



The Merchant of Venice

Study Guide by Course Hero



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👁️ Book Basics

AUTHOR

William Shakespeare

YEARS WRITTEN

c. 1596–97

GENRE

Comedy

ABOUT THE TITLE

The *Merchant of Venice* may refer to the character Antonio, a wealthy Venetian merchant whose trade and relationships intersect in ways that place him in mortal danger when he

makes a deal with a moneylender. However, an alternate title that appears in early records, *The Jew of Venice*, calls this reading into question. The original double title raises questions regarding the identities of the play's hero and villain and the play's stance on anti-Semitism.

🕒 In Context

Early Publications of *The Merchant of Venice*

The *Merchant of Venice* was first printed in a quarto edition in 1600. A quarto was a small book-sized edition of a single play, similar to any individual edition of William Shakespeare's play available today. Some early quarto editions were of questionable quality and accuracy—the result of an audience member copying down the lines during a performance, but the quarto for *The Merchant of Venice* is of higher quality. It seems to have been produced from one of Shakespeare's own scripts: *The Merchant of Venice* appeared in a definitive version in the *First Folio*, a large-format collection printed in 1623 of all Shakespeare's plays.

Jews in Renaissance Europe

The *Merchant of Venice* reflects prevailing European Christian attitudes toward Judaism rooted in conflicts dating back almost to the origins of Christianity itself. Christianity began as a sect within Judaism, the ancient monotheistic religion of Jewish people which became divided around the 8th century BCE. Issues contributing to the division were related to continued dominance from other cultures—most notably those of Greece and Rome—and related questions as to whether

Guide For Merchant Of Venice

Jianjun Gao



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