

The merchant of venice



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The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare (1596-1597) Portia: A Good Leader in a Crisis In the play, 'The Merchant of Venice, (Shakespeare, 1596-1597), Portia is a vital and important character, because she was involved in all the decisive actions and without her, matters would never have turned out so well in the end. She would make an excellent leader because of three important aspects of her character, which will be discussed in this essay.

One, is her sense of loyalty and duty, she was totally to be trusted as someone who would not go back on her word. This quality appears early in the play, as Portia obeys her father's wishes with the casket test to find a husband; something hard for her to accept, but she did not cheat.

" O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse Who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a Dead father.." (Act 1, Scene 2, v. 21-23)

In the same scene, she showed what a good judge of character she was, when discussing the various suitors with Nerissa. She did not break her word, but managed to get the man she wanted by hanging on to her belief in love, and then offering him the duty and love she once gave her father.

" Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted" (Act 3, Scene 2, v. 166-167)

Next, is her quick mind and intelligence; she saw right to the crux of any problems and thought of solutions quickly. When Bassanio got the letter about Antonio's problems, she offered the money right away to get them out of trouble. It was a rational and decisive solution. When the offer of money did not work, Portia looked for another way out and sought expert help to put her plan into practice.

" In speed to Padua. See thou render this

Into my cousin's hand, Dr. Bellario,
And look what notes and garments he doth give thee." (Act 3, Scene 4, v. 49-51)

Her intelligence meant she had a realistic view, and helped her recognize that a rich young woman would have no influence or power, but a clever young lawyer would. It also made her aware that expert advice was necessary, as was the quick decision to get that advice. Her great reasoning and negotiating powers allowed her to understand that Shylock wanted to use the law, so she would use it too, to get a good outcome for all.

The third and most important characteristic is her ethical and fair way of dealing with everything. Despite Shylock wanting to cut a man open, Portia offered him a chance to change his mind, a way to stop things going too far and hurting everyone. Her fair and generous approach stands out in the famous speech when she begged Shylock to temper justice with mercy.

" The quality of mercy is not strained.

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." (Act 4, Scene 1, v. 181-184)

Portia in the guise of lawyer showed the essential values and moral qualities that she lived by. Any decision or judgment she made would be fair, tempered with mercy. Even when using the other law regarding the spilling of one drop of blood, she was trying to prevent Shylock from becoming a killer, while saving Antonio's life, a mercy for all of them. She delivered justice by the deed she made Shylock sigh for Lorenzo and Jessica, showing her sense of fair play.

So the three most important elements of her character could be used in a

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work related crisis such as the one described as follows. Loyal, trustworthy, intelligent, decisive, and fair, these seem more than three, but they all fit together to make a good person to work with. Portia could avert a possible strike over a pay rise demand that would damage the company. As a team leader, she would be loyal to her team but feel duty to them and the company, which means she would have to be strong, decisive and see every side of the issue; as she did when helping Antonio and in planning her court appearance. She would discuss the matter with everyone, ask them to consider what was fair, maybe to lower the level of rise they are within their rights to demand (a pound of flesh). Portia would outline the consequences for the company and the workers, such a losing their jobs if the rise was pursued at the high level. She would have taken advice from a financial expert, got information from the company's bosses, and used facts to support her case. Given her intelligence and fair-minded approach, there is every reason to believe she would achieve a fair resolution for everyone.

Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Penguin Shakespeare. Penguin Books. 2005