



*TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE*

# STUDY GUIDE



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## TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE

### NOTES TO THE TEACHER

#### THE PROGRAM

*Timeless Shakespeare* were expressly designed to help students with limited reading ability gain access to some of the world's greatest literature. While retaining the essence and stylistic "flavor" of the original, each *Timeless Shakespeare* has been expertly adapted to a reading level that never exceeds grade 4.0.

An ideal introduction to later, more in-depth investigations of the original works, *Timeless Shakespeare* utilize a number of strategies to ensure the involvement of reluctant readers: airy, uncomplicated page design, shortened sentences, easy-reading type style, elimination of archaic words and spellings, shortened total book length, and handsome illustrations.

#### THE STUDY GUIDES

The *Timeless Shakespeare Study Guides* provide a wealth of reproducible support materials to help students extend the learning experience. Features include critical background notes on both the author and the times, character descriptions, chapter summaries, and seven "universal" exercises which may be used to follow up the reading of any *Timeless Shakespeare* novel or play.

In addition to the universal exercises, 27 title-specific exercises are included to review, test, and enrich students' comprehension as well as their grasp of important vocabulary and concepts. All reproducible, the worksheets provided

for Shakespeare's plays are designed to be used act-by-act as the student's reading of the play proceeds. Several exercises are provided for each act. One always focuses on key vocabulary. Others include a simple comprehension check and treatment of an important literary concept such as character analysis, point of view, inference, or figurative language. A three-page final exam is also included in every *Timeless Shakespeare Study Guide*.

#### USING THE STUDY GUIDES

Before assigning any of the reproducible exercises, be sure each student has a personal copy of the *Glossary* and the *Facts About the Author* and *About the Times*. Students will need to be familiar with many of the literary terms in order to complete the worksheets. Obviously, the *Facts About the Author* and *About the Times* lend themselves to any number of writing, art, or research projects you may wish to assign.

The title-specific exercises may be used as a springboard for class discussions or role-playing. Alternatively, you may wish to assign some exercises as homework and others as seatwork during the closing minutes of a class period.

All exercises in this Guide are designed to accommodate independent study as well as group work. The occasional assignment of study partners or competitive teams often enhances interest and promotes creativity.

**FACTS ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

(1564–1616)

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the finest poet and playwright who ever lived. Yet he was the son of illiterate parents and never attended college!

Much of this remarkable man's life is shrouded in mystery. He had been dead almost a hundred years before anyone wrote a short account of his life. But we do know that his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a prosperous farmer. His father, John Shakespeare, was a successful glovemaker who also traded in wool, hides, and grain. They lived in an English market town called Stratford-on-Avon, where William was born in 1564. Their house still stands.

Until the age of 13 or 14, Shakespeare probably attended the Stratford grammar school where he read the great Latin classics of Cicero, Virgil, and Seneca. Some stories say that he had to leave school early because of his father's financial difficulties. But there is no official record of his life until 1582, when he married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18. By 1585, he and Anne had three children. No one knows for

sure what happened to him during the next seven years, although one account says that he was a schoolmaster. In 1592, however, records reveal that he was working in London as both an actor and a playwright. By that year, he had published two popular poems and written at least three plays.

Records from various sources show that Shakespeare became wealthy. In 1597, he bought one of the grandest houses in Stratford. (It had 10 fireplaces!) The next year he bought 10 percent of the stock in the handsome Globe Theater and a fine house in London. His artistic life was very busy and productive. His theatrical company, known as the King's Men, presented a variety of plays, week after week. It is thought that he rehearsed in the mornings, acted in the afternoons, and wrote at night.

After 1612, he spent most of his time in Stratford with his family. He died there, at the age of 52, on April 23, 1616. The tomb of the great literary genius still stands at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

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**FACTS ABOUT THE TIMES**

**In 1564, when Shakespeare was born . . .**

About 100,000 people lived in London; the horsedrawn coach was introduced in England; the great Italian sculptor and painter, Michelangelo, died; an outbreak of plague killed more than 20,000 Londoners.

**In 1616, when Shakespeare died . . .**

Sir Walter Raleigh began his search for El Dorado; tobacco was becoming a popular crop in Virginia; Pocahontas died; the Catholic church forbade Galileo from conducting any further scientific investigations.



## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

### FACTS ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

**The Duke of Venice**, the local ruler  
**The Prince of Morocco** and **the Prince of Aragon**, suitors to Portia

**Antonio** (an TOH nee oh), a merchant of Venice

**Bassanio** (buh SAH nee oh), Antonio's friend

**Gratiano** (grah tzee AH noh),

**Solanio** (soh LAH nee oh), and

**Salerio** (sah LAIR ee oh), friends of Antonio and Bassanio

**Lorenzo** (lor EN zoh), in love with Jessica

**Shylock** (SHY lock), a Jewish moneylender

**Tubal** (TOO ball), another moneylender and a friend of Shylock

**Lancelot Gobbo** (LAN suh lot GOB oh), a clown; servant first to Shylock and later to Bassanio

**Old Gobbo**, Lancelot's father

**Leonardo** (lee uh NAHR doh), a servant to Bassanio

**Balthazar** (BAL thuh zahr) and

**Stephano** (STEHF uh noh), servants to Portia

**Portia** (POR shuh), a wealthy young heiress of Belmont

**Nerissa** (nuh RIHS uh), Portia's maid-in-waiting

**Jessica** (JES uh kuh), Shylock's daughter, in love with Lorenzo

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### SUMMARIES BY ACT

**ACT 1:** Antonio talks to his friends Salerio and Solanio about the sadness he feels. His friends try to cheer him up. Bassanio approaches, along with two other friends. When the others leave, Bassanio asks Antonio for a loan so he can go to Belmont to court a rich heiress. Antonio says that his money is tied up, but he will borrow money for Bassanio. Meanwhile, in Belmont, Portia and her maid, Nerissa, are talking about the system set up by Portia's father. Anyone who wants to marry Portia must choose one of three caskets—gold, silver, or lead. The right choice will win Portia as the prize. Portia doesn't like any of the men who have come to court her. Back in Venice, Shylock agrees to lend Antonio the money needed by Bassanio. Antonio must sign a contract that calls for

a pound of his flesh if he can't repay the loan in time. Antonio isn't worried about it, however, because he's expecting his ships to come in a month before the loan is due.

**ACT 2:** At Portia's house, the Prince of Morocco is preparing to make his choice. Back in Venice, young Lancelot wants to leave his employment as a servant to Shylock. He makes arrangements to work for Bassanio instead. Gratiano asks Bassanio if he can accompany him to Belmont, and Bassanio says yes. Bassanio makes arrangements for a party that night. Lorenzo sends a message to Jessica, Shylock's daughter, regarding their planned elopement that night. Shylock, invited to Bassanio's party, tells Jessica to keep the doors locked while he's out. Later,

Lorenzo meets her under her balcony. She leaves her father's house dressed as a boy, stealing a chest full of her father's money and jewelry. Meanwhile, in Belmont, the Prince of Morocco makes his choice—the gold casket—but he is wrong. He must leave immediately, much to Portia's relief. In Venice, everyone is talking about the elopement of Jessica and Lorenzo. Shylock has been crying in the streets, asking for help to reclaim his daughter, his ducats, and his jewels. Meanwhile, in Belmont, the Prince of Aragon chooses the silver chest, finds he is wrong, and leaves in tears. Just then, Bassanio appears at Portia's door, bearing gifts and ready to start his courtship.

**ACT 3:** News in Venice tells of the loss of several of Antonio's ships. Shylock is determined to have revenge for all his past humiliations by enforcing Antonio's contract. Back in Belmont, Bassanio makes his choice—the lead casket—and finds out that he is right. Portia is joyful, as Bassanio is the only one of the suitors she liked. Gratiano announces that Nerissa had agreed to marry him if Bassanio made the right choice. A letter arrives from Antonio, telling of his plight and that Shylock wants the pound of flesh. Portia and Bassanio get married immediately, along with Gratiano and Nerissa. That same day, Bassanio leaves for Venice to assist Antonio. Back in Venice, Antonio tries to reason with Shylock, but Shylock is determined to have his bond. Meanwhile, Portia makes arrangements with Lorenzo to manage her household while she and Nerissa are gone. She tells him that she and Nerissa are going to a monastery to pray until their husbands return—but in truth she has other plans.

**ACT 4:** In Venice, Shylock is insisting on his legal right to enforce the contract. The duke suggests that Shylock should show mercy, but Shylock refuses. Portia and Nerissa, dressed as a doctor of law and a law clerk, arrive with a fake letter of introduction. The duke allows Portia to resolve the case. Portia urges Shylock to show mercy, giving him several chances to accept three times the money owed. Shylock refuses each time. She finally says he can have his pound of flesh—but he cannot shed one drop of blood nor take  $\frac{1}{20}$  of an ounce more than a pound. Shylock says he'll take the money instead, but she says he had his chance to accept it. Now, he must either take the forfeit at his own peril, or take nothing. Furthermore, the law provides penalties for anyone who seeks the life of any citizen of Venice. Such a person will lose all his goods, half to the intended victim and half to the state treasury. Also, his life lies at the mercy of the duke. The duke spares Shylock's life but gives half his wealth to Antonio. The state says Shylock can keep half his wealth but he must leave it to his daughter and son-in-law at his death. He also must become a Christian immediately. Shylock agrees to these terms. As payment for her services, Portia asks for Bassanio's ring, the one she'd told him never to part with. At Antonio's urging, Bassanio gives her the ring.

**ACT 5:** Back in Belmont, Lorenzo and Jessica are waiting in Portia's garden when everyone returns. For a while, the women tease the men about the rings. The men insist that they had no choice but to give up the rings. When the truth is revealed, everyone has a good laugh, pledges undying love, and enters the house, arm in arm.

## LITERARY GLOSSARY

**aside** lines spoken by an actor that the other characters on stage supposedly cannot hear; an aside usually shares the character's inner thoughts with the audience

**Although she appeared to be calm, the heroine's aside revealed her inner terror.**

**backstage** the part of the theater where actors prepare to go onstage, where scenery is kept, etc.

**Before entering, the villain impatiently waited backstage.**

**cast** the entire company of actors performing in a play

**The entire cast must attend tonight's dress rehearsal.**

**character** a fictional person or creature in a story or play

**Mighty Mouse is one of my favorite cartoon characters.**

**climax** the outcome of the main conflict of a play or novel

**The outlaw's capture made an exciting climax to the story.**

**comedy** a funny play, film, or TV show that has a happy ending

**My friends and I always enjoy a Jim Carrey comedy.**

**conflict** the struggle between characters, forces, or ideas at the center of a story

***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* illustrates the conflict between good and evil.**

**conclusion** the resolution of all plot conflicts, bringing a story to a close

**That play's conclusion was very satisfying.  
Every conflict was resolved.**

**dialogue** words spoken by the characters in a novel or play

**Amusing dialogue is an important element of most comedies.**

**drama** a story, usually not a comedy, especially written to be performed by actors in a play or movie

**The TV drama about spies was very suspenseful.**

**event** something that happens; a specific occurrence

**The most exciting event in the story was the surprise ending.**

**figurative language** colorful wording not meant to be taken literally, but to form a colorful, sharp picture in the mind

**A "screaming" headline may be set in large type, but it makes no sound at all.**

**introduction** a short reading that presents and explains a novel or play

**The introduction to *Frankenstein* is in the form of a letter.**

**motive** the internal or external force that makes a character do something

**What was that character's motive for telling a lie?**

**PRE-READING**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read about the characters in the section that begins *The Merchant of Venice*. Then study the book's cover.

a. Which character do you think is emphasized? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is this character doing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Look at the art on page 38 in Act 2.

a. Who do you think the characters are? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Explain what you think is happening in the picture.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Suppose you lent money to someone who was unable to pay it back when it was due. What do you think would be an appropriate penalty for that person?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Suppose you are the daughter of a rich merchant. Your father does not approve of your boyfriend, so you elope. When you leave home, you steal money and jewelry from your father.

a. How do you think your father might react?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Do you think a girl's father would be justified in this reaction? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**COMPREHENSION CHECK**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Circle a letter to answer each question.

1. How would you describe Antonio's mood when the play opens?
  - a. cheerful
  - b. sad
  - c. angry
2. What favor does Bassanio ask of Antonio?
  - a. a job offer
  - b. an invitation to a party
  - c. a loan
3. What does Bassanio want to do?
  - a. go to Belmont to court Portia
  - b. travel to Venice to ride in a gondola
  - c. get a job on a merchant ship
4. Why can't Portia choose her own husband?
  - a. Her father's conditions require a kind of lottery.
  - b. She is too young to make a wise decision.
  - c. She gets too nervous when it's time to make a decision.
5. Why does Shylock hate Antonio?
  - a. because he is a Christian, and because he lends money free of charge
  - b. because he knows that Antonio wants to marry his daughter, Jessica
  - c. because Antonio is very wealthy and Shylock is jealous of him
6. When will Shylock's loan to Antonio come due?
  - a. whenever Antonio can pay it
  - b. in a year
  - c. in three months
7. According to the terms of the contract, what will be the penalty if Antonio can't pay the loan on time?
  - a. extra interest
  - b. a pound of Antonio's flesh
  - c. nine times the value of the contract

**WORDS AND MEANINGS**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**A.** Find and circle the hidden vocabulary words from Act 1. Words may go up, down, across, backward, or diagonally. Check off each word as you find it.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ___ <b>STATUE</b>    | ___ <b>MANAGE</b>    |
| ___ <b>FINANCE</b>   | ___ <b>YOUTH</b>     |
| ___ <b>PROPHET</b>   | ___ <b>MARRY</b>     |
| ___ <b>EAGERLY</b>   | ___ <b>BORROW</b>    |
| ___ <b>ROTTEN</b>    | ___ <b>IGNORANT</b>  |
| ___ <b>BILLOWING</b> | ___ <b>HOURGLASS</b> |

A	P	Y	R	Z	G	S	B	K	D	Z	D
N	R	S	T	A	T	U	E	F	E	B	Y
S	O	L	H	U	A	T	P	C	O	J	C
O	P	M	V	I	M	Q	R	R	X	G	F
X	H	Q	J	T	N	A	R	O	N	G	I
N	E	K	I	W	P	O	R	I	I	H	N
E	T	H	P	J	W	F	W	R	B	G	A
T	Y	O	U	T	H	O	L	A	Y	O	N
T	T	S	S	A	L	G	R	U	O	H	C
O	K	M	E	L	V	D	L	W	N	B	E
R	M	O	I	M	A	N	A	G	E	G	F
U	N	B	E	A	G	E	R	L	Y	E	C

**B.** Now complete each sentence with one or more of the hidden words.

- Both girls want to wear \_\_\_\_\_ veils on the day that they \_\_\_\_\_.
- One way to mark the passing of time is to use an \_\_\_\_\_.
- Sue needs a loan to \_\_\_\_\_ the purchase of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ seemed to be \_\_\_\_\_ of proper etiquette.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who foretells the future.
- Unless he can \_\_\_\_\_ some money, Joe won't be able to \_\_\_\_\_ his debts this month.
- Is it true that one \_\_\_\_\_ apple can spoil an entire basket of apples?
- The child was \_\_\_\_\_ awaiting the start of the birthday party.