

The Answers to the card sort

C	Once upon a time there was a poor nobleman from Venice called Bassanio, who was in love with Portia, a rich heiress from the country. To travel to her estate and court her, he needed three thousand ducats. His friend, the merchant Antonio, could not help as his wealth was with his ships at sea. So they asked the Jewish money-lender, Shylock for a loan. Shylock had long hated Antonio and so he agreed to lend the sum, on one condition. If the money was not returned in three months, Antonio must pay with a pound of his flesh. Antonio rashly agreed.
A	With the money safely in his possession Bassanio now prepared to woo Portia at her house in Belmont. His good friend, Gratiano, begged to accompany him and the two set off with a group of friends.
Q	Meanwhile, at Belmont Portia was waiting for a man to marry her. She had no choice over who was the successful suitor, because before her father died he had made three caskets: one gold, one silver, one lead and on each was a riddle. The first suitor to pick the casket that contained a portrait of his daughter would win her hand. Men had flocked from far and near to try the test but all had failed so far.
E	Now Bassanio took his turn. Portia, who loved Bassanio as much as he loved her, watched nervously, with Nerissa, her maid, and Gratiano. Gold? Silver? Or Lead? Which would Bassanio choose? At last, he turned the key in the lead casket ... and found his true love's portrait!
B	Portia gave Bassanio a ring after his success. He swore never to part with it. Then Nerissa gave Gratiano a ring because they had also found love.
L	Amid this joy, Bassanio's friend, Lorenzo, arrived. He had eloped with Shylock's daughter, Jessica. They brought grave news from Venice: Antonio's ships had not docked and the three months were up. Shylock was demanding his bond. Antonio's life was in danger.
D	The couples married in haste. Then Bassanio and Gratiano left for Venice. Portia promised enough money to pay off the debt many times over.
O	Left behind, Portia wrote to her cousin, a learned lawyer, Doctor Bellario. She asked him to send lawyers' clothes and books about the law. Next Portia asked Lorenzo and Jessica to look after her house. She told the couple that she and Nerissa would await their husbands' return in a monastery.
J	In Venice, the duke and his nobles were in court. Shylock refused to take the larger sum Bassanio offered. He wanted his pound of flesh. So the duke sent for an expert, Doctor Bellario, for advice. The learned doctor was unwell, but sent in his place a promising pupil and his clerk.

## The Merchant of Venice

F	The young lawyer confirmed the law stood against Antonio. Shylock was delighted and began to sharpen his knife. The lawyer asked Shylock to be merciful and drop the charge but Shylock would not. He wanted revenge upon his old enemy.
K	Shylock steadied his knife and Antonio prepared to die. The lawyer warned Shylock to take a pound of flesh exactly, no more and no less, and that if he spilled one drop of blood, he would break the law. Realising the impossibility of his task Shylock dropped his knife: he would take the money.
N	The lawyer, however, had more to say and continued. Shylock had sought the life of a citizen of Venice. The punishment was death, if the duke decreed it. The duke said that if Shylock became a Christian, he could keep his life and if he left his wealth to his daughter Jessica, he could keep his trade. Shylock agreed and left the court dejected.
R	The lawyer had saved Antonio's life. Yet he wanted no fee – only Bassanio's ring. Bassanio refused as he had promised his wife he would not part with it, but Antonio begged his friend to reconsider and he relented.
P	Gratiano went after the lawyer with the ring. The lawyer's clerk persuaded him to part with his ring too. Now both men would have some explaining to do to their wives.
I	When Bassanio, Gratiano and Antonio reached Belmont, they never guessed Portia and Nerissa had just returned too. At first the wives seemed pleased to see their husbands but then Nerissa asked Gratiano where the ring was that she had given him.
S	Soon Portia realised that her husband's ring was missing too and Bassanio was in trouble with his new wife as well. Both wives claimed to be offended by what their husbands had done.
G	Antonio interceded in the quarrel and explained that it was his fault that the rings had been given away. Portia relented and bade him pass Bassanio a ring as a sign of forgiveness. Nerissa also relented and gave Gratiano a ring. Both seemed familiar to the men.
M	Bassanio and Gratiano realised that these were the very rings they had given away. So Portia had been the young lawyer who had saved Antonio's life, and Nerissa her clerk! How blind the men had been and how happy they were to hear the whole story.
H	Then Nerissa told Jessica that even though she had eloped with Lorenzo, she would inherit Shylock's wealth when he died and Antonio discovered that his ships with all their merchandise had finally come safely into harbour. At last the merry friends could celebrate, and laugh at the husbands who had not known their own wives!