

# Expect the unexpected

Literature, William Shakespeare



Expect the Unexpected The Merchant of Venice Dramatic irony is when the words and actions of the characters in a novel have a different meaning for the reader than they do for the characters, this is the result of the reader having a superior knowledge than the characters themselves. Therefore, William Shakespeare introduces "dramatic irony" in the novel The Merchant of Venice to keep the readers engaged and wanting to read more. During the trial, Act 4 scene 1, Shakespeare uses Dramatic Irony to build tension in the court room resulting it to rise and escalate. The knowledge the readers have in mind about the previous acts and scenes increases tension because the readers know about the bond which is detained between Antonio and Shylock. "The pound of flesh which I demand of him." (4. 1. 100) Fear is heightened after entering into the trial scene because readers can see how determined Shylock is to receive his pound of flesh. Shylock is persisting to retrieve his bond from Antonio. Shylock's assurance to get the flesh from Antonio makes him seem more evil than readers expected from already known what he was like at the beginning of the novel. "As seek to soften that than which what's harder?--His Jewish heart." (4. 1. 80) Therefore, Antonio goes into the trial thinking Shylock will have strong pity towards him and will be understanding, but as far as readers know, Shylock is sticking to his word and not taking any other offers to pay off Antonio's debt. "Shylock, there's thrice the money offered thee." (4. 1. 235)