

“Treat people as if they were what they should be, and you help them become what they are capable of becoming.” -Goethe



Antonio , Christians mistreat Shylock:

SHYLOCK—“You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog, And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine, [...] 'Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last, You spurned me such a day; another time You called me dog; and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much moneys'?” (1.3.121-122; 135-141).

Shylock seeks revenge on Antonio:

SHYLOCK—“He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies—and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? ... And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? ... Revenge. **If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.**” (3.1.53-72)



Portia (disguised as a male judge) saves the day:

PORTIA [as Balthazar] - “This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood. The words expressly are ‘a pound of flesh.’ Take then thy bond, take thou thy 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.” (4.1.318-325)



The Merchant of Venice **By William Shakespeare**

Shylock is denied his bond and accused of attempted murder:

PORTIA—“...Thou hast contrived against the very life/Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred. The danger formerly by me rehearsed/Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.” (4.1.361-378)



Antonio shows mercy:

ANTONIO—“So please my lord the duke and all the court/ To quit the fine for one half of his goods, I am content; so he will let me have The other half in use, to render it, Upon his death, unto the gentleman That lately stole his daughter: Two things provided more, that, for this favour, /He presently become a Christian; The other, that he do record a gift, Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd, Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.” (4.1)



Shakespeare's justice message:

Society often treats minorities unfairly. In response to cruel or unequal interactions, these individuals will follow the example of the majority.

