

Portia



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Portia is the heroine of William Shakespeares The Merchant of Venice. A rich, beautiful, very intelligent heiress, she is bound by the lottery set forth in her fathers will, which gives potential suitors the chance to choose between three caskets composed of gold, silver and lead.

If they choose the right casket ??“ the casket containing Portias portrait ??“ they win Portias hand in marriage. If they choose the wrong casket, they must leave and never seek another woman in marriage. Portia favours Bassanio, but is not allowed to give him any clues to assist in his choice.

Later in the play, she disguises herself as a man, then assumes the role of a lawyers apprentice whereby she saves the life of Bassanios friend, Antonio, in court. She disguises herself as Balthasar, a young doctor of law. Portia is one of the most prominent of Shakespeares heroines in his mature romantic comedies. She is beautiful, gracious, rich, intelligent, quick witted and with high standards in men. She obeys her fathers will while having a determination to obtain Bassanio while being tactful to the Princes of Morocco and Arragon who unsuccessfully seek her hand.

In the court scenes, Portia finds a technicality in the bond, thereby outwitting Shylock and saving Antonios life when everyone else fails. Yet she also shows immense injustice and cruelty towards the Job-like figure of Shylock and those who are sympathetic with Shylock see her as the epitome of blunt, barbaric, Christian primitivism. It is Portia who delivers one of the most famous speeches in The Merchant of Venice: The quality of mercy is not straind. resume writing service nyc It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

The strength of Portia as a role has made it attractive to many notable actresses. Frances Abington, Sarah Siddons and Elizabeth Whitlock all played the role in the 18th century when actresses first started appearing on stage. More recently, the role has been played in the cinema and on television by a number of notable actresses such as Maggie Smith, Claire Bloom, Sybil Thorndike and Joan Plowright, regardless of her ruthlessness. Portia does not only have positive reviews of her nature. The famous Jewish writer Wolf Mankowitz dubbed her a “ cold, snobbish little bitch” in a video he made about anti-Semitism against Shylock the moneylender[citation needed]. The whole concept of the rhetoric is brought into light by Portia: The idea that an unjust argument may win through eloquence, loopholes and technicalities, regardless of the moral question in hand.