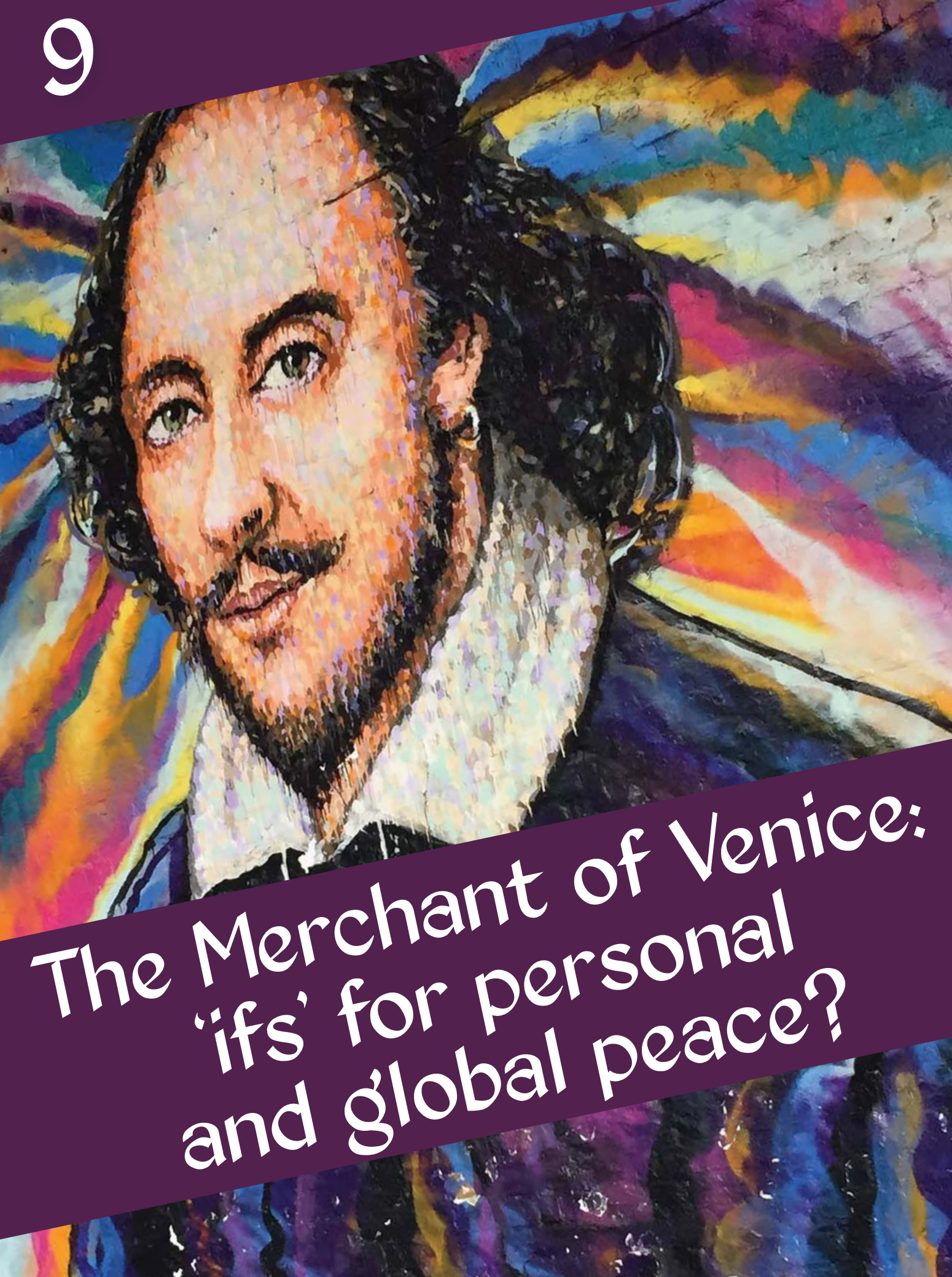


9



**The Merchant of Venice:  
'ifs' for personal  
and global peace?**




- ◆ Watch the “monologue of Shylock” from William Shakespeare’s “Merchant of Venice” on You Tube, directed by Michael Radford, with the leading role performed by Al Pacino. You are about to work on that scene with a discovery-experiential learning method in 4 stages (David Perkins, *The Intelligent Eye: learning to think by looking at art*, Getty Publications, 1994).



### 1. “Give looking time - give thinking time”

- ✓ Watch Shylock’s monologue (1.35’).
- ✓ Form groups and brainstorm noting down exactly what you saw. Give very specific and brief answers e.g. *I saw a man. The man wore a costume.* Then, report your answers to class.






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## 2. “Make your look broad and adventurous - Make your thinking broad and adventurous”



- ✓ Watch the same scene for a second time.
- ✓ In your groups, use your imagination and try to infer what is happening in the scene so as to answer the questions in the table that follows. Report your answers to class.



- ✓ What more would you like to know about the man and his story? Formulate your own questions (e.g. Why is the man angry?). **Keep your questions for stage 4.**

<i>Who is the man?</i>	
<i>Where is he?</i>	
<i>What is he talking about?</i>	
<i>Who are the other men?</i>	
<i>Who are the women?</i>	

## 3. "Make your looking clear and deep - Make your thinking clear and deep"



- ✓ Watch the same scene for a third time.
- ✓ You are going to participate in a debate. Discuss the content of the text that follows with the use of your dictionaries focusing on the questions posed in the 1st Conditionals. While discussing the content of the text, underline all the linguistic differences you can distinguish between the language of the text and modern English.

**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? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? 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.



✓ In the debate you are going to speak from the perspective of:



✓ You will be given 1 minute each to develop your argumentation, and 1 more minute to refute the argumentation of the other groups. Prepare your refutation speculating what the other groups are going to support. Decide who will represent your team in this debate.

**4. "Making your looking organized - make your thinking organized"**



- ✓ Watch the whole film "The Merchant of Venice" (in class or at home). You may also search for information on Shakespeare and his works or the art of movie-making on the internet.
- ✓ Discuss your answers to the questions of task 1 and decide if you will change any of them.
- ✓ Go back to your own questions of task 1 and see if they have been answered.

**5.** Give yourselves 2 minutes and reflect on the messages of the film, specially the ones sent via the 1st Conditionals. Cooperate in your groups to express your feelings and thoughts in the way you prefer (an oral or written text, a poem, a song, a drawing). Discuss and decide how you will present your work in class.

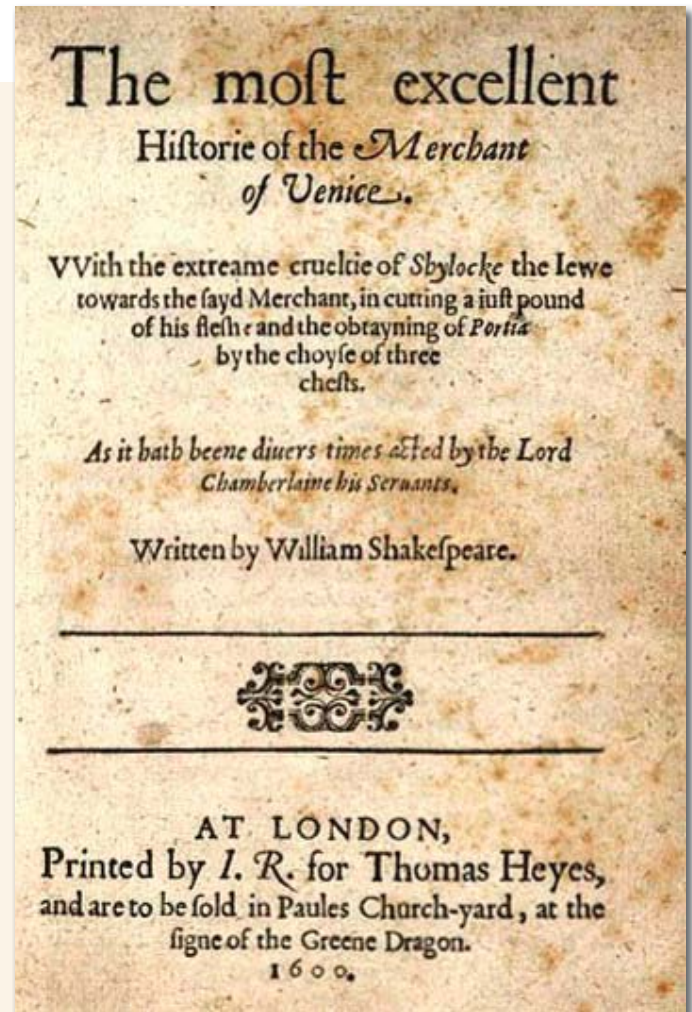


**6.** In your groups, try to recall the steps of this unit and decide upon five key words which reflect your feelings and thoughts about the educational experience you had.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

## About the play...

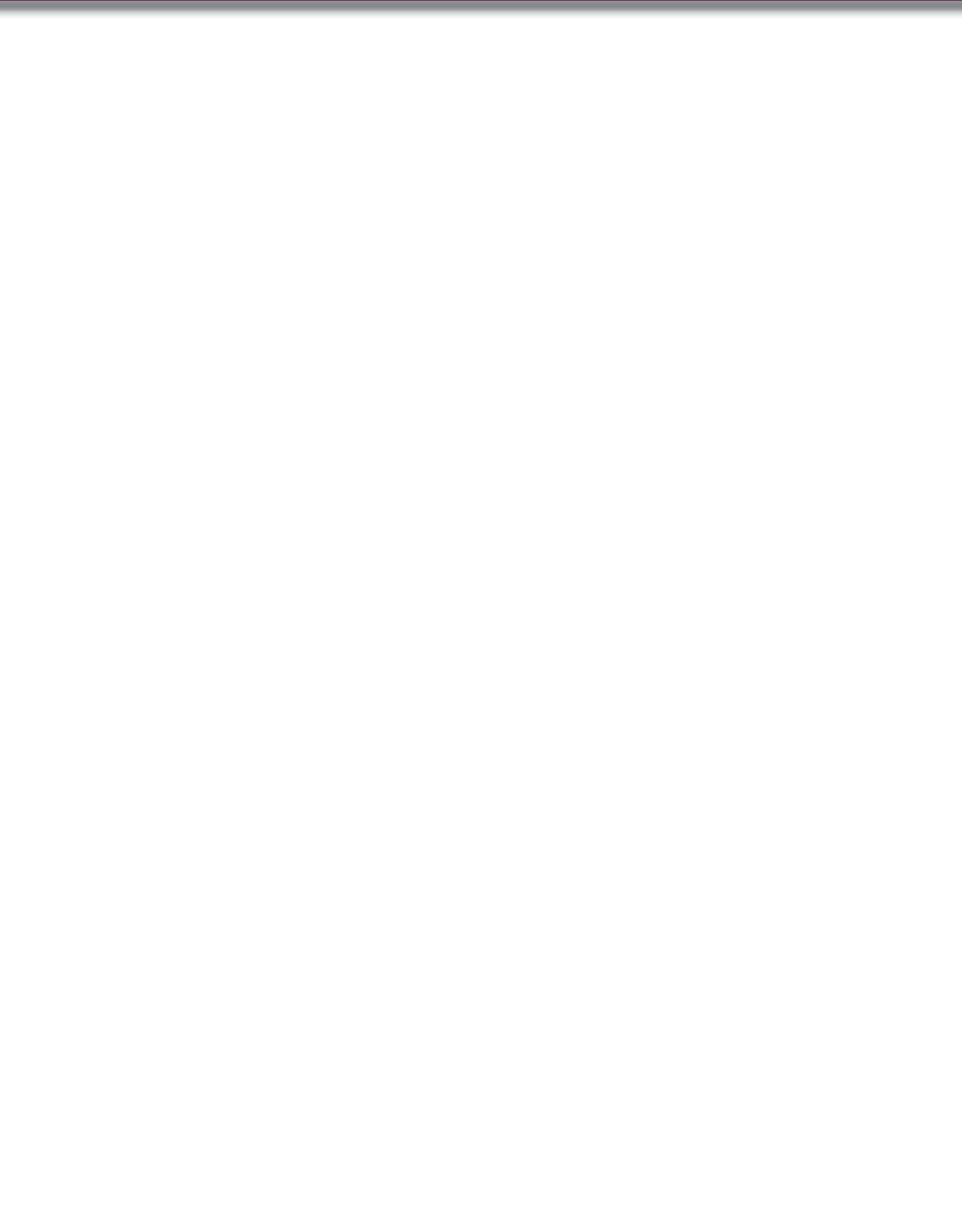
The **Merchant of Venice** is a 16th-century play written by William Shakespeare between 1596 and 1598, centred around love, money, prejudice and social injustice. It is the story of Antonio, a Merchant of Venice, who lends three thousand ducats to his friend Bassanio in order to assist him in his wooing of the wealthy and beautiful Portia of Belmont, an estate some distance from Venice. Antonio's own money is tied up in business ventures that depend on the safe return of his ships from sea, so he borrows the money from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender whom he has previously insulted for his high rates of interest. Shylock lends the money against a bond. Failure to repay the loan on the agreed date will entitle Shylock to a pound of Antonio's flesh!



Though classified as a comedy in the **First Folio** (the Collection of William Shakespeare's plays published in 1623, considered one of the most influential books ever published in the English language) and sharing certain aspects with his other romantic comedies, the play is most remembered for its dramatic scenes. Indeed, it is best known for Shylock's speech on humanity and his famous quote: "**Hath not a Jew eyes?**".



Royal Shakespeare Company  
<http://www.rsc.org.uk/the-merchant-of-venice/>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Merchant\\_of\\_Venice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Merchant_of_Venice)  
 (adapted text)



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