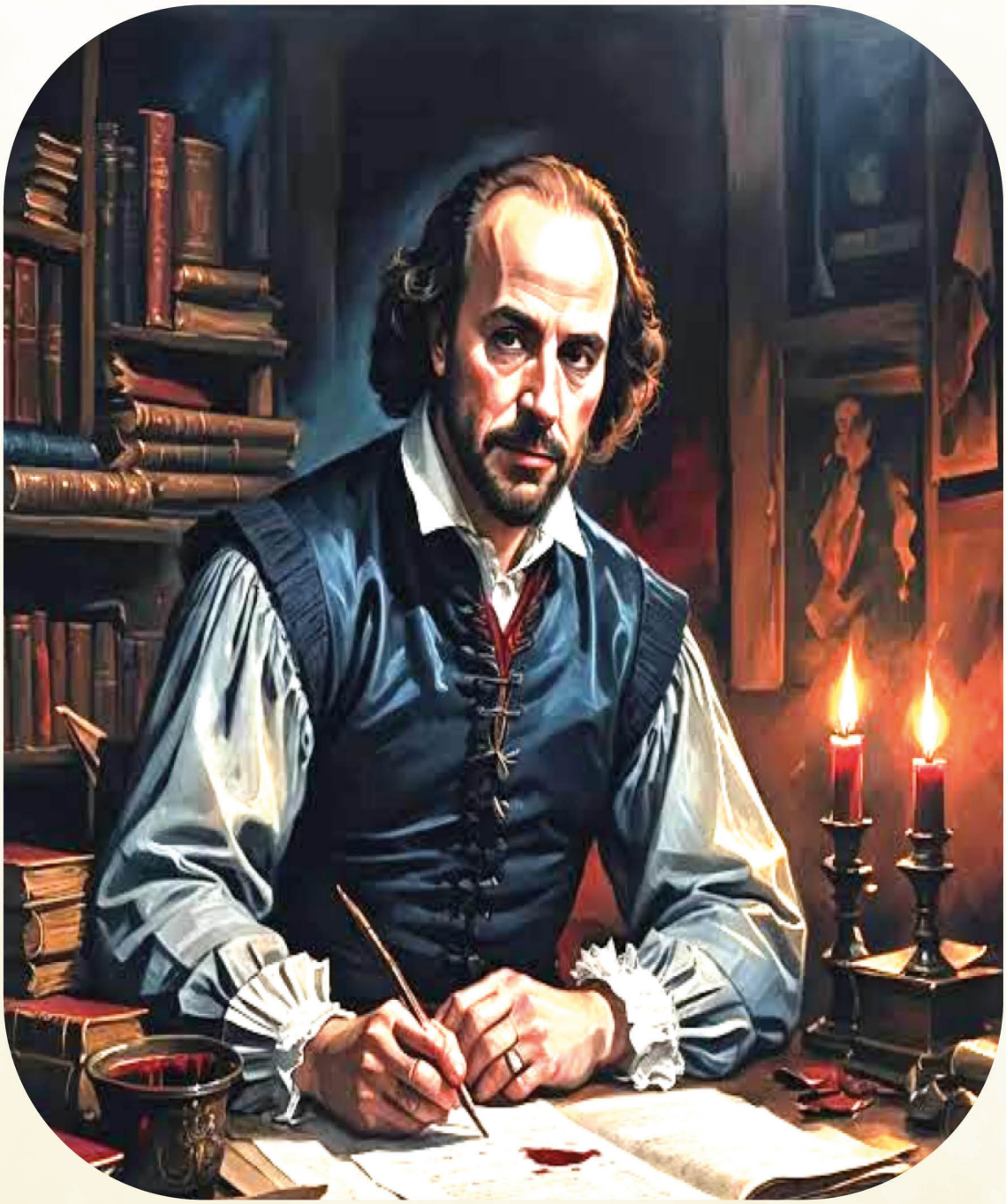
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE





About The Author

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

In the small town of Stratford-upon-Avon, England, a boy named William Shakespeare was born in 1564. Little did the world know, this boy would grow up to write tales of magic, love, and adventure that would echo through the ages.

Shakespeare's pen moved gracefully across the paper, creating wonderful plays and poems. His stories, like "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," are full of memorable characters and amazing worlds. He wrote about noble kings and queens, playful fairies, and everyday people, winning the hearts of audiences with his lovely words.

When he wasn't writing, Shakespeare acted in his own plays. He was part of a lively theater group called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which later became known as the King's Men. His plays were performed in grand theaters, where people from all walks of life gathered to journey through different places and times, stepping into the magical world of Shakespeare.

Even though he lived over 400 years ago, Shakespeare's stories still inspire and bring joy. He is remembered as the greatest writer in the English language, showing the power of imagination and the magic of storytelling.

Characters



Antonio

Antonio is a kind-hearted merchant in Venice, always ready to help his friends. He borrows money from Shylock to support his best friend, Bassanio, even though it puts him at great risk. Antonio's wealth is tied up in his ships, making him exposed to the sea's dangers.

Shylock

Shylock is a Jewish moneylender with a sharp mind and a grudge against Antonio. He lends Antonio the money but demands a pound of his flesh if the loan isn't repaid, showing his desire for revenge. Shylock's character is complex; Shylock the father can evoke our sympathy, while Shylock the moneylender fills our hearts with hatred and anger.



Chapter 1

Antonio's Help and Bassanio's Hope

Nestled by the sea in Italy, Venice stood tall as a **bustling hub** on the trade routes. The big **harbor** in Venice, which greeted ships from all around the world, was famous for being a hub of business success. That's why many merchants and moneylenders chose to live there. In this lively city, there lived a kind, **prosperous**, and wealthy merchant named Antonio. He owned many ships that sailed to faraway places like Portugal, Mexico, England, and India to bring all sorts of goods back to Italy and sold for a much higher price than what was originally paid for them.

Merchants were often wealthy because they earned big profits from buying and selling various goods. However, they faced risks in their journeys. A merchant could potentially lose their entire fortune if their ships faced unfortunate events, such as sinking in a storm or falling victim to pirate attacks that resulted in the stealing of all their goods. Merchants typically felt uneasy about the safety of their ships until they safely reached the harbor. Any accident during the journey could result in **financial ruin**, leaving them poor.

Despite being proud of his riches, Antonio was very kind and helpful. He always showed **eagerness** to assist those facing difficulties. For being **generous** to everyone, he was loved by everyone.

Bassanio was Antonio's nearest and dearest friend. He was a Venetian nobleman who had nearly depleted all his money due to the **luxurious** lifestyle that he led after his father's death. Bassanio had borrowed a lot of money from his friend Antonio, who always took pleasure in using his money to assist friends in times of financial need or difficulty.

Despite being loved by all his friends, Antonio was not happy. His friends couldn't understand the source of his sadness, guessing that it might stem from concerns about his ships and cargo travelling across the vast oceans. They thought of the big dangers that Antonio's ships would face every moment. They thought about the storms and pirates that would cost Antonio all his large fortune. When they put themselves in his shoes, they felt really **anxious**.

One friend expressed, "Your sadness seems tied to the vast wealth you have, with ships **traversing** oceans. Any accident could result in the loss of your entire fortune."

However, Antonio disagreed and said, "I have a lot of ships, and losing one wouldn't be a problem."

Another friend suggested that Antonio might be sad because he felt lonely. Antonio answered him, saying that he had a lot of good and kind friends who were usually trying to relieve him. His friends tried to make him happier by telling him jokes and stories, but Antonio was worried for an unknown reason. He had butterflies in his stomach even though everything seemed to be fine.



One day, Bassanio came by to see Antonio. Their daily meetings were nothing out of the ordinary, since they were close friends. This particular visit appeared to carry more significance for Bassanio than usual. Despite being **in debt** to Antonio, Bassanio had come to him asking to **borrow** more money.

"Dear friend, it has been a long time, and I am spending more than I earn; I know that I owe you a lot of money, and now I have no money to pay back all the money I owe you," said Bassanio.

"I didn't ask you to pay the money back and if I can help you now, I will surely do!" replied Antonio.

"But this time is different, believe me! I have a chance that could change my life," said Bassanio eagerly.

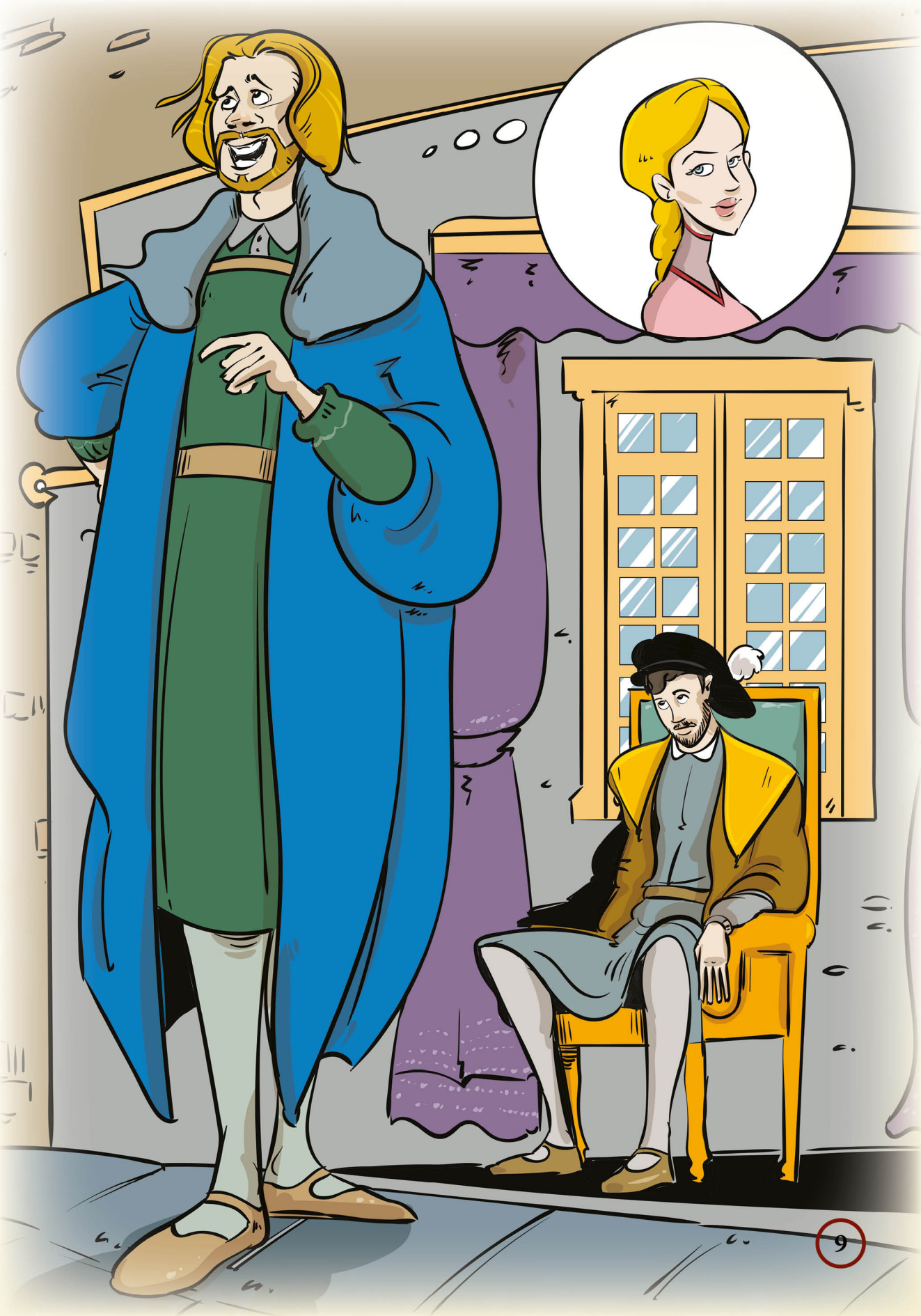
He told Antonio about a rich young lady from Belmont named Portia. Portia was a beautiful, young girl who **inherited** a lot of money after her father's death. Although a lot of **suitors** came from all over the world to **court** her, she was not yet married because she did not accept any of them.

"I met her before and I knew that she liked me. All that I want is to have enough money to marry her. She is rich enough to let us lead a luxurious life. Moreover, she is very beautiful. Her hair is like gold and her eyes are shining like stars. I am sure she would agree to marry me," said Bassanio.

"My ships are currently at sea, and my funds are limited, but fear not, my dearest friend. I will assist you," reassured Antonio, who suggested that Bassanio visit the town and explore the option of borrowing money.

"Numerous moneylenders are available to provide the needed funds with an added **interest**. You can inform the moneylender that I will serve as a **guarantee** for the timely repayment of the loan," Antonio advised.

He assured Bassanio that he would support him in his quest to visit Belmont and pursue the courtship of Portia.



Song

In the streets of Venice, deals are made,
Gold and silver, fortunes weighed.

Antonio lends, with heart so kind,
For Bassanio's dream, the contract he signed.

The deal is made, the risk is clear,
A deadly price, if fate is near.

Justice calls, but mercy pleads,
In Venice's courts, where hearts may bleed.

Portia speaks, disguised in grace,
Mercy's light shines on the case.
The scales of justice shift and sway,
A lesson learned in the trial that day.

In Venice's tales of love and strife,
Friendship, prejudice, and the price of life.
A story told of the soul's divide,
Where mercy and justice must collide.

Glossary

Chapter 1

bustling (adj.) full of busy activity.

hub (n.) the central or most important part of a place or activity.

harbor (n.) an area of water next to the coast where ships can stay safely.

prosperous (adj.) successful, usually by earning a lot of money.

financial (adj.) relating to money or how money is managed.

ruin (n.) the process or state of being spoiled or destroyed.

generous (adj.) willing to give money, help, kindness, etc., especially more than is usual or expected.

luxurious (adj.) very comfortable and expensive.

anxious (adj.) worried and nervous.

traverse (v.) to move or travel through an area.

inherit (v.) to receive money, property, or a title from someone after they have died.

in debt (phrase) owing money.

borrow (v.) to take and use something belonging to someone else with the intention of returning it.

suitor (n.) a man who pursues marrying a woman.

court (v.) to try to win the preference, or goodwill of someone.

interest (n.) money that is charged by a bank or other financial organization for borrowing money.

guarantee (n.) a formal assurance that certain conditions will be fulfilled.



Before you read,

Look at the pictures and skim through the book, then answer the following questions.

A) Who are the main characters of the story and what do you know about them?

He had to ..... .

He is ..... .



He helped ..... .

He lost ..... .

He lost ..... .

He had ..... .

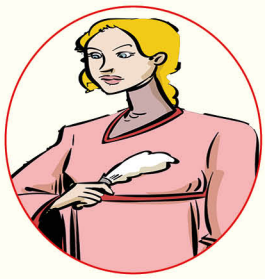


He wanted to ..... .

He was ..... .

She is ..... .

She was married to ..... .



She disguised herself as ..... to ..... .

Her father ..... .

B) Skim the chapters and note down the chapter number in which the following events take place.

1. Bassanio and Antonio borrowed money from Shylock and Antonio signed that he would pay a pound of his flesh if he failed to repay Shylock on time. ( )
2. Bassanio succeeded in choosing the right casket. ( )
3. Portia disguised herself as a young lawyer, called Balthazar. ( )
4. Jessica escaped from her father, Shylock, to marry Lorenzo. ( )

C) Elaborate and share your personal experience.

1. Have you ever had to help a friend in need, even when it was difficult for you?

..... .

2. Is there a difference between the law and the spirit of the law? How would you explain it? Can you think of an example where following the law strictly might not align with its deeper purpose or intent?

..... .

Chapter 1

Vocabulary practice

1) Scan through the chapter, and then match the word with the meaning you have guessed from the context. Use the glossary to check your answers.

1. inherit	a. full of busy activity.
2. borrow	b. the central or most important part of a place or activity.
3. suitor	c. an area of water next to the coast where ships can stay safely.
4. bustling	d. successful, usually by earning a lot of money.
5. harbor	e. relating to money or how money is managed.
6. prosperous	f. the process or state of being spoiled or destroyed.
7. financial	g. willing to give money, help, kindness, etc., especially more than is usual or expected.
8. ruin	h. worried and nervous.
9. court	i. to move or travel through an area.
10. interest	j. to receive money, property, or a title from someone after they have died.
11. guarantee	k. to take and use something belonging to someone else with the intention of returning it.
12. hub	l. a man who pursues marrying a woman.
13. generous	m. to try to win the preference, or goodwill of someone.
14. anxious	n. money that is charged by a bank or other financial organization for borrowing money.
15. traverse	o. a formal assurance that certain conditions will be fulfilled.

2) Fill in the blanks with the suitable words from exercise 1.

1. Venice stood tall as a ..... hub on the trade routes, with its big ..... greeting ships from all around the globe.
2. Antonio was a ..... merchant who faced the risk of financial ..... if his ships encountered storms or pirates.
3. Despite being wealthy, Antonio was very ..... and always eager to help those in need.
4. Antonio's friends thought he was ..... which might be due to concerns about his ships ..... the vast oceans.
5. Bassanio wanted to ..... money from Antonio to court Portia, a rich young lady who had ..... a lot of money.
6. Antonio suggested Bassanio visit the town to ..... money from moneylenders, with Antonio willing to ..... the loan.
7. Portia had many ..... who came to ..... her, but she had not accepted any of them.

Comprehension

1) Before you read, put the events in order. Then, check your answers after reading the chapter.

1. Despite his wealth, Antonio was generous and always helped his friends, including Bassanio, who was in debt due to his luxurious lifestyle.
2. Bassanio sought to borrow more money from Antonio to court Portia, a wealthy heiress, and Antonio agreed to help by guaranteeing the loan.
3. Antonio's friends were concerned about his anxiety, thinking it was due to worries about his ships.
4. Antonio was a prosperous merchant who lived in Venice. He owned many ships and faced the risk of financial ruin due to sea travel dangers.

2) Tick (✓) or (✗) and correct the mistakes.

1. Bassanio wanted to borrow money from Antonio to court Portia, who was a poor lady. ( )
.....
2. Antonio's friends were not concerned about his anxiety and thought he had no worries. ( )
.....
3. Antonio agreed to help Bassanio by guaranteeing the loan, despite not having any money. ( )
.....
4. Antonio was in debt due to his luxurious lifestyle and sought Bassanio's help. ( )
.....
5. Venice was a bustling trade hub and home to the prosperous merchant, Antonio. ( )
.....
6. Antonio was known for being stingy and rarely helped his friends. ( )
.....

3) Answer the following questions.

1. What were the main dangers that Antonio's ships faced during their voyages, and how did these dangers impact his financial stability?
.....
2. How did Bassanio's lifestyle lead to his financial troubles, and what was his plan to resolve them?
.....
3. Why were Antonio's friends concerned about his anxiety, and what did they believe was the cause of his worries?
.....
4. "My ships are currently at sea, and my funds are limited, but fear not, my dearest friend. I will assist you." Comment.
.....

Wrap up questions

1) Answer the following questions.

1. How does the theme of justice versus mercy play out in the trial scene? Which do you think is more important, and why?

.....

2. What does the play teach us about the role of friendship and loyalty through the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio?

.....

3. How does the theme of prejudice affect the characters, particularly Shylock? What lessons can we learn about tolerance and understanding from the play?

.....

4. Do you think the idea of love in ***The Merchant of Venice*** is more about romance or responsibility? Explain your perspective using examples from the play.

.....

2) Characters

Use one adjective to describe each character, then explain why this adjective describes them.



Antonio is ..... because ..... .



Shylock is ..... because ..... .



Portia is ..... because ..... .



Bassanio is .....because..... .

3) Plot

Use the following plot diagram and write the chapters and the main events that indicate each step of the story's plot.

