

# UNIQUE

BY AYESHA KAMPANI

A magazine like no other

3000

THE TRUTH  
EXPOSED

A FRIENDLY  
PLEA NOW A  
DEATHSENTENCE

"Everyone has  
secrets...*right?*"

INSIDERS'  
UNWRAP

*Betrayed*

MARCH 2022

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# PROJECT DISCLAIMER

The below article is purely a work of fiction and for project and educational purposes. Do not take offence to any biases shown as it is written from the anonymous perspective of Lady Portia (lady gloria) during the Elizabethan Era. Any similarities between present day life and situations are merely a coincidence and not to be thought of as anything else. The aspect of focusing anything other than the court scene has been deliberately put into action.

For further context: I have added a few elements to Antonio's character (relating to Balthazar and Gratiano) which are purely fictitious and for entertainment purposes

ONLY!  
HAPPY READING :)

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# FIRE AND ASH

AN ARTICLE BY LADY GLORIA

With the extreame crueltie of Sbylocke the Iewe  
towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound  
of his flesh: and the obtayning of *Portia*  
by the choise of three  
chests.

*As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord  
Chamberlaine his Seruants.*

This weekend we were witness to one of the most ravaging and disastrous scandals Venice has been witness to in its 250 year history. A great extend of drama has gone down and we *Uniques* are back with another dose to break it down for you. Along with the dozen other witnesses, our very own *Unique* reporter was present in the court scene at the time of the trial and we have got the opportunity to interview all involved parties in the scandal (barring the Jew), and we have gained insight to this entire situation. There is a lot that we didn't know and the information we received is enlightening.

**Starting from the basics**, this world rattling scandal has been going on for three months now, and the verdict is finally in. Involving, the infamous Jew; Shylock, best known for ruthless moneylending and being unable to maintain a stable family; and Antonio, our flourishing merchant of Venice, who seems to have found himself at a loss of luck and close to death.

Antonio had once signed a bond (image above) with Shylock for 3000 ducats as a loan to help sustain his business. With the terms stating that incase Antonio would not be able to pay his due in within the tenure, then the Jew had the right to scrape off one pound of flesh from his bosom or place nearest to his heart; which practically means death-sentence. Talk about cruel! Yet again the Jew proves that they couldn't be worse than Barbarians.

Antonio at that time knew he would be able to pay it off, but luck wasn't in his side...which takes us to present day at the Grand Court Of Venice where both individuals are justifying their pleas. The court is the most renowned in the world and one of the largest too. With wood panels and witness seating arrangement, a Dias, a waiting room, and a board of display for any term or document in case point...luxury was oozing out of the room.

Our reporter was disguised and had reached, hours prior to get a proper insiders view, the aura of the entire room was "grim and sombre". They were able to get a first hand view of the bond, the image above is the original copy, and we noticed something

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interesting- our lovely lady Portia has been mentioned in the terms. According to a source: "At first thought one would think Antonio had taken this loan as a due to Portia, but that wouldn't make sense since Bassanio (Antonio's best friend) is married to her. It was confusing, so I decided to interview Bassanio and reach the bottom of this situation"

And what they uncovered was shocking. The glorious love of Lord Gratiano and Lady Portia had taken the world by storm and we still can't have enough! The iconic story of the Three Caskets is one that has gone down history and still makes us swoon. And as much as we love to believe that they were meant to be, the reality is very different. During the interview, it was revealed that Bassanio had always fancied Portia but he didn't always have enough money. "I cared for Portia in a very different way. I loved her and I needed to marry her. When I heard there was an opening, I took it and asked Antonio for some funds. It may seem brash and cruel; but a love like that, isn't to be taken lightly. It's only happened to me once before and I couldn't do anything about it, and I had to do something now. So yes, the money was intended for a proposal for Portia." Talk about Romantic!!! To think we couldn't be crying more already,

Bassanio also revealed, "Even though it is partially my fault for putting Antonio in this situation, I wouldn't have changed anything differently. I know that it was worth it". Moving onto the actual court scene, there wasn't much that could be done for poor Antonio. The Duke rightfully supported Antonio and told the Jew the statistics. Unknown to outsiders, the Duke didn't carry out the entire judgement alone. In the midst of the testimony, he invited Lord Balthazar all the way from Padua to help decide this situation. He wore a long coat with a leathery top hat made from the finest fabrics in Venice. The attire was nothing like we've ever seen before and speaks bounds on his wealth. The man was of a petite and rather feminine nature, and extremely young. On the basis of first impressions, he wasn't a very convincing person. His hair was of a luscious red-orange colour which is extremely rare for men, on top of that, his voice was also of a peculiar pitch. It seemed as though as he never crossed his teens, the sound was gruff and sounded forced but it turns out that it was because of days of unending research on the case. Balthazar couldn't have been much older than



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25 yet he carried himself in a confident manner. He carried the entire judgement on his shoulders and knew the conditions very clearly. One would have their doubts on him at first, due to his age and his constant mention of Antonio having to pay the debt, but do not be fooled, he turned out to be a manipulator of his own making. As a magazine ourselves, we in unique haven't heard much about a "Balthazar" however, his work shined in the day's events.

About an hour into the hearing, it was evident that Antonio would not be able to control the outcome and he was starting to lose hope. During the interview he declared, "During that moment, I had lost all faith and belief. We have been sitting and waiting for this moment for months and I thought I had lost it all. At that time, I felt humiliated for ever falling into this situation and I greatly regretted each of my actions. It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life and I wished I could change it. I just hoped to be dead. I wanted this over and done with". He started saying his goodbyes and he very emotively described his feelings to his best friend, "Bassanio, he-- he is my soulmate and even though he put me in this situation, I would have done it again for him. I care about him more than the world and so his happiness means everything to me. I had to tell him how I felt. This was not his fault, and to not grieve my loss. He deserves to be happy, even though it would be difficult, he would have to do it for me". Such loyalty, and such friendship! It was truly a heartbreaking sight to see. If one didn't know better, they could assume, there was something more sparkling inside. Is there? What do you think?!



There is definitely something between these two gentlemen and it makes all of us reporters question what truly goes on personally. What if there was something going on? We have all been witness to Antonio and Bassanio's iconic friendship and camadary, could it be possible that their marriages were just a facade to stop people from finding out the real details?

Thinking about all the ways they have spoken about each other, there

was always nothing but praise, appreciation and care, but what if we take it literally...what if Bassanio's first true love was actually Antonio? Could this be the reason Antonio has not married? What would this mean for Portia and Bassanio's "love". Was it all a facade or is it something different after all? So many unanswered

questions...but does Lady Portia even know of this little secret? Poor Portia, we all know her undying love for Bassanio, this news changes things, but most importantly- it would mean her entire marriage was a lie. Looks like it's time that their time has come for the fire to become ash. Old and forgotten. And before we go questioning Lady Portia fulfilling her marital capabilities as a wife; both Antonio and Bassanio have always had an aura of mysteriousness to their relationship...could this finally be This court scene, seems to have exposed quite a few secrets, and according to the witness Balthazar also seems to have a secret of his own, or shall we say **her own**. Sources say that Balthazar is actually Antonio's supposed affair who seems to have wanted to practice law and was never able to, until now. That would explain their abrupt arrival and questionable physique. But we don't know for sure...

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As Balthazar was very guarded during the entire and didn't disclose any information about their personal life. All we know is that they worked profusely alongside the infamous and evergreen Bellario.

Towards the end of the case, Balthazar revealed their true intentions for the case, in which they used The Jew's staunch and unchanging opinion against him. They declared that since the Jew was not willing to make any additions that were not in the bond, like arranging a surgeon for innocent Antonio, Venice wouldn't either. So Balthazar put forward his argument and gave the justice long overdue.

In the end, it was declared that The Jew would receive the penalty that he deserved, so long as he did not drop a single drop of Christian blood, or take even a hair's breadth more of Antonio's flesh; otherwise all of his goods would be confiscated. It was pure genius from Balthazar's side! Who would have thought it would have turned into this?

And don't start celebrating just yet, Balthazar still had another trick up their sleeve- they proclaimed, that if a forgeriner ever threatened the life of any citizen in Venice the court had the right to, confiscate all their goods and property- out of which half to the state, and the other to the offended. Moreover, the life of the individual, would be subject to the Duke.

Balthazar, this brilliant person, had managed to save the life of our beloved Merchant and at the same time give the Jew the justice he deserved. "It was truly an amazing moment to witness. One would have thought that there was no hope, and we were going to lose, and just like that- we won- no thanks to Balthazar"- says Gratiano, another one of Antonio's acquaintances. But HOLD ON STILL, if it isn't enough praise for Balthazar already, there is more. In his interview, he shared: "I always knew Antonio would win, it was rightfully his case anyway. I just stretched it on further for fun. I haven't had such a challenging case in a while and why not have fun while you're at it?". WOW! Isn't that crazy?! The spark which turned into a fire, has now been resolved and it couldn't have been done without Balthazar.

This journey was truly a rollercoaster, for us and you too! What are your views on this entire scandal and who do you think was truly in the wrong? what do you think of the secrets uncovered? Tell us your views below!



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