The Jew of Malta

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Not much is known about Christopher Marlowe, including his exact date of birth, but he was baptized as an infant on February 26, 1564. Marlowe was born the eldest son to John and Catherine Marlowe in the city of Canterbury in Kent, England. Marlowe's father was a shoemaker, and young Christopher—as known as "Kit'—attended the King's School in Canterbury, England's oldest public school. He later attended Corpus Christi College at the University of Cambridge on a scholarship and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584. Marlowe continued at Cambridge and began studying for a Master of Arts degree, and he completed his graduate studies in 1587; however, Marlowe's degree was initially withheld due to his excessive absenteeism. He was eventually awarded his degree after Queen Elizabeth I insisted that Marlowe's absences were on behalf of his "good service" to England. What kind of "service" Marlowe provided is not known, and this uncertainty has fueled longstanding suspicions that Marlowe may have been a secret spy working on behalf of England and the Queen. It is thought that Marlowe wrote his first play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, during his time at Cambridge. The play was first performed the same year Marlowe graduated, but it was not published until after his death in 1594. Marlowe's most famous play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, was also first performed in 1587, and it was his first play to be staged in London. Marlowe then wrote *Tamburlaine the Great, Part II*, and both plays were wildly popular and published in 1590. *The Jew of Malta* was likely written around 1589, but the play was not performed until 1592, and it wasn't published until 1594. Marlowe's next play, *Edward the Second*, was first performed in July of 1593, just weeks after Marlowe's murder at the age of 29. He is also remembered for *Doctor Faustus*, although it is unknown when the play was written or first performed. In the early 1590s, Marlowe shared a room with Thomas Kyd, a fellow English playwright and author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and both men were arrested in May of 1593 after heretical literature was found in their room. Kyd confessed under torture that the offensive writing belonged to Marlowe, but Marlowe was later released without punishment. Since the accepted penalty for heresy was death, Marlowe's apparent pardon further fueled rumors that he was secretly a government spy. Marlowe was killed just days later, on May 30, 1593, when he was allegedly stabbed to death by Ingram Frizer, a wealthy businessman with ties to the English government and Queen Elizabeth I. The circumstances and events surrounding Marlowe's death are largely unknown, and Frizer was ultimately pardoned on the grounds of self-defense. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave near St. Nicolas Church in London, but a memorial window sits in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey as a tribute to Marlowe and his contribution to literature and the stage.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the prologue of *The Jew of Malta*, the play's narrator, Machevill, mentions the death of "the Guise," a reference to Henri de Lorraine, the third Duke of Guise. Guise was a Frenchman and a leader of the Catholics during the French Wars of Religion that pitted French Protestants against French Roman Catholics from 1562 to 1598, and he led the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572, which was widely viewed by the English in Marlowe's day as a prime example of Catholic intolerance and violence against Protestants. The massacre was a period of violence perpetrated by the French Catholics and included several assassinations of high-profile Protestants, like Gaspard de Coligny, the leader of the French Protestants known as the Huguenots. The St. Bartholomew's Day massacre began in Paris on the night of August 23, 1572, during the feast celebrating Bartholomew the Apostle, and continued for many weeks, resulting in the deaths of up to 30,000 French Protestants. Under the leadership of Guise, the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre turned the French Wars of Religion in favor of the Catholics and decimated the Protestant resistance. King Henry III of France and Poland tried to make peace with the Huguenots in 1576, and Guise, viewing Henry III's decision as a betrayal, formed a league to continue defending the Catholic cause and began vying for the crown, even though he was not the heir presumptive. On December 23, 1588, Henry III ordered Guise's death, and he was stabbed to death, along with his brother, Louis II, cardinal de Guise, in Paris.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Christopher Marlowe was one of the most famous playwrights of the Elizabethan era, along with contemporaries Thomas Kyd—known for his popular play, *The Spanish Tragedy*—and William Shakespeare, remembered for *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, and numerous other plays and sonnets. Like *The Spanish Tragedy*, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is widely considered to be an important example of a revenge tragedy, a kind of play that explores revenge and the moral implications of vengeance. Other revenge plays include *Electra* by Sophocles, *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Thomas Middleton, and *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster. *The Jew of Malta* also examines anti-Semitism and the prejudice the play's protagonist, Barabas, the

richest Jew in Malta, faces because of his Jewish identity. Anti-Semitism and the way similar bigotry shapes broader society is a theme that is also explored in W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and *Maus II*, and Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Jew of Malta*
- **When Written:** Likely around 1589
- **Where Written:** London
- **When Published:** 1594
- **Literary Period:** The English Renaissance
- **Genre:** Revenge Tragedy
- **Setting:** The island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Climax:** Barabas is betrayed by Ferneze and falls to his death into the boiling cauldron meant for Selim-Calymath.
- **Antagonist:** Ferneze and the anti-Semitism of 16th-century society.

EXTRA CREDIT

Marlowe's Influence. Marlowe's influence has remained long after his death. *The Wench is Dead*, a 1989 novel by English writer Colin Dexter, gets its title from a line in *The Jew of Malta*, and the same line is also quoted in T.S. Eliot's prologue to his 1915 poem, "Portrait of a Lady."

High Crimes. In 1592, Marlowe was arrested in the city of Vlissingen in the Netherlands for counterfeiting coins. The penalty for such fraud was death, but Marlowe again escaped punishment, further fueling conspiracy theories that he was a secret spy working on behalf of the English government and Queen Elizabeth I.

PLOT SUMMARY

Most people think that Machevill is dead, but his soul lives on, and now he has come from France to England to have some fun. Machevill's name is "odious" to many, it is those who despise him the most—including those who rise to the papacy—who also admire him the most. To Machevill, religion is a "childish toy," and the only sin is ignorance. Many people call his methods murder, but Machevill thinks this is foolish—strong nations require strong leaders, and one that rules with "might." But, Machevill is not here to talk about himself; he is here to introduce "the tragedy of a Jew, / Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed." The Jew, Barabas, obtained his **gold** through Machevill's "means," but Machevill asks the audience not to judge Barabas too harshly. They must judge him by his merit, not because he supports Machiavellianism.

Barabas enters his counting house and is surrounded by piles of gold. Three Jews enter and tell Barabas about the arrival of a Turkish fleet. The men fear war, but Barabas calms them. Malta is in league with the Ottoman Empire, he says, and the fleet surely comes in peace. However, in a short aside, Barabas admits he cares little about Malta or the other Jews. The Turks can wage war all they want—as long as they leave Barabas, his gold, and his daughter, Abigail, alone. The men tell Barabas there will be a meeting at the senate-house, and every Jew in Malta is expected to attend.

In the meantime, Ferneze, the governor of Malta, enters the senate-house with Selim-Calymath, the son of the Turkish Emperor. Malta owes the Turks 10 years' worth of tribute payments; however, to avoid war, Calymath gives Ferneze 30 days to collect the money. Barabas and the other Jews are escorted in, and Ferneze informs them that the Turks have come for their tribute money, and the sum is more than Malta has. Therefore, each Jew in Malta must surrender half their wealth to cover the bill. If they refuse, their entire estate will be seized, and they will be forced to convert to Christianity. Barabas asks if everyone in Malta will be taxed; the Jews alone "stand accursèd in the sight of heaven," Ferneze says, so the Jews alone will pay. Barabas claims he will not convert, nor will he give half his wealth to Malta. Ferneze says that Malta will take all Barabas's wealth. Barabas reluctantly agrees to pay half, but Ferneze says it is too late—Barabas has refused, and now his wealth belongs to Malta. As the Jews are escorted out of the senate-house, a knight suggests they turn Barabas's mansion into a nunnery. Ferneze agrees that converting Barabas's home is a good idea and exits with his men.

Alone, Barabas says he will not let Ferneze get away with stealing his wealth, and he vows to get even. Suddenly, Abigail enters in hysterics—she has been ejected from their home, which is being converted into a convent. Barabas tells Abigail not to worry. He has bags of gold and jewels hidden in the floorboards, and it is enough to get them started again. "We ought to make bar of no policy," Barabas says, telling Abigail to go back to the house and ask to be accepted as a nun. That way, she can retrieve the hidden gold from the floorboards. "For religion," Barabas says, "hides many mischiefs from suspicion." Abigail resists. Such deceit is not right, she says, but Barabas convinces her. "Counterfeit passion is better / Than unseen hypocrisy," he says. When two friars, Jacomo and Bernardine, pass on their way to the new convent, Abigail asks to join the nunnery. Excited to convert a Jew, the friars agree and take Abigail to the convent.

Later that night, Barabas appears outside his old mansion, and Abigail throws down the bags of gold. "Oh my girl, / My gold, my fortune, my felicity," Barabas says, clutching the bags to his body. Abigail warns him that the nuns will soon be waking, and he runs off with his gold. Meanwhile, Ferneze enters with Marin Del Bosco, the Vice-Admiral of Spain. Bosco has many

Turkish slaves to sell, but Ferneze informs him that such business violates Malta's tributary league with the Turks. Bosco is surprised Ferneze is in league with the Turks, and he offers Ferneze a way to keep the 100,000 crowns Malta owes the Ottoman Empire. If Ferneze allows Bosco to sell his slaves, he promises Spain's protection, and his fleet will not leave until Malta is safe from the Turks. Ferneze immediately agrees. "So will we fight it out," Ferneze says as he exits with Bosco and the knights. "Honour is bought with blood and not with gold."

The next day, Barabas enters the market to buy a slave. His pockets are full of money, and he has already purchased a new house even bigger than Ferneze's. Barabas watches as Ferneze's son, Don Lodowick enters the market. Barabas swears revenge upon Lodowick, too, for the "sin" of being Ferneze's son and approaches the young man. Lodowick heard about Barabas's beautiful daughter from his friend, Don Mathias, and Lodowick has come to the market hoping to catch a glimpse of Abigail. He asks Barabas if he has any diamonds to sell, but Barabas says the only "diamond" he has left is Abigail. Lodowick is indeed interested, and Barabas tells him to call on him later to talk about price. Lodowick exits, and Barabas buys a skinny Turkish slave named Ithamore. Soon after, Mathias enters with his mother, Katherine. Mathias quietly asks Barabas why he was talking to Lodowick, and Barabas tells Mathias not to worry. Lodowick is interested in a diamond, not Abigial, Barabas says, reassuring Mathias that he will be the one to marry Abigail. Alone with Ithamore, Barabas learns about his new slave. Like Barabas, Ithamore hates Christians and murders them every chance he gets. Lodowick returns, asking about the "diamond," so Barabas yells for Abigail. In a quick aside, Barabas convinces Abigail to pretend to love Lodowick, even though she is really in love with Mathias. Abigail is hesitant, but Barabas assures her it is just for show. Barabas privately celebrates his "policy": he will send a forged letter to Mathias, and as Lodowick, he will challenge Mathias to a duel. The two men will surely kill each other, and Barabas's plan will be complete.

Bellamira, a local prostitute, laments the business she has lost since the Turks blocked Malta's port. Her friend, a thief named Pilia-Borza, enters, and gives her a small bag of silver, which he took from Barabas's counting-house. Suddenly, Ithamore walks by and immediately falls in love with the beautiful Bellamira. Pilia-Borza and Bellamira rush off, and Ithamore goes to deliver the forged letter. Later, both Mathias and Lodowick enter, and Barabas watches from above. Mathias and Lodowick draw their swords, stabbing each other to death. As Barabas slips away unseen, Ferneze and Katherine enter to find their sons dead. They quickly realize that someone must have turned the men against each other, and they swear revenge against whoever is responsible. As Ferneze and Katherine exit with their dead sons, Abigail enters with Ithamore, who is laughing. She asks him what is so funny, and Ithamore tells her all about Barabas's forged letter and Lodowick and Mathias's deadly duel. Betrayed by her father and mourning the loss of her true love, Mathias, Abigail joins the convent again—this time for real. When Barabas finds out what Abigail has done, he is furious, and he quickly plots another scheme. He stirs poison into a pot of rice and tells Ithamore to deliver it to the convent. Once consumed, the poison requires 40 hours to take effect, but it is sure to kill Abigail and the entire nunnery.

As Ferneze and Bosco brace Malta for a Turkish attack, Abigail visits Bernardine for her final confession. All the nuns are dead, and Abigail will soon be dead, too. She tells Bernardine all about Barabas's involvement in Mathias's and Lodowick's deaths and promptly dies. Later, as Barabas and Ithamore celebrate the sound of funeral bells, Bernardine enters with Jacomo. It is clear to Barabas that the two friars know about his involvement in Mathias's and Lodowick's deaths, and Barabas knows that he must get rid of the friars, too. Barabas and Ithamore strangle Bernardine, frame Jacomo for his murder, and deliver the friar to the court. As Jacomo is hanged, Pilia-Borza delivers Ithamore a letter from Bellamira, in which she confesses her deep, and secretly false, love for him. He immediately goes to visit her, and, along with Pilia-Borza, Bellamira easily convinces Ithamore to extort money from Barabas. Ithamore firsts asks for 300 crowns, and then 500 crowns, but Barabas won't pay so easily. He finally agrees to send Ithamore a few silver coins, and then he quickly begins plotting the deaths of Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Ithamore.

While Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza drink and celebrate their easy money, Barabas enters disguised as a French musician. He gives Bellamira a flower, which she smells and hands to Pilia-Borza and Ithamore. As they smell the flower, Barabas smiles and exits—the flower is laced with the same poison that killed Abigail and the nuns. It is not long before Bellamira and Pilia-Borza betray Ithamore and tell Ferneze all about the crimes Ithamore committed with Barabas. Ferneze attempts to question Ithamore and Barabas, but they die before he gets the chance, along with Bellamira and Pilia-Borza. Ferneze orders the bodies buried, except for Barabas, who is thrown from the city walls for vultures to feed on. As soon as Barabas hits the ground, he wakes up, having taken a sedative to trick Ferneze's men.

Calymath approaches, and Barabas offers to help the Turks conquer Malta. Afterward, Calymath is so thankful, he makes Barabas Malta's new governor. Alone with Ferneze, Barabas asks what it would be worth to the Christians if he was to kill Calymath and free Malta from the Turks. Ferneze assures Barabas that such a task would be worth "great sums of money," and Barabas quickly hatches a new plan. He will invite Calymath and his men to a feast before they leave for Turkey—Calymath will dine with Barabas, and his men will feast in a monastery outside of town—at which time, Barabas will blow up the monastery and drop Calymath through a trapdoor

into a boiling cauldron to his death. Barabas only needs Ferneze to cut the trapdoor's rope after he hears the cannon hit the monastery. Ferneze agrees, but when Calymath arrives and the cannon hits the monastery, Ferneze cuts the rope just a moment early, dropping Barabas into the cauldron instead. As Barabas dies, Ferneze informs Calymath that his men are dead and takes him prisoner. Calymath begs for his freedom, but Ferneze refuses. Calymath will remain their prisoner, and Malta will never be conquered again. "So march away," Ferneze says as they exit, "and let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Barabas – Barabas is the richest Jew in Malta, Abigail's father, and the protagonist of *The Jew of Malta*. He is exceedingly greedy and corrupt, and he obtained his wealth through Machiavellian means, which means he is very deceitful and conniving. Barabas frequently cites his Jewish identity and the hate and bigotry he faces in Malta, but this is where Barabas's connection to his religion ends. He repeatedly lies, steals, and abuses the people in his life, and when his fellow Jews come to him for assistance when Ferneze exploits them to pay the Turkish tribute, Barabas refuses to lift a finger to help. Once Ferneze seizes all Barabas's wealth, Barabas swears revenge on Ferneze and his son, Lodowick, and he continues his devious machinations to ensure their suffering. Barabas instigates a deadly duel between Lodowick and his friend Mathias, both of whom are in love with Abigail. Abigail, however, is in love with Mathias, and even though Barabas knows this and has already promised Mathias Abigail's hand in marriage, Barabas has no problems murdering Lodowick and Mathias and breaking Abigail's heart. Lodowick's and Mathias's deaths lead to Abigail's conversion to Christianity, which Barabas considers another betrayal and vows to avenge. Barabas ultimately murders Abigail and the entire nunnery with the help of his slave, Ithamore, and a batch of poisoned rice, and then they murder Friars Jacomo and Bernardine because they are privy to Abigail's final confession and know enough to ruin Barabas and put an end to his scheming. Barabas is then betrayed by Ithamore, along with Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, so Barabas murders them, too, with the same poison he uses to kill Abigail. Barabas is eventually out schemed by Ferneze and is killed when he falls into his own trap. Through the character of Barabas, Marlowe argues the dangers of unchecked greed and vengeance, which he warns will only lead to destruction and pain. Barabas also embodies Machiavellianism and corruption, which Marlowe furthers argues is beginning to take hold in England.

Ferneze – Ferneze is the governor of Malta and Lodowick's father. Like Barabas, Ferneze is deceptive and fond of Machiavellian scheming. When Malta owes the Turkish Empire 100,000 crowns they can't pay, Ferneze exploits Malta's Jews to pay the bill, citing biblical scripture and the Jews' "inherent sin" as his motivation. In Fernze's estimation, the Jews are responsible for Christ's crucifixion, which he uses as justification to abuse the Jewish community. Of course, Ferneze never does pay Selim-Calymath and the Turks their rightful tribute money, and he schemes with Martin Del Bosco to keep the money and avoid the war it will likely cause. Yet Ferneze doesn't return the money to the Jews, which further highlights his greed and corruption. When Barabas secretly causes the strife between Lodowick and Mathias that leads to their deadly duel, both Ferneze and Katherine, Mathias's mother, vow to avenge their sons' deaths, an obsession that suggests betrayal and revenge often go hand in hand. Like many of Malta's Christians, Ferneze is exceedingly anti-Semitic and bigoted, and he makes it his personal goal to destroy Barabas and seize every bit of his wealth. After the Turks invade Malta, imprison Ferneze, and make Barabas governor, Ferneze begins to scheme with Barabas to deliver Malta from the Turks. Ferneze ultimately betrays Barabas again, catching Barabas in his own trap and killing him. As Ferneze exits for the last time with Calymath as his prisoner, he claims it is God's will, not Machiavellian corruption and scheming, that has saved Malta. In this way, Marlowe suggests that in addition to being immoral, Machiavellianism is ultimately useless in the face of God's will, which always determines the outcome of any given event.

Ithamore – Ithamore is a Turkish slave, presumably brought to Malta by Martin Del Bosco after capturing a Turkish ship, sinking it, and taking the men as slaves. Barabas buys Ithamore—a skinny man Barabas is certain will cost little to feed and maintain—for 100 crowns at the market in Malta and immediately takes to teaching Ithamore his "policy" and Machiavellian scheming. Barabas tells Ithamore he must be void of love and any trace of compassion, and he further tells Ithamore he must "smile" as the "Christians moan." Ithamore shares Barabas's penchant for murder and Christian contempt, and he easily settles into Barabas's corrupt lifestyle. First, Ithamore delivers the forged letter that leads to Lodowick and Mathais's deadly duel, and he also delivers the poisonous rice that kills Abigail and the entire nunnery. Ithamore falls in love at first sight with Bellamira, who is scheming with Pilia-Borza to trick Ithamore and blackmail Barabas for his **gold**. Ithamore immediately falls for Bellamira and Pilia-Borza's deceitfulness, and he easily agrees to extort Barabas's money, but Bellamire and Pilia-Borza ultimately deceive Ithamore, too, and report his and Barabas's murder of Mathias and Lodowick to Ferneze, hoping for a reward. Ithamore dies along with Bellamira and Pilia-Borza after Barabas disguises himself as a French musician and gives them a bouquet of flowers tainted with the same poison that kills Abigail and the nuns. Like Barabas, Ithamore represents Machiavellian scheming and immorality, which Marlowe implies in widespread across Europe.

Abigail – Abigail is Barabas's daughter and Mathias's love. Abigail is incredibly beautiful and young—around 14—and she is first introduced after Ferneze seizes Barabas's wealth and converts his mansion into a convent. Barabas convinces Abigail to join the convent under false pretenses to retrieve the **gold** he has hidden under the floorboards, which she agrees to do even though she knows it is immoral and deceitful. Afterward, Barabas again asks for Abigial's help in his scheming, and he convinces her to pretend to be in love with Don Lodowick, even though she is really in love with Mathias and hopes to marry him. Barabas is secretly plotting his revenge against Ferneze, which includes the death of Ferneze's son, Lodowick, and Don Mathias. Abigail leads Lodowick on as her father asks her to do, but she is shocked and heartbroken when she learns her dishonesty leads to Lodowick and Mathias's deaths, so she entreats Friar Jacomo to join the nunnery—this time for real—as penance for her sins. When Barabas learns of Abigail's conversion to Christianity, he considers it a personal betrayal, and he vows to avenge Abigail as well. With Ithamore's help, Barabas delivers a pot of poisoned rice to the convent, killing all the nuns, including Abigail. Abigail is arguably the most morally sound character in Marlowe's play, even though she is easily manipulated by her father's machinations and refuses to betray him, even when he proves disloyal to her.

Friar Bernardine – Friar Bernardine is a member of one of the Christian monasteries in Malta, and like Friar Jacomo, he serves to represent religious hypocrisy. Barabas and Ithamore constantly make comments that Bernardine has sexual relationships with the abbess and the other nuns, and when Abigail dies, Bernardine laments the fact that she dies a virgin. Despite Bernardine's priestly vows, he still seems to engage in desires of the flesh, which casts his piety and righteousness into doubt. Bernardine's morality is also called into question in the form of his greed, and when Barabas falsely claims he wants to convert to Christianity and gift his entire fortune to the church that gives him sanctuary, Bernardine and Jacomo physically fight over Barabas and the right to exploit his fortune. What's worse, Bernardine breaks the sacred confessional seal and reveals Abigail's final confession to both Jacomo and Barabas for his personal benefit. Barabas and Ithamore murder Bernardine after he tries to exploit Barabas's wealth, and then they frame Jacomo for his murder. Through the characters of Bernardine and Jacomo, Marlowe suggests that hypocrisy is rampant in religious figures, and he argues that Machiavellianism is not limited to politicians and criminals.

Don Lodowick – Don Lodowick is Ferneze's son and Mathias's friend. After Mathias tells Lodowick all about Barabas's beautiful daughter, Abigail, Lodowick goes behind Mathias's back and tries to win Abigail's love, even though he knows his friend is interested in her. Lodowick's attraction to Abigail creates an opportunity for Barabas, who has sworn revenge against Lodowick for the "sin" of being Ferneze's son, and Barabas manipulates Lodowick and Mathias's feelings for his own benefit. Barabas promises both Mathias and Lodowick Abigail's hand in marriage, and then he tells Mathias that Lodowick has long since been pursuing Abigail and sends Mathias a forged letter as Lodowick, insulting him and challenging him to duel. Lodowick and Mathias ultimately meet and fight, killing each other and further advancing Barabas's plan to avenge Ferneze's theft of his **gold**. Like Barabas, both Lodowick and Mathias are obsessed with revenge, and once they believe that the other has betrayed them, they easily seek their own payback and play right into Barabas's corrupt scheming.

Bellamira – Bellamira is a local prostitute and Pilia-Borza's partner. Ithamore first notices Bellamira while out delivering Barabas's forged letter to Mathias, and Ithamore instantly falls in love with her. Bellamira convinces Ithamore that she is love with him, too, even though she isn't, and she and Pilia-Borza easily convince him to betray Barabas and help them extort money out of him in the form of blackmail. Bellamira wins Ithamore over with sex and testaments of love, but she ultimately betrays him when she and Pilia-Borza turn in both Ithamore and Barabas for the murder of Ferneze's son's Lodowick. Like many of Marlowe's characters, Bellamira represents greed and deceitfulness in the form of Machiavellianism and scheming, and her immorality eventually leads to her downfall, as does Pilia-Borza and Ithamore's immorality. Bellamira is killed, along with Pilia-Borza and Ithamore, after Barabas disguises himself as a French musician and delivers them a poisoned bouquet of flowers.

Pilia-Borza – Pilia-Borza is a local thief and Bellamira's partner. Pilia-Borza breaks into Barabas's counting-house and steals a bag of silver coins, and he is determined to get back in and take Barabas's huge stash of **gold**. Bellamira and Pilia-Borza scheme together to exploit Ithamore and blackmail Barabas for his money, and they easily convince Ithamore to go along with them. Like many of Marlowe's characters, Pilia-Borza is exceedingly greedy, and he goes back to Barabas several times to demand more gold. Pilia-Borza and Bellamira decide to turn Barabas and Ithamore into Ferneze, hoping the governor will give them a financial award for turning in his son, Lodowick's murder; however, both Pilia-Borza and Bellamira die after Barabas poisons them with a tainted flower, before they have the chance to convince Ferneze and collect their reward. Like Bellamira, Pilia-Borza embodies greed and Machiavellian scheming, which Marlowe suggests are common human traits.

Friar Jacomo – Friar Jacomo is a member of one of the Christian monasteries in Malta, and after Barabas engineers the deaths of Lodowick and Mathias, Abigail appeals to Jacomo to join the nunnery for real as penance for her sins. Like Friar Bernardine, Marlowe implies many times that Jacomo ignores his vows of celibacy and regularly has sex with the Catholic nuns, and Jacomo frequently disregards his other priestly oaths

as well, such as his vow of poverty. After Abigail joins the nunnery, Barabas blames Jacomo for her betrayal and swears revenge. Barabas promises Jacomo that he will join his parish and donate his fortune to the church coffers, but then Barabas and Ithamore strangle Friar Bernardine and frame Jacomo for his murder. Jacomo is ultimately hanged, and like Bernardine, he serves to embody religious hypocrisy and greed.

Machevill – Machevill is a ghost and the play's narrator, and presumably, he is the embodiment of Niccolò Machiavelli, a deceased Italian diplomat from the 16th century whose name is synonymous with political corruption and godless scheming in the name of self-interest. Machevill introduces Barabas and his story, and Machevill's sinister presence suggests that Machiavellianism is a widespread problem that is not limited to Italy or other European countries but is making its way to England as well. Machevill claims he has come to England to have some fun and spread around his "policy," although he asks the audience to judge Barabas based on his merit, not his support of Machiavellianism. While Marlowe's play takes place in Malta, Machevill addresses an English audience, which draws a parallel between Maltese society and Marlowe's contemporary England.

Don Mathias – Don Mathias is Katherine's son and Abigail's love. Barabas has already promised Mathias Abigail's hand in marriage, but then Barabas promises Abigail to Don Lodowick, too, in an effort to turn the men against each other and influence them to murder each other to avenge Ferneze, Lodowick's father, and his theft of Barabas's **gold**. Barabas knows that Mathias and Abigail are in love, but their feelings mean nothing to Barabas compared to his desire for revenge. Barabas easily convinces Mathias that Lodowick is pursuing Abigail behind his back, and he encourages them to engage in a deadly duel through a forged letter delivered by Ithamore. Mathias is ultimately killed, as is Lodowick, in the battle engineered by Barabas, and Abigail is left heartbroken.

Martin Del Bosco – Martin Del Bosco is the Vice-Admiral of Spain and Ferneze's ally. Bosco's Spanish fleet engages with the Turkish fleet near Malta's port, and he sinks one of the ships and captures the crew as slaves. Ferneze allows Bosco to sell his Turkish slaves in Malta, even though it violates Malta's tributary league with the Turks, and Bosco offers Ferneze Spain's protection so Malta can keep the tributary money and refuse the Turks' payment. Despite Bosco's promise that his fleet will not depart until Malta is safe from the Turks, he is not able to protect Malta from Selim-Calymath and his men, and Malta is ultimately captured.

Abbess – The abbess is the head nun at the new convent established in Barabas's mansion. When Barabas convinces Abigail to join the nunnery under false pretenses, she appeals to the abbess. Ithamore and Barabas repeatedly accuse the abbess of having sexual relationships with the parish priests, and she is dies, along with Abigail and the rest of the nuns, when Barabas sends the convent a batch of poisoned rice as alms. Like Friars Bernardine and Jacomo, the abbess serves to reflect religious hypocrisy. Her role as a nun implies that she is pious and chaste, but her suspected sex life suggests her righteousness is just a farce.

Knight – The knight is one of Ferneze's Maltese officers, and he serves to personify the widespread anti-Semitism and bigotry present in the play, and, Marlowe thus implies, in 16th-century England as well. When Ferneze seizes half the wealth belonging to all the Jews in Malta to pay the Turkish tribute, the knight tells Barabas that it is because of his "inherent sin," or Jewish identity. What's more, it is the knight who suggests Ferneze also seize Barabas's house and turn it into a convent, a proposal that adds insult to the injury of Barabas's lost **gold**.

Selim-Calymath – Selim-Calymath is the son of the Turkish Empire, and he comes to Malta to collect the delinquent tribute money from Ferneze. Even though Calymath is not authorized to do so, he gives Ferneze 30 days to collect the money. Of course, Ferneze betrays Calymath and the Turkish Empire and refuses to pay the money, resulting in a full-scale war that destroys Malta and imprisons Ferneze and his men. Ferneze's own Machiavellianism and corrupt scheming results in Calymath's capture, and he manages to free Malta.

Katherine – Katherine is Mathias's mother, and she serves to personify vengeance and anti-Semitic hate. When Katherine catches Mathias talking to Barabas, she forbids her son to converse with a Jew, and even though Mathias admits he is in love with Abigail, he is hesitant to act on his feelings for fear his mother won't approve. When Mathias is killed in the duel with Lodowick, Katherine, like Ferneze, swears revenge, which suggests that revenge and betrayal often go hand in hand.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Bashaw – The bashaw is a high-ranking Turkish official sent by Selim-Calymath to Malta to collect the tribute money from Ferneze.

TERMS

Machiavellianism – Machiavellianism is a political philosophy based upon the writings of Italian diplomat Niccolò Machiavelli and his political treatise, *The Prince*. Machiavelli died in 1527, but his name has long since been synonymous with unscrupulous scheming and godless corruption in the name of self-interest, and this idea is reflected in *The Jew of Malta*. The play's narrator, a ghost named **Macheville**, is the embodiment of Machiavelli himself, and the other characters likewise prescribe to the "policy" of Machiavellianism. **Barabas**, the richest Jew in Malta, came into his enormous stockpile of gold through Macheville's "means," and he is willing to lie and murder—even his own daughter, **Abigail**—to maintain his

wealth. **Ferneze**, Malta's governor, also resorts to Machiavellianism. After he exploits Malta's Jews to pay the tribute money owed to **Selim-Calymath** and the Turks, Ferneze schemes with **Martin Del Bosco**, the Vice-Admiral of Spain, to keep the tribute money. Even the local friars, **Jacomo** and **Bernardine**, employ Machiavellian tactics, as does the prostitute **Bellamira** and her friend **Pilia-Borza**, the thief. In the end, Ferneze's scheming comes out on top, and he kills Barabas and takes Calymath prisoner. But Marlowe suggests it isn't Ferneze's Machiavellianism that saves Malta. "So march away," Ferneze says in the play's final lines, "and let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven." As it is in modernity, Machiavellianism was largely condemned as immoral during Marlowe's time. Marlowe doesn't openly condemn such deceit and corruption, but he does imply that Machiavellianism is ultimately useless. In short, Marlowe suggests that it is God's will that decides the outcome of any given event, and no amount of scheming can ever change God's will.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

GOD AND MACHIAVELLIANISM

At the center of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is the idea of Machiavellianism, a political philosophy based upon the writings of Italian diplomat Niccolò Machiavelli. Since the 1532 publication of Machiavelli's political treatise *The Prince*, Machiavellianism has been associated with unscrupulous scheming and godless corruption in the name of self-interest, and this idea is reflected throughout Marlowe's play. The play's prologue is narrated by Machevill, a ghost who calls to mind Machiavelli himself, and Marlowe specifically mentions the anti-Machiavellian movement that was sweeping across 16th-century Europe. When Marlowe's play was written around 1589, Machiavellianism was largely condemned and considered an Italian problem that had little to do with England, but Marlowe implies that such moral corruption is widespread, both in government and in personal choices and actions. *The Jew of Malta* underscores the prevalence of Machiavellianism in politics and everyday life; however, the play also suggests that real life isn't as godless as Machiavellianism is thought to be, and Marlowe ultimately argues that corruption and scheming are no match for God's divine will.

The play takes place on the Mediterranean island of Malta, which, at the time the play was written, was under the control of the Ottoman Empire. The Maltese government frequently resorts to dishonest and corrupt practices in Marlowe's play, which highlights the pervasiveness of Machiavellian tactics in broader European society. Malta owes the Ottoman Empire 10 years' worth of tribute payments (money paid from one government to another to ensure peace and protection) that they can't pay. To avoid war with the Turks and save the country, Ferneze, Malta's governor, taxes Malta's Jewish population and orders each Jew to surrender half their **gold** and wealth to the state. Ferneze's decision to tax only the Jewish population reflects the anti-Semitism of the time, but it also underscores Ferneze's moral corruption and suggests that he has no problem exploiting others for the benefit of Malta. Ferneze's easy Machiavellianism suggests that such tactics are common among Europe's powerful elites. After Ferneze taxes and exploits Malta's Jewish population, he has more than enough money to pay the Turks, but he begins scheming with Martin Del Bosco, the Vice-Admiral of Spain. With Bosco's help, Ferneze devises a plan to keep the tribute money *and* remain safe from the Turks under Spain's protection. But Ferneze does not return the tribute money to Malta's Jews, which further speaks to Ferneze's corruption and Machiavellian tactics, along with the corruption of Bosco and the Spanish government. This corrupt deal again suggests that Machiavellianism is common practice in Europe, and it further implies that such tactics are even encouraged by those in power. The Turks do take over Malta, but Ferneze won't give up so easily. He schemes with Barabas, the richest Jew in Malta, to kill the invading Turks—including Selim-Calymath, the son of the Turkish Emperor. After the Turks are killed in a huge explosion and Selim-Calymath is taken prisoner, Malta is again free, seemingly due to Ferneze's moral corruption and use of Machiavellian tactics. In short, Machiavellianism isn't something Ferneze dabbles with as a last resort to save Malta; he is repeatedly dishonest and corrupt, which again suggests that Machiavellian tactics are widely practiced in broader European society.

In addition to the Machiavellian strategies of various countries and governments, devious plots and schemes are employed by several characters—including the play's protagonist, Barabas, who often resorts to similarly dishonest practices. When the Jews of Malta suspect that Ferneze will tax them to pay the Turks, they seek the advice and guidance of Barabas, a wealthy Jew known for his talent of "policy," or Machiavellian deviousness. Barabas promises to help the other Jews, but in an aside he claims: "Nay, let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all, / So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth." From the very beginning, Barabas is concerned only with his own wealth and wellbeing, which he plans to maintain even at the expense of others. After Ferneze seizes Barabas's estate and turns his mansion into a nunnery, Barabas quickly begins scheming to recover his wealth. He convinces his daughter, Abigail, to join the convent under false pretenses and retrieve the gold and

jewels hidden under the floorboards. Like the Maltese government, both Barabas and Abigail employ deceptive practices, which again reflects Machiavellian "policy" on an individual level. Abigail eventually sees the error of her ways and joins the nunnery for real as penance for her sins, but Barabas refuses to abandon his Machiavellian ways. As revenge for Abigail's betrayal, Barabas and his Turkish slave, Ithamore, poison and kill the entire nunnery, including Abigail. Barabas's ability to murder his own daughter in retaliation for a perceived slight implies that Barabas and his Machiavellian ways know no bounds.

Both Barabas and Ferneze employ Machiavellian tactics, but it is Ferneze who ultimately comes out on top. Ferneze deceives Barabas and kills him instead of Calymath, but it isn't Ferneze's scheming and corruption that saves Malta. "So march away," Ferneze says, "and let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven." In other words, Marlowe suggests that Malta's independence and perseverance is due to God's will, not the Machiavellian scheming of Ferneze or Barabas. Marlowe does not explicitly condemn Machiavellianism for its obvious immorality, but he does suggest that such practices are useless. In the end, it is God's will that decides the outcome of any given event, and no amount of scheming can ever change that.

RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

While Christopher Marlowe hints at the importance of God's will in *The Jew of Malta*, his play is nevertheless critical of religion and religious doctrine, especially Christianity. Marlowe's depiction of religion is not one of morality, good will, and righteousness. On the contrary, religion in *The Jew of Malta* is rife with hatred, deception, and hypocrisy. When the Turks come to Malta under the threat of war to collect the tribute money owed to the Ottoman Empire, the Maltese government exploits the island's Jewish population to pay the country's debt, and they do so in the name of Christianity. What's more, the friars from Malta's Catholic churches, who lust for both sex and **gold**, claim the moral high ground but ignore their priestly vows. For Marlowe's characters, religion is not a reason to behave in a morally upright way—it is a means to an end that allows them to behave however they want. Through *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe exposes the hypocrisy that he believes is often implicit in religious beliefs and ultimately argues that religion is a tool to secure power and wealth, not a guide for morality and righteousness.

Marlowe highlights religion's hypocrisy through Malta's Christian government and Ferneze, the governor, who cites religion as a reason to exploit Malta's Jewish population. When Ferneze is short the tribute money Malta owes the Ottoman Empire, he taxes only Jewish people to pay the bill. Ferneze says that Jews "stand accursed in the sight of heaven," and it is therefore their burden alone to cover the debt. Ferneze's claim that the Jews are "accursed" is a reference to the crucifixion of Christ. In short, Ferneze's Christian beliefs uphold that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christ; therefore, in Ferneze's mind, his exploitation of the Jews is completely justified. In response to Ferneze's request, Barabas, the richest Jew in Malta, points out Ferneze's use of scripture and answers in kind. "The man that dealeth righteously shall live: / And which of you [Christians] can charge me otherwise?" Barabas uses scripture to prove his point, referring to Proverbs 10.2, a biblical passage that underscores the importance of moral righteousness. In Barabas's estimation, a Christian who exploits and oppresses another can never claim morality, and by decree of their own Christian religion, they can never be saved and live immortal life in heaven. Through Barabas's biblical reference, Marlowe highlights the hypocrisy of a religion that claims morality but uses the same religious doctrine to defend immoral acts.

Religious hypocrisy is further reflected in the behavior of Jacomo and Bernardine, two Catholic friars who repeatedly ignore their holy vows in favor of their selfish desires. When Barabas's daughter, Abigail, appeals to Jacomo and Bernardine to join the convent, Jacomo says that Abigail's desire comes from the "spirit," or soul. "Ay," Bernardine responds, "and of a moving spirit too, brother; but come, / Let us entreat she may be entertained." Bernadine's reference to Abigail's "moving spirit" is vaguely sexual—it suggests that the friars are interested in Abigail in a carnal way, which directly violates their vows of chastity and purity. Abigail does end up joining the nunnery, so Barabas poisons Abigail and the rest of the nunnery for the betrayal of her conversion. But before Abigail dies, she confesses her sins to Bernadine, including Barabas's involvement in the deaths of Abigail's love, Don Mathias, and Don Lodowick, Ferneze's son. Bernardine later breaks the confessional seal and reveals Abigail's confession—he ignores his vows when it benefits him personally, which further underscores religious hypocrisy in *The Jew of Malta* and represents the religious hypocrisy that Marlowe suggests in rampant among real-life religious leaders. Both Bernardine and Jacomo accuse Barabas of being a "wicked Jew," but when Barabas tells the friars he is looking to convert to Christianity and promises his substantial wealth to whichever church baptizes him and gives him sanctuary, the friars begin to fight over him. "Oh good Barabas come to our house," Jacomo says. "Oh no, good Barabas come to our house," Bernardine says. Both Jacomo and Bernardine are quick to dismiss Barabas as a Jew, but they will accept him as a Christian—if it benefits them finically. As friars, Jacomo and Bernardine both took vows of poverty, yet they easily ignore this oath, too, further highlighting their religious hypocrisy. The overt and frequent hypocrisy of the friars suggests that such duplicity is commonplace in Christianity, and in Catholicism in particular.

Marlowe's negative view of religion is not limited to Christianity. Barabas, a Jewish man, is arguably the most despicable and immoral character in the entire play. He adamantly refuses to abandon his Jewish faith and convert to Christianity as the Maltese government would have him do, but this is where Barabas's religious devotion ends. He easily lies, deceives, and even murders, which runs counter to the Jewish tradition—specifically to the Ten Commandments. While Barabas doesn't use his religion to justify his sins in quite the same way the Christians do, he still dismisses his religious teachings all the same, which again exposes the hypocrisy that is often found in religion. Barabas and the other characters manipulate and ignore religion to get what they want, and Marlowe implies that those who ignore religious teachings in pursuit of power and wealth are just as wicked as those who use religion to obtain the same.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* deals heavily with anti-Semitism. The play takes place in Malta, but Machevill, the play's narrator, addresses an English audience in the prologue—and the rest of the play likewise reflects the bigotry against Jewish people that permeated 16th-century English society. English society has a long history of anti-Semitism: in 1290, King Edward I issued the Edict of Expulsion, which officially expelled all Jews from England. The Edict of Expulsion remained in effect throughout the Middle Ages and was not overturned until 1657, several years after Marlowe wrote *The Jew of Malta* around 1589. In Marlowe's play, Jewish people in Malta are regarded with a general disgust, and they are referred to as "strangers"—meaning their status as Jews prohibits them from being actual Maltese citizens. The Jewish community is repeatedly insulted, marginalized, and exploited without restraint or apology, and there is no indication that this abuse is an isolated event or will come to an end any time soon. With the depiction of society in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe underscores the anti-Semitism present in England during the 16th century; however, Marlowe's overtly prejudiced representation of Jews also perpetuates the same hateful opinions and misconceptions.

The Jewish community is constantly mistreated and insulted throughout *The Jew of Malta*, which underscores the rampant anti-Semitism that Jews faced during the 16th century. When Ferneze, the governor of Malta, doesn't have the money to pay the tribute owed to the Ottoman Empire, he issues a decree that "the tribute money of the Turks shall all be levied amongst the Jews." Ferneze orders each Jew to pay half their total wealth, or else they forfeit their entire estate and must become Christians. Not only does Ferneze's decree unfairly target the Jews, he also attempts to convert them, thereby decreasing the number of Jews in Malta. Ferneze's decree reveals his general disgust for Jewish people and exposes a concerted attempt to eliminate Jews from society. Don Mathias, a local Christian, falls in love with Abigail, the daughter of Barabas, the richest Jew in Malta. However, Mathias is hesitant to act on his feelings. "I cannot stay," Mathias tells Abigail, "for my if my mother come, / She'll die with grief." The implication here is that Katherine, Mathias's mother, will not approve of Abigail because she is Jewish. As Marlowe's target audience was 16th-century English society (which openly rejected the Jewish community in keeping with the Edict of Expulsion), they likely would have sympathized with Mathias's mother. Thus, Katherine's presumed "grief" again underscores the widespread bias against the Jewish community in 16th-century England. Lastly, after the Turks take over Malta and make Barabas governor, Ferneze openly laments his plight. "Oh fatal day to fall into the hands / Of such a traitor and unhallowed Jew!" Ferneze cries. "What greater misery could heaven inflict?" The conquering of Malta and Ferneze's subsequent imprisonment is made worse by way of Barabas's Jewish identity, once more illustrating the anti-Semitic sentiments of England during the 1500s. As Jews were largely condemned in England during the time the play was written, a Jew in a position of political power would have been viewed by the people of England as both absurd and detrimental to society.

Additionally, Marlowe's protagonist, Barabas, embodies only the most offensive Jewish stereotypes, a representation that further bolsters the hateful prejudice that pervades the play, and, so it goes, real-life English society. Jewish people were not accepted in England during the 1500s, and they were often represented in offensive ways. As an Englishman targeting an English audience, Marlowe's description of Barabas reflects this same bigotry. When Machevill opens the play, he says he will "present the tragedy of a Jew, / Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed, / Which money was not got without my means." Marlowe implies that Machevill is the ghost of Niccolò Machiavelli—a deceased Italian diplomat famous for his corrupt political practices generally known as Machiavellianism—and Machevill further implies that Barabas obtained his wealth through unscrupulous means, an implication that aligns with society's anti-Semitic assumption that wealthy Jewish people are dishonest and conniving. Throughout the play, Marlowe repeatedly mentions Barabas's enormous **nose**, which is a reference to the offensive stereotype that all Jews have a large, hooked nose. Many people of Mediterranean descent have the facial features Marlowe attributes to Barabas, not just Jews. Still, the representation of large and unattractive noses persists in the caricature of the Jewish community, which further reflects the widespread anti-Semitism of the 16th century. What's more, Barabas is completely depraved and corrupt, and he murders an entire convent of nuns—including his own daughter, Abigail—without batting an eye. Barabas is a despicable man completely lacking a moral compass, and he is the epitome of the stereotypical "wicked Jew" that Marlowe's

Christian characters both despise and fear, a harmful representation that perpetuates the same hateful stereotypes.

While many literary scholars have argued that *The Jew of Malta* depicts anti-Semitism to expose and overcome such hatefulness, Marlowe's overtly stereotypical representation of Barabas complicates this interpretation. Barabas is ultimately killed at the end of the play (one of his schemes backfires and he falls into a boiling cauldron meant for Selim-Calymath, the son of the invading Turkish Emperor), but it is difficult to view Barabas's untimely death as tragic. It is impossible to sympathize with Barabas and his contemptible ways, regardless of the unfair way in which he and the other Jews are treated. While it may be argued that Marlowe intended to condemn anti-Semitism through *The Jew of Malta*, his play undeniably bolsters the very same bigotry and harmful stereotypes he may have sought to expose.

MONEY AND GREED

Most of the characters in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* are motivated in some way by money and greed. The play's protagonist, Barabas, is described as a man "who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed," and Marlowe implies that Barabas obtained his money through Machiavellianism (a reference to the corrupt practices of Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat from the 16th century) to satisfy his unchecked greed. Money is also central in the Maltese governor, Ferneze's, trouble with the Turks and the excessive tribute payment Malta owes the Ottoman Empire. Ferneze exploits Malta's Jewish population to pay the debt—but when his own Machiavellian scheming allows him to refuse the Turks the tribute, he doesn't return the money to the Jews and instead keeps his ill-gotten gains. Money and greed also drive the actions of Barabas's Turkish slave, Ithamore, as well as Bellamira, the prostitute whom Ithamore falls in love with, and Pilia-Borza, a thief in cahoots with Bellamira. Together with Pilia-Borza, Ithamore and Bellamira attempt to extort money from Barabas, and their covetousness ultimately leads to their demise. Through the widespread greed in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe implies that greed is an inherent human trait, but he ultimately argues that greed and covetousness is a selfish and misguided mindset that does not pay off and often leads to suffering.

Most of Marlowe's characters are covetous, which underscores his implication that greed is an innate and widespread human quality. When Barabas is first introduced, he sits in his counting-house among his piles of **gold** and jewels. Barabas describes "heaps of pearl[s] like pebble-stones" and "bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts, / Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds, / Beauteous rubies, [and] sparkling diamonds." Barabas's laundry list of riches suggests he isn't satisfied with just a little wealth—his stash reflects his excessive greed. At one point, Barabas lies to Jacomo and Bernardine, two Catholic friars, telling them that he plans to convert to Christianity and give all his wealth "to some religious house / So [he] may be baptized and live therein." Upon hearing this false claim, Bernardine and Jacomo begin to bicker over taking Barabas into their respective parishes, a reflection of their own greed and desire for Barabas's wealth, which overshadows their religious vows and duties. When Ithamore attempts to coerce money out of Barabas with the help of Pilia-Borza and Bellamira, Pilia-Borza initially tries to get 300 crowns out of Barabas, and then he demands 500 more. "Jew, I must ha' more gold," Pilia-Borza says, exposing Pilia-Borza's greed, as well as Ithamore and Bellamira's, and further suggesting that all people are selfish and easily overcome by greed.

Despite the widespread greed present in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe suggests that greed is a dangerous—and often deadly—human trait that only leads to increased pain and suffering. When Malta's Jewish community first hears rumors that Ferneze plans to tax them to pay the Turkish tribute, they immediately seek Barabas's guidance, a man whose "policy" and Machiavellian deceitfulness is widely known. Barabas promises to help his fellow Jews, but in an aside he claims: "Nay, let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all, / So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth." Barabas doesn't really care about the other Jews, and he will gladly sacrifice their lives to protect his own wealth. However, in Barabas's pursuit to help himself, he loses his entire estate, which suggests that such selfishness and greed does more harm than good. After Friars Jacomo and Bernardine compete to convert Barabas and take him into their respective parishes, their greed and desire for Barabas's wealth leads directly to their deaths. "What, will you have my life?" Bernardine says when he wakes to Barabas and Ithamore strangling him. "Pull, hard, I say," Barabas replies, "you would have had my goods." Barabas frames Jacomo for Bernardine's murder, and Jacomo is later hanged for the crime, which again implies that selfishness and greed is a foolish mentality that does not pay off. Once the Turks invade Malta, imprison Ferneze, and make Barabas governor, Barabas still continues scheming to recover his lost wealth. Money is so dear to Barabas, it is even more important than his newfound political power or his loyalty to Malta. Barabas betrays Ferneze, the country of Malta, and his so-called allegiance with the Turks just to secure his wealth and satisfy his greed. But this unchecked greed ultimately leads to Barabas's death, when Ferneze betrays him and drops Barabas into the trap meant to kill Selim-Calymath, the leader of the invading Turkish fleet. Again, Marlowe suggests that greed is a dangerous human trait that often leads to unnecessary pain, suffering, and even death.

When the Turkish Bashaw arrives in Malta to collect the delinquent tribute money from Ferneze, he tells Ferneze that "the wind that bloweth all the world besides, / Desire of gold,"

and this is certainly the case in *The Jew of Malta*. Nothing is sacred in Marlowe's play when it comes to money—not love, politics, or religion—and it is this same unrestrained greed that ultimately leads to the demise of Marlowe's most covetous characters. While Marlowe certainly condemns the greed that motivates his characters, he nevertheless implies that such selfishness is a common human trait, and that money is often valued above even the things people hold most dear.

BETRAYAL AND REVENGE

Betrayal is rampant in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. Malta's Jewish community is betrayed by Ferneze, Malta's governor, when he unfairly seizes their wealth to pay the tribute money owed to the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the play's protagonist and Malta's richest Jew, Barabas, betrays his fellow Jews when he fights for his own happiness and wealth while ignoring theirs. Barabas even betrays his own daughter, Abigail, and engineers a plot to murder her love, Don Mathias, as well as Ferneze's son, Don Lodowick. Barabas is likewise betrayed, first by Ferneze and then by his trusted Turkish slave, Ithamore, who sells Barabas out for **gold** and the affection of Bellamira, a prostitute whom Ithamore lusts after. The play is also rife with revenge, as each character who is wronged seeks vengeance against those they hold responsible. Both Ferneze and Katherine, Mathias's mother, are determined to avenge the deaths of their sons—but their attempts pale in comparison to Barabas's desire for vengeance, which quickly spirals out of control. In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe underscores the ubiquitous nature of betrayal and revenge in broader society, and he ultimately argues that trying to avenge betrayal is a slippery slope that is best avoided.

Most of Marlowe's characters in *The Jew of Malta* are guilty of treachery and disloyalty, which highlights how common betrayal is in broader society. When Martin Del Bosco, the Vice-Admiral of Spain, comes to Malta selling Turkish slaves, Ferneze initially denies Bosco's business "by reason of a tributary league." Malta's agreement with the Ottoman Turks prohibits the selling of Turkish slaves, a covenant that Ferneze quickly breaks when Bosco promises to help him retain the gold obtained to pay the Turks' tribute and further protect Malta from war and Turkish retaliation. The promise of money and protection is enough for Ferneze to betray the Turks, which highlights how commonplace betrayal is in broader society. Barabas promises Mathias that he will ultimately be allowed to marry Abigail. "Thou know'st, and heaven can witness it is true," Barabas tells Mathias, "that I intend my daughter shall be thine." Mathias agrees. "Ay, Barabas, or else thou wrong'st me much." Of course, Barabas cares very little if he wrongs Mathias or Abigail, and he easily betrays them when he later engineers the duel between Mathias and Lodowick, which kills them both and breaks Abigail's heart. Again, the ease with which Barabas deceives his daughter suggests that betrayal is a common human practice. Before the duel between Lodowick and Mathias, the two men are close friends, but Lodowick betrays their relationship and pursues Abigail behind Mathias's back. Barabas seizes the opportunity created by Lodowick's betrayal, and Barabas's machinations directly result in their deadly duel, but their strife begins with Lodowick's disloyalty, which once more underscores the widespread betrayal present in broader society.

Revenge is likewise rampant in *The Jew of Malta*, a connection that implies vengeance is just as common as the betrayal that provokes it. After Ferneze confiscates Barabas's wealth, Barabas swears revenge. "Having Ferneze's hand," Barabas says, "whose heart I'll have; / Ay, and his son's too, or it shall go hard." Barabas wants Ferneze to guarantee the return of his wealth, either in writing or through a handshake. Barabas further wants Ferneze's son, Lodowick, to propose marriage to Abigail to aid Barabas's plan to kill Lodowick and avenge the theft of his gold. In other words, Barabas's reference to Ferneze and Lodowick's "hand" and "heart" mirrors Barabas's desire for revenge. When Katharine and Ferneze find Mathias and Lodowick dead, they suspect someone put their sons up to the deadly duel, and they vow to exact their own revenge. "Hold," Katharine says to Ferneze, "let's enquire the causers of the deaths, / That we may venge their blood upon their heads." For Katharine and Ferneze, there is no justice for their sons' deaths without revenge. After Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza betray Barabas, he exacts revenge on them, too, by giving them a poisonous bouquet. "So, now I am revenged upon 'em all," Barabas says. "The scent thereof was death, I poisoned it." With the flowers, Barabas kills Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza, which again reflects the widespread betrayal and revenge present in broader society.

Once Barabas decides to seek revenge for the unfair theft of his wealth, he will stop at nothing to avenge his lost fortune, and his desire for vengeance quickly gets out of control. Barabas's desire to exact revenge on Ferneze informs his sinister plan to kill Ferneze's son, which just so happens to involve the additional death of Mathias, the love of Abigail's life. Barabas sacrifices his daughter's happiness in the name of his revenge. And when Abigail later joins the nunnery (a move she says is in response to her sins but is likely her private revenge for Barabas's involvement in Mathias's death), Barabas exacts revenge against Abigail, too, killing her and all the nuns in the convent with a gift of poisoned rice. Once he begins down the road of vengeance, Barabas is helpless to stop, which illustrates the disastrous course of action that Marlowe implies is implicit in revenge.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and

Analysis sections of this LitChart.

GOLD

Nearly every character in *The Jew of Malta* lusts for gold, which in the play is symbolic of wealth, power and the greed that often comes along with it. Barabas is the richest Jew in Malta, and even though he is hated in 16th-centry Malta's anti-Semitic society, he is respected for his wealth. Barabas's enormous stockpile of gold gives him power in a bigoted society that otherwise dismisses him, and he would rather be hated as Jew than "pitied in a Christian poverty." Ferneze, Malta's governor, is also in search of gold to pay the tribute money owed to Selim-Calymath and the Turks, and Ferneze intends to pay using only the gold he exploits from Malta's Jews. Of course, Ferneze keeps the money he takes from the Jews and never pays Calymath, a greedy decision not unlike how Bellamira (a prostitute) and Pilia-Borza (a thief) plan to extort Barabas's gold through his Turkish slave, Ithamore. Indeed, most of Marlowe's characters are motivated by gold, and in their unchecked greed, they will stop at nothing to secure the wealth and power that gold provides.

While his cast of covetous characters suggests that greed is an inherent human trait, Marlowe nevertheless implies that greed and the constant search for gold and wealth is a recipe for disaster that will likely lead to undue suffering, for it is the greediest characters in the play who meet the most gruesome ends. Friars Jacomo and Bernardine condemn Barabas as a Jew, but they try to convert him to fill their parish coffers with gold, and they are ultimately murdered—Barabas and Ithamore strangle Bernardine with a belt, and Jacomo is hanged for the crime. It isn't long after Pilia-Borza visits Barabas and demands that he "must ha' more gold" that Barabas murders Pilia-Borza, along with his greedy partners, Ithamore and Bellamira. Even Barabas succumbs to his desire for gold when he schemes with Ferneze to kill Calymath and the Turks in exchange for "great sums of money." But Ferneze double-crosses Barabas and kills him instead of Calymath, dropping Barabas through his own trapdoor and into the boiling cauldron below. Like the other greedy characters, Barabas's lust for gold ultimately leads to his untimely death, underscoring Marlowe's warning against the dangers of greed and humankind's innate tendency for covetousness.

BARABAS'S NOSE

Throughout *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe repeatedly alludes to protagonist Barabas's enormous nose, which symbolizes the bigotry Barabas faces as a Jewish man in 16th-century Malta's anti-Semitic society—and in 16th-century England as well. Marlowe's play takes place in Malta, but the narrator, Machevill, addresses an English audience, and the prejudice Barabas and the other Jews endure mirrors that of the bias in England during Marlowe's time. Barabas embodies only the worst Jewish stereotypes—chief among them his huge nose. A large hook nose is common among many people of Mediterranean descent, not just Jews, yet this offensive trait is often present in caricatures of the Jewish community, and Barabas is no exception. When Barabas tells his Turkish slave that he enjoys killing Christians in his spare time, an excited and hateful Ithamore says: "Oh brave, master, I worship your nose for this." Ithamore's reference to Barabas's nose is clearly a slight against Barabas's Jewish identity, just like his comment when Barabas claims to smell the friars, Jacomo and Bernardine, approaching from the convent. "God-a-mercy nose," Ithamore says under his breath.

Presumably, Ithamore's references to Barabas's nose are jokes, and such comments likely garnered big laughs in Marlowe's day, but this harmful stereotype also reflects the anti-Semitism that pervades both the play and England during the 1500s. Many scholars believe that Marlowe's representation of Barabas was meant to highlight England's rampant prejudice to expose and overcome it, but it is difficult to sympathize with Barabas and his untimely death. Barabas is a despicable man who plots, schemes, and murders without a second thought. He is the epitome of the "wicked Jew" whom Marlowe's Christian and Muslim characters fear and hate, and least offensive of these hurtful stereotypes is his unattractive nose. In the end, Barabas does not have one redeemable quality, and Marlowe's overtly biased representation—beginning with Barabas's oversized nose—not only reveals the anti-Semitism plaguing both the play and England during the 1500s but also bolsters and reinforces the same prejudice it exposes, ultimately perpetuating hate instead of overcoming it.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Bloomsbury edition of *The Jew of Malta* published in 2009.

Prologue Quotes

Admired I am of those that hate me most.
Through some speak openly against my books,
Yet will they read me, and thereby attain
To Peter's chair: and when they cast me off,
Are poisoned by my climbing followers.
I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

Related Characters: Machevill (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

This quote from the prologue implies that the narrator, a ghost named Machevill, is the embodiment of 16th-century Italian diplomat Niccolò Machiavelli and establishes the theme of Machiavellianism in the play. During Marlowe's time, Machiavelli (who had died decades earlier) and his political philosophy, known as Machiavellianism, was largely condemned as selfish and immoral. Machiavelli's philosophy hinged on the idea that one's ends justify their means—in other words, it's fine to use corrupt means to get what one wants. However, Machevill claims "those that hate [him] most" and condemn his "books" and writings (a reference to Machiavelli's political treatise, *The Prince*) are actually the ones who admire him the most. In other words, while most people denounce Machevill, they nonetheless still read his books, and they secretly find value in his effective, albeit sinful and cruel, methods.

This quote also establishes the theme of religion and suggests that Machevill—and, perhaps, Christopher Marlowe himself—has no use for religion. Machevill claims that powerful people have read his books, including the Catholic Pope. Roman Catholics believe that St. Peter (one of Jesus's 12 disciples) was the first pope; thus, every subsequent pope has sat in "Peter's chair." So in saying that many of his readers have sat in "Peter's chair," Marlowe accuses the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy of dishonesty and Machiavellian scheming—they claim to reject Machevill and be morally upright but still read his books. Machevill claims that religion is nothing but a "childish toy," but this is a stark contrast from the way that the historical Machiavelli saw religion. To Niccolò Machiavelli, religion was an important part of life and politics. It's unclear if he himself believed in the Christian God, but he nonetheless believed that religion had social utility, as it kept people in line. (Importantly, though, he believed rulers had every right to sidestep religious values and do whatever they needed to do to stay in power.)

Marlowe never does condemn Machiavellianism in his play, but this major deviation from Machiavelli's original views suggests that Marlowe is not in complete agreement with Machiavelli's political philosophy as it relates to religion. Indeed, Marlowe was suspected of being an atheist—a serious offense punishable by burning at the stake—and he was arrested for this so-called crime in 1593.

> But whither am I bound, I come not, I,
> To read a lecture here in Britaine,
> But to present the tragedy of a Jew,
> Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed,
> Which money was not got without my means.
> I crave but this, grace him as he deserves,
> And let him not be entertained the worse
> Because he favours me.

Related Characters: Machevill (speaker), Barabas

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

This quote introduces the play's protagonist, Barabas, and emphasizes his greediness and Machiavellian nature. Machevill says he is not in England to talk about himself; he is in England to tell the audience about a Jew named Barabas, "who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed." Barabas's wealth was "not got without [Machevill's] means," which is to say Barabas obtained his wealth through corruption and dishonesty. Machevill asks the audience to judge ("grace") Barabas on his merit and not condemn him simply because he supports Machevill's philosophy, but Barabas doesn't have any merit. He is an immoral and deceitful man who embodies only the most offensive Jewish stereotypes, such as Machevill's description of Barabas as greedy and dishonest (elsewhere, he's also stereotyped as having a large nose). These false assumptions, which align with those popular in England during Marlowe's time, both highlight and perpetuate the anti-Semitism that was rampant during the 16th century. The play takes place on the Mediterranean island of Malta, but Machevill addresses an English audience "here in Britaine" during his introduction. Therefore, readers can reasonably assume that Maltese society in the play very much mirrors that of real-life society in Marlowe's contemporary England.

Act 1, Scene 1 Quotes

> Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea,
> And thus are we on every side enriched:
> These are the blessings promised to the Jews,
> And herein was old Abram's happiness:
> What more may heaven do for earthly man
> Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
> Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
> Making the sea their servant, and the winds
> To drive their substance with successful blasts?

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

This quote, which appears when Barabas is introduced during the first scene, it explores Barabas's Jewish identity and underscores his greed and religious hypocrisy. For Barabas, being Jewish is about being a rich merchant. His wealth "trowls," or rolls, "in by land and sea," which, along with his great success, "are the blessings promised to the Jews." He speaks of "old Abram's happiness," a reference to the covenant between God and Abraham, in which God promised Abraham he would be the father of a great and chosen people in Israel—but only if they obeyed God. But Barabas doesn't obey God—he lies, blasphemes, and even murders—which likely makes Barabas's own agreement with God null and void.

Barabas's language here does not reflect a man who is thankful for what God has given him. The land and sea exist to serve Barabas and his "fortune," and he has no problem "ripping the bowels of the earth" to amass that wealth, a particularly violent and gruesome sentiment that foretells Barabas's murderousness. The sea is his "servant," and the wind blows only to push his ships to port in "successful blasts." Barabas's view of God's earth is incredibly self-centered and reveals more about his greedy nature than it does his about his love for God or his devotion to his Jewish faith. Barabas cites his Jewish identity yet does nothing to observe his faith or the moral guidelines it sets forth, a trait that is shared by many of Marlowe's non-Jewish characters, which suggests such hypocrisy is widespread in all religions, not just Judaism.

Rather had I a Jew be hated thus,
Than pitied in a Christian poverty:
For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
Which methinks fits not their profession.
Happily some hapless man hath conscience,
And for his conscience lives in beggary.
They say we are a scattered nation:
I cannot tell, but we have scrambled up
More wealth by far than those that brag of faith.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

This introduction to Barabas's character underscores his obsession with money and speaks to the theme of religious hypocrisy that runs throughout the play. Barabas says that somewhere there is a man who lives with a clean conscience, but this man is "hapless" and "lives in beggary." In other words, to live a moral and righteous life, one must completely denounce money and live in poverty, which suggests that money and greed truly are the root of evil. He again refers to the Jewish people and calls them a "scattered nation," referring to the popular belief that the Jewish diaspora is a direct result of God's anger, but this is a small price to pay for Barabas. He is certain his wealth is more valuable than others' "faith." He sees nothing of value in Christianity and says it is full of "malice, falsehood, and excessive pride," and this is certainly the case with the Christians in *The Jew of Malta*, again suggesting that such hypocrisy is widespread in religion—Marlowe isn't just singling out Judaism with this critique.

This passage also reflects the anti-Semitism that plagued England during the 1500s. Barabas says he is "hated" as a Jew in Malta, which is a veiled reference to how Jews were perceived and treated in English society during Marlowe's time. The Edict of Expulsion officially expelled all Jews from England in 1290 and was not lifted until 1657, which made England a particularly hostile place for Jews. But Barabas claims he would rather be a Jew and "hated thus" than live in "Christian poverty." Barabas again equates his religion with his material wealth, and he would rather be reviled as a rich Jew than accepted as a poor Christian.

Act 1, Scene 2 Quotes

Barabas: Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed?

Knight: Have strangers leave with us to get their wealth?
Then let them with us contribute.

Barabas: How equally?

Ferneze: No, Jew, like infidels,
For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,
Who stand accursèd in the sight of heaven,
These taxes and afflictions are befallen,
And therefore thus we are determinèd;
Read there the articles of our decrees.

Related Characters: Ferneze, Knight, Barabas (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 22-23

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Barabas and the other Jews are told that Malta owes tribute money to the Turkish Empire that it can't pay, a situation that again highlights the anti-Semitism and religious hypocrisy that pervades both the play itself and 16th-century English society more broadly. When Barabas asks if "strangers" will be taxed to pay the bill, he is referring to the Jews. The Jews are considered foreigners in Malta—as they were in Marlowe's England—and are therefore not official citizens. According to the knight, the Jews live in Malta and earn their money there, so they should "contribute" to the debt. The word "contribute" implies that the Jews will pay only a portion of the tribute, but Barabas's question about "how equally" that payment will be divided implies that he is accustomed to being exploited by the Christians, and he expects that Jews will have to singlehandedly shoulder the financial burden.

Ferneze's response also reflects the hate Barabas and the other Jews are accustomed to. He calls the Jews "infidels," a hostile word that immediately points out their religious differences with contempt. Ferneze refers to the Christians and their "sufferance" of the Jews' "hateful lives," as if the Jews' physical presence in Malta causes the Christians intolerable pain that they graciously allow and should be compensated for. He says the Jews "stand accursèd in the sight of heaven," a reference to the then-popular belief among some Christian circles that the Jews were responsible for Christ's Crucifixion, and so therefore *all* Jewish people are to blame. In Ferneze's estimation, the Jews are sinners, and he uses this false assumption to justify the exploitation of the Jewish community and demand that they pay the entire tribute. This kind of hate and religious hypocrisy is rampant in *The Jew of Malta*, through which Marlowe argues that religion is often a tool to secure power and wealth rather than a guide for morality and righteousness.

> What? Bring you scripture to confirm your wrongs?
> Preach me not out of my possessions.
> Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are:
> But say the tribe that I descended of
> Were all in general cast away for sin,
> Shall I be tried by their transgression?
> The man that dealeth righteously shall live:
> And which of you can charge me otherwise?

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Ferneze, Knight

Related Themes:

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

Barabas speaks these words after Ferneze seizes Barabas's wealth to pay the Turkish tribute. This passage again underscores religious hypocrisy and the prejudice the Jewish community endures in the play, and, Marlowe thus implies, in 16th-century English society as well. Ferneze uses holy "scripture" and his Christian religion as a reason to tax the Jews, and Barabas will not be "preach[ed]" "out of [his] possessions" by Ferneze and his holier-than-thou attitude. Barabas admits that "some Jews are wicked," but he says that "all Christians are [wicked]," as they claim moral superiority yet clearly have no scruples if they can so easily hate another person.

Barabas uses scripture to prove his point and refers to Proverbs 10:2, which speaks of the importance of righteousness and teaches Christians that nothing is profited from wickedness. Suppose all Jews really are damned, Barabas asks Ferneze, wouldn't a true Christian forgive that sin? Furthermore, it is not fair to make Barabas pay for the sins of his ancestors, whether they are actually guilty or not of causing the Crucifixion. According to Christianity, Barabas reminds Ferneze, "the man that dealeth righteously shall live," and there is nothing righteous about Ferneze's treatment of Barabas and the other Jews. In Barabas's view (and Marlowe's by extension), there is nothing righteous about a religion that claims to be moral but uses the same religious doctrine to defend immoral acts.

> Out wretched Barabas,
> Sham'st thou not thus to justify thyself,
> As if we knew not thy profession?
> If thou rely upon they righteousness,
> Be patient and thy riches will increase.
> Excess of wealth is cause of covetousness:
> And covetousness, oh, 'tis a monstrous sin.

Related Characters: Ferneze (speaker), Barabas

Related Themes:

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Ferneze rejects Barabas's pleas to keep half his wealth. Like much of the action from Act I, this situation speaks to the nature of greed and Machiavellian deceitfulness in Marlowe's play. Ferneze kicks Barabas out of the senate house and says that he should be ashamed of himself, since everyone in Malta knows all about Barabas's "profession" and how he came to be the richest man on the island. In saying this, Ferneze implies that Barabas obtained his wealth through corrupt and dishonest means, and that Ferneze consequently shouldn't feel badly about seizing that wealth for the good of Malta.

Ferneze further says that if Barabas was really concerned with "righteousness" and morality, he would willingly give up his ill-gotten gains and rebuild his wealth in an honest way. Ferneze implies that Barabas is a hypocrite; Barabas calls Ferneze out for stealing his wealth, but Barabas is likely guilty of stealing that wealth in the first place. However, Ferneze's claim that "covetousness, oh, 'tis a monstrous sin" reveals his own hypocrisy. He condemns Barabas's excessive wealth and greed all while blindly hating an entire group of people based on something their ancestors supposedly did and exploiting those same people for personal and political gain. Besides revealing his deep-seated bigotry and hypocrisy, Ferneze's comment also exposes his own Machiavellian deceitfulness. Just like Barabas, Ferneze schemes to get what he wants, a tactic that Marlowe implies is common in politics and matters of state.

theme of betrayal and revenge. The word "policy" if often used in *The Jew of Malta* to describe deceit and corruption, and this is the word Barabas uses to describe Ferneze's actions and those of the Maltese government. Their corruption is not "simplicity," meaning their motives in taking Barabas and the other Jews' money are neither just nor honest. Ferneze cites his Christian faith as proof of his righteousness and honesty, but he employs the same deceitful practices that earned Barabas his wealth in the first place—one of many examples of religious hypocrisy throughout the play.

According to the stage directions, Barabas kneels at some point during this passage and calls upon God, or the "great *Primus Motor*"—a Latin phrase meaning "first mover" or "prime cause" used in Marlowe's play *Tamburlaine the Great* to describe "The chiefest God." On his knees, Barabas asks God to curse Ferneze and the Maltese citizens to the "everlasting pains" of the "plagues of Egypt" (including pestilence, boils, and the death of one's firstborn, among other plagues and disasters), a barren and fruitless earth, and all the hatred in the world. Barabas despises Ferneze and Maltese government for wronging him and stealing his wealth, and he will see them suffer through his revenge. Barabas is ultimately consumed by his desire for revenge, which Marlowe argues is dangerous, but the play nevertheless suggests that the desire for revenge is a common human response that often goes hand-in-hand with betrayal.

> Ay, policy? That's their profession,
> And not simplicity, as they suggest.
> The plagues of Egypt, and the curse of heaven,
> Earth's barrenness, and all men's hatred
> Inflict upon them, thou great *Primus Motor*.
> And here upon my knees, striking the earth,
> I ban their souls to everlasting pains
> And extreme tortures of the fiery deep,
> That thus have dealt with me in my distress.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Ferneze

Related Themes:

Page Number: 27

Explanation and Analysis

This quote, which appears after Ferneze seizes Barabas's wealth to pay the Turkish tribute, emphasizes the Machiavellian corruption within the play and introduces the

> Barabas: Then Abigail, there must my girl
> Entreat the abbess to be entertained.
>
> Abigail: How, as a nun?
>
> Barabas: Ay, daughter, for religion
> Hides many mischiefs from suspicion.

Related Characters: Abigail, Barabas (speaker), Ferneze, Abbess

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Ferneze has just seized Barabas's house and turned it into a nunnery. This brief discussion between Barabas and his daughter, Abigail, underscores Barabas's deceit and

cunning, but on a larger scale it also reflects the theme of religious hypocrisy and Marlowe's contention that religion is often used as a tool to secure power and wealth. Barabas wants Abigail to go to the convent and ask the abbess to accept her as a nun, so that she can gain access to the house and steal back the gold Barabas has hidden beneath the floorboards. That way, Barabas won't be left destitute, and he can begin to rebuild his lost wealth. This high-risk plan illustrates Barabas's deceitfulness and the lengths he will go to—or rather force Abigail to go to—to recover his gold.

Barabas tells Abigail to ask the nuns "to be entertained," a word that reflects the joy and pleasure Barabas gets out of his deviousness. For Barabas, playing a trick on the Christians for his own financial benefit is big fun, but Abigail's hesitation suggests she isn't as comfortable as her father is with Machiavellian scheming. Barabas claims that "religion / Hides many mischiefs from suspicion," meaning that Abigail's feigned desire to convert to Christianity and join the convent will conceal her intention to find the gold and return it to Barabas. The idea that religion "hides many mischiefs from suspicion" is a prominent one in *The Jew of Malta*—Ferneze uses religion to hide his intention to unfairly exploit the Jews, and the nuns and friars conceal their sexual exploits behind the convent walls—and, Marlowe thus implies, in broader society as well.

Abigail: Thus father shall I much dissemble.

Barabas: Tush,
As good dissemble that thou never mean'st
As first mean truth and then dissemble it;
A counterfeit profession is better
Than unseen hypocrisy.

Related Characters: Abigail, Barabas (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Abigail agrees to join the convent under false pretenses, further underscoring the role hypocrisy plays in religion not only within the context of the play but in broader European society as well. Like her father, Abigail is Jewish, and she has no desire to actually convert to Christianity and join the convent. To execute her father's plan, Abigail will have to "dissemble," which is to say she will have to do some serious acting in order to conceal her true intentions.

While it is Abigail's turn to "dissemble" here, it is Barabas who spends most of the play acting and deceiving others, a talent that is reflected in the easy way he refers to the task that lies before his daughter. "Tush," Barabas says to Abigail, to calm her reservations and downplay the treachery he is demanding of her. He isn't asking her to convert and mean it; he is merely telling her to pretend that she is interested in becoming a Christian and a nun just long enough to get into the house and retrieve the gold. Barabas tells Abigail that "counterfeit profession is better / Than unseen hypocrisy," which suggests that religious hypocrisy is much worse when committed unintentionally, compared to those who are willingly duplicitous and make no sincere claims to righteousness.

Act 2, Scene 1 Quotes

Oh my girl,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity;
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy;
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss:
Oh Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too,
Then my desires were fully satisfied.
But I will practise thy enlargement thence:
Oh girl, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my bliss!

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Abigail

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Abigail throws Barabas's gold out of the convent window having successfully infiltrated the convent under the pretense of wanting to convert to Christianity. This passage emphasizes Barabas's greed and suggests that he considers his gold as important, if not more important, than his daughter. As Barabas holds the bags of gold close to his heart, he cries, "Oh my girl, / My gold, my fortune, my felicity." Notably, Barabas begins talking about Abigail, but he quickly transitions to talking about his gold without missing a beat. It is Barabas's gold, not Abigail, that gives "strength to [his] soul," and it is Barabas's gold that is "death to [his] enemy," as it is his wealth that gives him power in a society that largely dismisses and condemns him on the

basis of his Jewish identity.

Barabas cries out for Abigail and laments that he cannot hold her as he does his gold. If Barabas had both his gold and his daughter, then his desires would be "fully satisfied." He says he will "practise [Abigail's] enlargement thence," meaning he will see about her release from the convent the next day, which he indeed does. But Barabas's cries here still seem to imply that he is more concerned with his lost wealth than Abigail: he cries out only once for Abigail ("Oh girl") but cries out for his gold three times ("oh gold, oh beauty, oh my bliss!") Clearly, Barabas's "bliss" is his material wealth, not the paternal connection he should have with his daughter. Barabas's insatiable greed and desire for gold is the most important aspect of his life, which eventually leads to his downfall, through which Marlowe warns against the inevitable destruction implicit in such unrestrained greed.

Act 2, Scene 3 Quotes

In spite of these swine-eating Christians,
Unchosen nation, never circumcised;
Such as, poor villains, were ne'er thought upon
Till Titus and Vespasian conquered us,
Am I become as wealthy as I was:
They hoped my daughter would ha' been a nun:
But she's at home, and I have bought a house
As great and fair as is the Governor's;
And there in spite of Malta will I dwell:
Having Ferneze's hand, whose heart I'll have;
Ay, and his son's too, or it shall go hard.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Don Lodowick, Ferneze, Abigail

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 44

Explanation and Analysis

Barabas speaks these words after recovering the hidden gold from the convent floorboards with help from his daughter, Abigail. This passage underscores the religious strife present in the play and reflects Barabas's obsession with revenge. Barabas hates Ferneze and Malta's Christians for exploiting him and the other Jews and stealing their wealth, and he has vowed to get even. He openly insults the Christians, calling them "swine-eating," and he insists the Christians belong to an "unchosen nation." These criticisms refer to Barabas's Jewish identity and the ways he believes he is superior to the Christians. Unlike Christians, the Jewish community follows a kosher diet and does not consume pork, and Jews believe they are God's "chosen people" by way of a special covenant.

Despite the persecution Barabas faces as a Jew in an anti-Semitic society (beginning with "Titus and Vespasian," father and son Roman Emperors from the first century who defeated the Jews and conquered Jerusalem), Barabas has managed to restore some of his wealth, but simply getting his gold back will not make him whole again. Barabas wants "Ferneze's hand, whose heart [he'll] have," which is to say he wants Ferneze's handshake and promise that he will restore Barabas's wealth. But Barabas also wants Ferneze's son, Don Lodowick, too. Killing Ferneze's son will complete Barabas's revenge, which he is determined to have. He is completely preoccupied with revenge, through which Marlowe implies that vengeance is a common human response to betrayal but nevertheless a dangerous one.

Barabas: Oh, sir, your father had my diamonds.
Yet I have one left that will serve your turn:
I mean my daughter. (But ere he shall have her
I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood.
I ha' the poison of the city for him,
And the white leprosy.)

Lodowick: What sparkle does it give without a foil?

Barabas: The diamond that I talk of, ne'er was foiled
(But when he touches it, it will be foiled).
Lord Lodowick, it sparkles bright and fair.

Lodowick: Is it square or pointed? Pray let me know.

Barabas: Pointed it is, good sir (but not for you).

Related Characters: Don Lodowick, Barabas (speaker), Ferneze, Abigail

Related Themes:

Page Number: 46-47

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Don Lodowick approaches Barabas and inquires about buying a "diamond." This exchange suggests that money is the most important thing in Barabas's life—even more important than his daughter. Barabas reminds Lodowick that his father, Ferneze, has taken all Barabas's wealth, but Barabas still has his daughter, whom he compares to the most beautiful "diamond." This comparison

assigns a monetary value and worth to Abigail. Still, in a quick aside, Barabas admits that he has no intention of ever promising Abigail to Lodowick.

Lodowick asks if the "diamond" sparkles "without a foil," which is his delicate way of asking if Abigail is attractive without a contrast or something to add to her beauty, and Barabas confirms she is. Abigail has never been "foiled," Barabas says, his own way of telling Lodowick that Abigail is still chaste and pure—which is to say she is virginal and presumably worth more money. Barabas quietly admits that Abigail will be "foiled," or ruined, once she is touched by Lodowick, and even though he reassures Lodowick that Abigail is indeed "pointed" (promised to a man in marriage) and implies that man is Lodowick, Barabas is clearly deceiving him. This passage not only reveals Barabas's conniving nature, it also exposes his greed and suggests he has very little respect for his daughter and only values her for what she can bring him financially.

> Barabas: Good sir,
> Your father has deserved it at my hands,
> Who of mere charity and Christian ruth,
> To bring me to religious purity,
> And as it were in catechizing sort,
> To make me mindful of my mortal sins,
> Against my will, and whether I would or no,
> Seized all I had, and thrust me out-a-doors,
> And made my house a place for nuns most chaste.
>
> Lodowick: No doubt your soul shall reap the fruit of it.
>
> Barabas: Ay, but my lord, the harvest is far off:
> And yet I know the prayers of those nuns
> And holy friars, having money for their pains,
> And wondrous; (and indeed do no man good)
> And seeing they are not idle, but still doing,
> 'Tis likely they in time may reap some fruit,
> I mean in fullness of perfection.

Related Characters: Don Lodowick, Barabas (speaker), Ferneze

Related Themes:

Page Number: 47-48

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which also occurs during Barabas's exchange with Lodowick in the second act, further exposes anti-Semitism and religious hypocrisy within the play and broader society. Barabas claims that Ferneze, out of "charity and Christian ruth," or pity, took it upon himself to instruct Barabas in religious matters ("in a catechizing sort") and point out his "mortal sins" of covetousness and Judaism. Ferneze seized Bararbas's wealth, including his home (he "thrust [Barabas] out-a-doors") to make room for the "most chaste" and virginal nuns. Lodowick, proving himself to be as bigoted as his father, claims that Barabas's soul will benefit and "reap the fruit" of such instruction, but Marlowe implies such faith in Christianity, and religion in general, is naïve and misguided.

The benefit, or "harvest" Lodowick speaks of is, according to Barabas, "far off." Barabas accuses the Christian nuns and friars of taking a vow of poverty but still "having money for their pains," and he further claims the same nuns and friars should be "idle" (i.e., celibate), but they are "still doing," or having sex with each other. Their "fullness of perfection," a Christian claim that Ferneze and the others share, may come in time, but for now that "fullness" is limited to the pregnant nuns' wombs. Barabas's thinly veiled insults depict the nuns and friars, as well as Ferneze, Lodowick, and all of Malta's Christians, as hypocritical sinners who preach one thing but practice another, a problem Marlowe implies is widespread in all religions.

> Yonder comes Don Mathias, let us stay;
> He loves my daughter, and she holds him dear:
> But I have sworn to frustrate both their hopes,
> And be revenged upon the—(Governor).

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Ithamore, Don Lodowick, Don Mathias, Abigail

Related Themes:

Page Number: 51

Explanation and Analysis

This short quote, spoken by Barabas to Ithamore, appears as Mathias enters the market in the second act, and it is significant because it underscores the extent of Barabas's Machiavellian scheming and illustrates the lengths he will go to exact his revenge upon Ferneze for seizing his wealth and leaving him in poverty. Here, Barabas reveals that Mathias and Abigail are in love with each other, even though Barabas spends the better part of this scene promising Abigail's hand in marriage to Lodowick. Barabas knows that Abigail and Mathias want to marry, but Barabas has taken a vow "to frustrate both their hopes" as part of his plan to get revenge

against Ferneze.

Barabas identifies Ferneze in an aside, presumably to avoid advertising his plans too loudly in a public place, but Barabas is nevertheless proud of his plan to avenge the theft of his wealth, as evidenced by Barabas's bragging to his new slave. This admission exposes Barabas's despicable nature and his determination for revenge, which is so important to him that he is willing to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to get it. Marlowe highlights Machiavellian deviousness on an individual level, which he argues is widespread in broader society, while simultaneously pointing out the tendency for revenge to snowball and escalate. While Barabas's revenge is directed at Ferneze, it inevitably affects others as well.

Barabas: Hast thou no trade? Then listen to my words,
And I will teach that shall stick by thee:
First be thou void of these affections,
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear,
Be moved at nothing, see thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan.

Ithamore: Oh brave, master, I worship your nose for this.

Related Characters: Ithamore, Barabas (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

This short exchange occurs after Barabas purchases Ithamore as his slave and the two are getting to know each other. This passage is significant because it further reflects Barabas's Machiavellian nature. When Ithamore admits he doesn't have a profession, Barabas offers to teach him his own "trade," which requires him to be completely devoid of "compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear," to "be moved by nothing" and to "pity none," a rather comprehensive definition of Barabas's Machiavellian nature.

This quote also reflects the anti-Semitism and offensive Jewish stereotypes that pervade most of the play Most importantly, to Barabas at least, Ithamore must "smile when the Christians moan," a requirement that not only reveals Barabas's violent and contemptable nature but underscores his complete hatred for Christians, a sentiment that Ithamore echoes. The word "brave" during Elizabethan times also referred to something wonderful, which is exactly have Ithamore views Barabas's hate for the Christians. "I worship your nose for this," Ithamore says to Barabas. Ithamore's comment about Barabas's nose refers to the popular and offensive stereotype that all Jews have large, hook noses. Barabas's nose is just one of many Jewish stereotypes Marlowe attributes to his protagonist, which produces a biased portrayal that only serves to further perpetuate the same offensive stereotypes.

Act 3, Scene 2 Quotes

Oh bravely fought, and yet they thrust not home.
Now Lodowick, now Mathias, so;
So now they have showed themselves to be tall fellows.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Don Mathias, Don Lodowick

Related Themes:

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

Barabas speaks these words during Mathias's and Lodowick's deadly duel, again underscoring the ubiquitous nature of Machiavellian scheming and revenge. Here, Barabas sits above Mathias and Lodowick, watching the men fight as if it is a form of entertainment—which to Barabas, it is. Barabas relishes the sight of his machinations in action, and he clearly enjoys the idea of killing the men without touching them. He claims their fight is "bravely fought," implying it is admirable, even though they have not yet "thrust" "home," or managed to kill one another.

Barabas's language here mimics the back and forth action of the duel. "Now Lodowick," Barabas says, "now Mathias," as if the men are taking turns stabbing one another with their swords. Finally, the men are successful and kill each other, showing "themselves to be tall fellows." With this comment, Barabas again implies the men are brave, but this is no doubt meant as sarcasm. Indeed, Marlowe implies the exact opposite. True bravery requires honesty and integrity, which none of the men involved in this scene display. While Marlowe seems to suggest that human beings are inclined to selfishness, corruption, and vengeance, he nevertheless implies that such Machiavellian tendencies can be self-destructive.

Act 3, Scene 3 Quotes

Ithamore: Oh mistress! I have the bravest, gravest, secret, subtle, bottle-nosed knave to my master, that ever gentleman had.

Abigail: Say, knave, why rail'st upon my father thus?

Ithamore: Oh, my master has the bravest policy.

Related Characters: Abigail, Ithamore (speaker), Don Mathias, Don Lodowick, Barabas

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 68

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which appears after Barabas's scheming results in Lodowick's and Mathias's deaths, further reflects Ithamore's own Machiavellian nature and underscores the anti-Semitism that permeates most of the play. Here, Ithamore praises Barabas's scheming to Abigail, even though Ithamore knows that Abigail is in love with Mathias and is sure to be heartbroken by his death. Like Barabas and many other characters in Marlowe's play, Ithamore is cruel, and he gets satisfaction from watching other people suffer, a trait that suggests Machiavellianism is often employed on an individual level and not just by politicians and governments.

Ithamore celebrates Barabas and says he is "the bravest" and most admirable master a slave ever had, but then he insults Barabas and calls him a "bottle-nosed knave," which is another reference to Barabas's enormous nose and the offensive stereotype that all Jews have a large and unattractive nose. Abigail is the only one to object to Ithamore's hurtful and frequent insults regarding Barabas's nose and asks Ithamore why he "rail'st upon [her] father" so. Ithamore doesn't answer her question, but it is clear that he respects Barabas deviousness, if nothing else. Barabas is Ithamore's master, yet Ithamore still openly insults his Jewish identity, suggesting that such abuse is common and even tolerated. It is also clear from quotes like this that Ithamore's comments regarding Barabas's nose are meant to be hurtful, and such comments further bolster the very same bias and hate.

Act 3, Scene 4 Quotes

Stay, first let me stir it Ithamore.
As fatal be it to her as the draught
Of which great Alexander drunk, and died:
And with her let it work like Borgia's wine,
Whereof his sire, the Pope, was poisonèd.
In a few, the blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane:
The juice of hebon, and Cocytus' breath,
And all the poisons of the Stygian pool
Break from the fiery kingdom; and in this
Vomit your venom, and envenom her
That like a fiend hat left her father thus.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Don Mathias, Don Lodowick, Abigail, Ithamore

Related Themes:

Page Number: 77

Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears in the third act, as Barabas readies the rice that will poison Abigail and the entire nunnery, further reflecting Barabas's abject cruelty and Machiavellian tendencies, as well as his growing obsession with betrayal and revenge. Abigail has converted to Christianity and joined the convent for real to atone for her sins and involvement in Lodowick's and Mathias's deaths, which Barabas considers a personal betrayal, and now he must seek revenge against Abigail, too. Barabas will poison her, just as Alexander the Great was allegedly poisoned, and Pope Alexander VI, who was poisoned by his son, "[Cesare] Borgia's wine," in 1503.

Barabas mentions the Hydra of Lerna, a sea monster in Greek mythology whose breath was said to be so poisonous that the mere scent of it caused instant death. This death motif is repeated in Barabas's mention of the "Cocytus," a river in the same Greek stories that leads to the river Acheron and Hades, or the Underworld. The "Stygian pool" further refers to the River Styx, which also flows through the Greek Underworld and reflects the death Barabas wishes on his own daughter. He calls on the collective poison of his many deadly references to "envenom" Abigail, who "like a fiend," betrayed him by abandoning their Jewish faith. Barabas's ease in killing his own daughter to avenge a perceived slight implies that one's desire for revenge can easily grow out of control.

Act 3, Scene 6 Quotes

Bernardine: Know that confession must not be revealed,
The canon law forbids it, and the priest
That makes it known, being degraded first,
Shall be condemned, and then sent to the fire.

Abigail: So I have heard; pray therefore keep it close,
Death seizeth on my heart, ah gentle friar
Convert my father that he may be saved,
And witness that I die a Christian.

Bernardine: Ay, and a virgin too, that grieves me most:
But I must to the Jew and exclaim on him,
And make him stand in fear of me.

Related Characters: Abigail, Friar Bernardine (speaker), Barabas

Related Themes:

Page Number: 82-83

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Abigail confesses her sins (and Barabas's) to Friar Bernardine before she dies. However, far from being a touching seen of redemption, this passage highlights the religious hypocrisy that permeates the play and ultimately suggests that Abigail's faith in Christianity and Friar Bernardine is misguided. Abigail is concerned that her final confession will get back to her father, but Bernardine reassures Abigail that her confession is sealed—"canon law forbids" Bernardine to reveal her confession under threat of eternal damnation and the "fire[s]" of hell. The Seal of Confession is one of the most sacred of the priestly vows, and Bernardine's explanation implies he takes it very seriously.

But Bernardine doesn't take Abigail's confession seriously at all, and he can't wait to run off and find Barabas the moment she dies, so he can use his newfound knowledge about Barabas's criminal behavior to exploit Barabas out of his wealth. Bernardine even notes what a pity it is that Abigail dies a virgin, a particularly inappropriate comment that implies Bernardine doesn't take his vow of chastity seriously either. Like every other character in *The Jew of Malta*, Bernardine is a religious hypocrite, a problem that Marlowe implies is prominent in Christianity, and in Catholicism in particular.

Act 5, Scene 2 Quotes

Oh fatal day to fall into the hands
Of such a traitor and unhallowed Jew!
What greater misery could heaven inflict?

Related Characters: Ferneze (speaker), Barabas

Related Themes:

Page Number: 117

Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears near the end of the play, after the Turks conquer Malta and make Barabas the new governor. This passage again reflects the play's anti-Semitism and Ferneze's religious hypocrisy. With the fall of Malta to the Turkish Empire, Ferneze is taken prisoner and left to Barabas and his Machiavellian tendencies. Malta's demise and Ferneze's imprisonment is made worse by way of Barabas's Jewish identity, which Ferneze, like the other Christians in the play, fears and despises. This obvious bigotry mirrors that of England in the 1500s, which by and large responded to the Jewish community with the same vitriol and hate.

This passage also begins to hint at the concept of God's will. It is a "fatal day" when Ferneze finds himself in the hands of a "traitor and unhallowed Jew." Ferneze refers to Barabas as if his Jewish identity alone makes him wicked and unholy, yet Barabas's wickedness has nothing at all to do with his religion. For Ferneze, being held subordinate to a Jew is a fate worse than death, and he can't imagine a "greater misery" inflicted by "heaven." Ferneze's implication that "heaven," a synecdoche for God, is responsible for his current circumstances suggests that God's will determines the outcome of any given event. In this vein, Barabas's Machiavellian machinations are all for naught, as no amount of scheming can ever sway God's will. While Marlowe doesn't necessarily condemn Machiavellianism as immoral, he does suggest that Machiavellianism is ultimately useless.

Away, no more, let him not trouble me.
Thou hast thou gotten, by thy policy,
No simple place, no small authority,
I am now Governor of Malta; true,
But Malta hates me, and in hating me
My life's in danger, and what boots it thee
Poor Barabas, to be the Governor,
Whenas thy life shall be at their command?
No Barabas, this must be looked into;
And since by wrong thou got'st authority,
Maintain it bravely by firm policy,
At least unprofitably lose it not:
For he that liveth in authority,
And neither gets him friends, nor fills his bags,
Lives like the ass that Aesop speaketh of,
That labours with a load of bread and wine,
And leaves it off to snap on thistle tops:
But Barabas will be more circumspect.
Begin betimes, Occasion's bald behind,
Slip not thine opportunity, for fear too late
Thou seek'st for much, but canst not compass it.
Within here.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Ferneze

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 118-119

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which appears after Malta is conquered by the Turks and Barabas is appointed governor, stresses the inherent pros and cons of Barabas's Machiavellian machinations. Barabas's "policy," that is his scheming and conniving, has resulted in great "authority" in his new role as Malta's governor, and he knows his new position of authority must be maintained using the same "firm policy." Barabas now has all the power, but the people of Malta still hate him, and they will likely try to kill him if he doesn't deter them in some way. This implication suggests that Machiavellianism can be effective in that it instills and promotes fear, which scares people in obeying their leader, even if they don't respect said leader.

According to Barabas, anyone who occupies a position of authority and does not use that authority to their advantage—to either make new "friends" or "fill his bags" with gold—is foolish, just "like the ass" in Aesop's fairytales, who eats "thistle tops" instead of "bread and wine." So Barabas must act quickly and seize the "Occasion," or opportunity, creating by his deviousness and immorality before it passes him by. Again, Marlowe does not seem to advocate for Machiavellianism, but he does imply that corruption is widespread in government and on an individual level, and that such tactics can be quite effective.

And thus far roundly goes the business:
Thus loving neither, will I live with both,
Making a profit of my policy;
And he from whom my most advantage comes,
Shall be my friend.
This is the life we Jews are used to lead;
And reason too, for Christians do the like:
Well, now about effecting this device:
First to surprise great Selim's soldiers,
And then to make provision for the feast,
Then at one instant all things may be done,
My policy detests prevention:
To what even my secret purpose drives,
I know; and they shall witness with their lives.

Related Characters: Barabas (speaker), Selim-Calymath, Ferneze

Related Themes:

Page Number: 121

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Barabas celebrates his Machiavellianism and his ability to make "a profit of [his] policy," underscoring his devious nature and exposing his final scheme leading up to the play's climax. Barabas's final scheme will result in the death of either Ferneze or Calymath, and while Barabas doesn't particularly care for either one (he is "loving neither" but will "live with both"), he vows that whoever is left standing will "be [his] friend." This damning admission again reflects Barabas's despicable nature and opportunistic ways, as he will work either outcome to his benefit with his masterful scheming.

Barabas claims that deceitfulness "is the life we Jews are used to lead," but he admits that "Christians do the like," which undermines the anti-Semitism that pervades most of the play and implies that *all* people are capable of such wickedness, regardless of their religious beliefs and identity. This suggestion at once identifies an inherent human tendency toward corruption and also implies that such corruption can be exacerbated within a religious context, which seems to promote division and hate in *The Jew of Malta* instead of love and righteousness, a problem

Marlowe implies in widespread in broader society.

Act 5, Scene 5 Quotes

Ferneze: Should I in pity of thy plaints or thee,
Accursèd Barabas, base Jew, relent?
No, thus I'll see thy treachery repaid,
But wish thou hadst behaved thee otherwise.

Barabas: You will not help me then?

Ferneze: No, villain, no.

Barabas: And villains, know you cannot help me now.
Then Barabas breathe forth thy latest fate,
And in the fury of thy torments, strive
To end thy life with resolution:
Know, Governor, 'twas I that slew thy son;
I framed the challenge that did make them meet:
Know, Calymath, I aimed thy overthrow,
And had I but escaped this stratagem,
I would have brought confusion on you all,
Damned Christians, dogs, and Turkish infidels;
But now begins the extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs:
Die life, fly soul, tongue curse thy fill and die!

Related Characters: Barabas, Ferneze (speaker), Don Mathias, Don Lodowick, Selim-Calymath

Related Themes:

Page Number: 129-130

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which occurs after Ferneze betrays Barabas and catches Barabas in his own trap, further reflects the play's anti-Semitism and perpetuates the same offensive stereotypes Marlowe identifies. As Barabas is dying in the boiling cauldron and begging for his life, Ferneze asks if he should "pity" Barabas's "plaints" and cries of sorrow and pain. Afterall, Barabas is "accursèd" as a Jew and, according to Christian doctrine at least, is damned to hell, a fate that is reflected in the boiling water of Barabas's hot cauldron. Ferneze calls Barabas "base"—a reference to his lowly social status as a Jew—and suggests that Barabas deserves to die in such a way based solely on his religion, not because of his clear immorality.

When it becomes clear to Barabas that Ferneze will not rescue him, Barabas bitterly confesses to all his crimes, including murdering Lodowick and Mathias. If Barabas is going to die anyway, he wants Ferneze to know that his son died in vain, so Ferneze's suffering will continue and Barabas's revenge will be complete. Barabas even wants Calymath to know that he only barely escaped Barabas's "stratagem," just to prove that he really is an immoral, deceitful, and despicable man. Barabas curses the Christians and Muslims alike, and then dies, confirming every negative Jewish stereotype Marlowe attributes to him. Many scholars have argued that Marlowe employs such offensive stereotypes to expose and overcome them, but his overtly negative representation of Barabas makes this interpretation difficult. Had Marlowe really wanted to condemn the use of such stereotypes, he likely wouldn't have made his protagonist the embodiment of the "wicked Jew" his Christian characters despise and fear, which only reinforces and perpetuates the same harmful stereotypes.

Content thee, Calymath, here thou must stay,
And live in Malta prisoner; for come call the world
To rescue thee, so will we guard us now,
As sooner shall they drink the ocean dry,
Than conquer Malta, or endanger us.
So march away, and let due praise be given
Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven.

Related Characters: Ferneze (speaker), Barabas, Selim-Calymath

Related Themes:

Page Number: 131

Explanation and Analysis

This quote, which appears at the very end of *The Jew of Malta*, highlights the importance of God's will and implies that Machiavellianism is ultimately useless. The Machiavellian scheming that Barabas, Ferneze, and Calymath all take part in seemingly leads to Calymath's capture and Malta's subsequent liberation, just as such scheming seems to lead directly to Barabas's demise. And, with Calymath as Malta's prisoner, the Turks won't dare to try and conquer Malta again for fear of endangering Calymath's life. It seems, for now at least, that Malta is safe, and that Ferneze and the Christians have prevailed.

As Ferneze exits with his men and Calymath, Ferneze implies that his apparent victory and Malta's freedom is not due to "fate nor fortune," meaning victory cannot be bought and is not because of anyone's Machiavellian scheming. Ferneze gives praise to "heaven," or God, which implies that it is God's will that decides the outcome of any given event, not corruption and Machiavellianism. While Marlowe seems

to imply that Machiavellianism is a widespread problem across Europe, both politically and on an individual level, he doesn't condone such immoral behavior, and he suggests that such deviousness is ultimately futile. In short, Marlowe implies that God's will determines the outcome of events, and no amount of unscrupulous scheming can ever alter God's will.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PROLOGUE

While the people of the world believe that Machevill is dead, his soul lives on. "The Guise," too, is dead, and now Machevill's ghost has come from France to England. Machevill's name is repulsive to some, but he is admired the most by the people who despise him. Some people rally against his books, but the same people still read those books (some even sit in "Peter's chair"), and Machevill is impossible to forget. To Machevill, religion is "a childish toy," and the only sin is ignorance.

Presumably, Machevill is the embodiment of Niccolò Machiavelli, at 16th-centry Italian diplomat and political philosopher who died in 1527. Machiavelli's name is synonymous with corruption and self-interest (a political policy known as Machiavellianism), and this is the same immorality Marlowe hints at here. "The Guise" is a reference to the third Duke of Guise, a French nobleman and leader of the French Catholics against the Protestants during the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598). Guise led the attack during the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in Paris in 1572, which killed over 30,000 people, mostly Protestants. Marlowe implies that Guise employed Machiavellian tactics, and now that Guise is dead, Machevill is looking to have some fun in England with his deceitful ways. His name is vile to many, but Machevill suggests that many people rely on his tactics, including the Pope (the man who sits in "Peter's chair"). Machevill doesn't have much use for religion and calls it a "toy," which is a major deviation from Machiavelli's political policy. Machiavelli saw value in religion, whereas Machevill does not, which suggests that Marlowe, at the very least, disagrees with some of Machiavelli's selfish and corrupt tactics.

Some people call his methods murder, but Machevill thinks this opinion is foolish. He asks the audience what right Caesar had to the crown. Kings are made by "might," Machevill says, and laws come second. A strong nation requires more than laws; a strong nation requires a strong leader.

Machevill's claim that kings are made by "might" implies that a leader must rule by force—mere laws are insufficient. In this way, Marlowe suggests that a strong leader must instill a certain amount of fear in the people, ostensibly through Machiavellian tactics.

But, Machevill says, he is not here to talk about himself. He is here to introduce "the tragedy of a Jew, / Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed." The Jew, Barabas, obtained his **gold** through "my means," Machevill notes, but he asks the audience not to judge Barabas too harshly. Machevill asks the audience to judge Barabas based on his own merit, not solely because he supports Machevill.

Barabas "smiles" at his full bags, which suggests that he is exceedingly greedy, and the term "tragedy" foreshadows that Barabas's story will not end well. Barabas obtained his wealth through Machevill's "means," which is to say that Barabas made his money through dishonest and corrupt practices. Jews were officially unwelcomed in England during Marlowe's time, and this air anti-Semitism pervades most of the play, beginning with Marlowe's stereotypical caricature of Barabas as a greedy and corrupt Jew.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Barabas enters his counting house, where he is surrounded by piles of **gold**. He is awaiting the return of his merchant ships, which carry various goods, including Greek wines and Spanish oils. The Arabians pay well in gold, but Barabas prefers Indian merchants and the rich Moors of the East with their precious gems and the finest diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. The bulk of Barabas's wealth consists of such jewels, and he will have more. His ship coming from Alexandria is loaded with valuable spices and silks, and he expects it soon to arrive in Malta.

Barabas's counting house and piles of gold again speak to his greed—he isn't happy with just a little wealth; he must have piles of it. He is expecting more ships, which means his fortune is only expected to grow, and the fact that he trades in Greek wines and Spanish oils suggests that his enterprise is far-reaching and lucrative. Furthermore, Barabas prefers jewels to gold—presumably because they are more exotic and valuable—which also suggests that he isn't satisfied with just an average fortune.

A merchant enters and tells Barabas that his ship has safely arrived, and Barabas must go to the customhouse and pay the bill of entry. Barabas tells the merchant to use credit for the bill, but the merchant claims the cost is more than the worth of many of the town's merchants. Barabas tells the merchant to go back and tell them that "the Jew of Malta" sent him. That should be enough, Barabas says. The merchant agrees, but before he exits, Barabas asks him what ship he comes from. The *Speranza*, the merchant answers. Barabas asks about the ship coming from Alexandria, but the merchant knows nothing of it. He says that many of the merchants think Barabas is mad to trust such wealth on a "crazèd vessel," but Barabas quickly dismisses him. The ship is fine, Barabas says.

Clearly, Barabas is the richest man in Malta, and he is worth more than most of the town's merchants combined. Barabas's name alone extends an enormous line of credit and is enough to cover the large bill at customs. Barabas has so many ships and merchants working for him, he must ask the merchant which ship he comes from, which again points to Barabas's insatiable greed. He is particularly concerned with the ship from Alexandria, presumably because it carries the most valuable goods. The merchant's mention of the ship being a "crazèd vessel" means that the ship is in poor repair and isn't exactly seaworthy. This point suggests that Barabas is not only greedy, he is cheap, and he puts his crewmembers (and, counterintuitively, his own wealth) at risk with a ramshackle ship.


The merchant exits and a second merchant enters. He tells Barabas that his ship has arrived safely from Alexandria and is loaded with various riches. Barabas asks about the other ships arriving from Egypt, but the merchant did not come across them. The ship from Alexandria was escorted by a Spanish fleet, the merchant says, and they were chased by the Turks. Barabas dismisses the second merchant and is again alone with his wealth.

During the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire (the Turks) was at the height of its power and controlled much of Europe and Western Asia. The Turkish presence outside of Malta is threatening and hints at war and aggression—a connotation that is also Machiavellian, especially if the Turks are looking to take Malta by force. In contrast, Spain is clearly an ally and is invested in protecting the Maltese. Again, Barabas has numerous ships (at least four have been referenced thus far), which again underscores his wide-reaching greed.


As Barabas looks around his counting house at his **gold**, he says that "these are the blessings promised to the Jews." They are the masters of the seas, and the wind blows to carry their riches. Barabas may be hated overall, but he is respected for his wealth, and he would rather be hated as a Jew than be a poor Christian. There is nothing to be found in religion, according to Barabas, "but malice, falsehood, and excessive pride." The Jews are a "scattered nation," but they have more wealth than most have faith.

The Jews are a "scattered nation," meaning that they live in many nations without a permanent home because no nation will claim them as citizens, which again highlights the anti-Semitism of the time. Barabas is hated in Malta because of his Jewishness, which speaks to Malta's (and, metaphorically, England's) biased society, but Barabas's wealth affords him power that society otherwise strips from him. While this goes a long way in understanding Barabas's greed, it also reinforces negative stereotypes that Jewish people are often rich and greedy. Again, Barabas has no use for religion and considers it harmful (it is full of "malice" and "falsehood"), yet he refers to his wealth as a "blessing" and often cites his Jewish identity. Barabas doesn't approach his Jewish religion as a way of life or a spiritual or moral guide; he considers his religion only in context with his wealth, which exposes his own hypocrisy.

There are many Jews in Malta, Barabas says, and in every other nation, and each Jew is wealthy. But, Barabas admits, the Jews do not want to rule as kings. Let the Christians be kings, Barabas says, and leave him to his wealth and his daughter, Abigail, whom he holds "as dear / As Agamemnon did his Iphigen." Three Jews enter talking about Barabas's "policy" and talent. A Turkish fleet has arrived, one of the men says, and they fear war. Barabas tries to calm the men. The Turks and Malta are in league, so the Turks likely come in peace, Barabas says, but then he makes a short aside. Barabas cares only about himself, his money, and Abigail—he cares little about Malta or the other Jews.

Barabas's admission that there are Jews in every country would not have been received well in Marlowe's time. Jews were formally ejected from England in the 13th century with the Edict of Expulsion, and many English people did not want to admit that Jews were living in their country. Barabas's allusion to "Agamemnon and Iphigen" refers to the Greek myth of Agamemnon, the King of Mycenae, and his daughter, Iphigenia, whom he sacrificed to the gods for favorable winds. This ironic reference suggests that Barabas doesn't hold his daughter as dear as he says, and it foreshadows her grim fate. The Jews' mention of Barabas's "policy" is a reference to his Machiavellian scheming and corruption, which is also reflected in Barabas's aside when he admits he cares only about himself and his money.

There will be a meeting at the senate-house, the Jewish man tells Barabas, and every Jew in Malta must attend. Barabas says that he understands and will investigate it immediately (for himself, Barabas again says in a quick aside). The men are thankful for Barabas's help and exit. Alone again, Barabas laughs at how stupid the other Jews are—of course the Turks have not come as friends. The Maltese government owes the Turks many years of tribute pay, and Barabas fears the Turks have come to collect. Barabas doesn't care why they have come. The Turks can have Malta, but they can't have his wealth.

Barabas's aside again suggests he plans to betray the other Jews and is concerned only with himself and his money. Malta owes the Turks tribute pay, which is payment from one country to another in exchange for peace. On the surface, this agreement sounds like a mutual alliance, but what it basically amounts to is a shakedown and Machiavellian tactics. Malta is small and powerless compared to the Ottoman Empire, so the Turks agree not to attack—that is, if Malta pays the tribute.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Ferneze, the governor of Malta, enters with Selim-Calymath, the son of the Turkish Emperor, and several Turkish military officers. The tribute between Malta and the Turkish Empire has not been paid for 10 years, and the Emperor has sent Calymath to collect. Ferneze claims the tribute is too high, and he begs Calymath for mercy. It is not in his power to grant them mercy, Calymath tells Ferneze. The Emperor has sent Calymath for the money, and Ferneze has no choice but to pay.

Although the amount of the tribute payment is not mentioned here, the reader can infer that it is a substantial amount of money, since a high-ranking man like Ferneze has no way to pay it. This excessive tribute payment again hints at the threads of greed and Machiavellianism that run throughout the play. The Turks expect Malta to pay money it doesn't have in order to stop a military invasion it likely can't defend. In this light, the tributary agreement between the Turks and Malta is little more than extortion.


Ferneze agrees, but he asks Calymath for more time. Since the tribute payment is so high, Ferneze will have to collect it from the people of Malta. One of the Turkish officers tells Calymath that granting Ferneze more time is not within their scope of power either, but Calymath tells the officer to show some kindness. It is better to collect the money peacefully than to collect it through violence, Calymath says. Ferneze says he will have the money in one month, and Calymath agrees. They will send a messenger to collect the money later, Calymath says, exiting with his military officers.

Calymath must answer to his father, the Ottoman Emperor, so he does not technically have the power to grant Ferneze more time. In this way, Calymath betrays the Emperor's order when he doesn't collect the money immediately or attack. While Calymath's decision to grant Ferneze more time certainly displays some kindness on his part, it is also evidence of the frequent betrayal portrayed throughout the play.

Ferneze turns to one of his own officers and asks where the Jews are just as Barabas enters with three other Jewish men. Selim-Calymath has come to collect the tribute money, Ferneze says, and Barabas agrees it is a good idea to give the Turks their money. Ten years' worth of tribute money is too much, Ferneze continues, and he must ask the Jews for their help. Of course, Barabas says, but the Jews are not soldiers. Ferneze laughs. Malta is not looking for soldiers—Malta is looking for **gold**, and Barabas is a rich man. Barabas feigns surprise and asks Ferneze if he is asking for his money. Yes, Ferneze says, and the other Jews as well.

Barabas knows that Ferneze is asking—or rather telling—the Jews to pay the tribute bill. Barabas is feigning ignorance when he says that the Jews are not soldiers and cannot possibly help to fight off the Turks. He says it is better to pay the money and avoid a fight, but he really has no intention of offering any of his own wealth to help, which again harkens to Barabas's greed and selfishness.

The Jewish men immediately protest. Barabas asks if "strangers" are the only people who will be taxed, or if Ferneze intends to tax everyone equally. Ferneze says he will only tax the Jews, as Malta suffers for the Jews' "hateful lives." The Jews alone "stand accursèd in the sight of heaven," so Ferneze will tax only them. As Ferneze stops speaking, an officer reads the official decree. The Turks' tribute money will be imposed on the Jews only, and each Jew must pay half of their total wealth. If they refuse to pay, they will forfeit all their wealth and must convert to Christianity.

Barabas refers to the Jews as "strangers" because they are considered foreigners in Malta rather than genuine citizens. This bias again underscores the anti-Semitism of the time, especially since Ferneze expects only the Jews to foot the bill. Ferneze's bigotry is on full display when he calls the Jews "hateful" and claims they "stand accursèd," meaning the Jews were responsible for Christ's crucifixion and are therefore damned. Ferneze exploits the Jews for money in the name of religion, which underscores his greed, hypocrisy, anti-Semitism, and his use of Machiavellian tactics.




Ferneze turns to Barabas and asks if he will convert to Christianity. No, Barabas answers, and he will not give Malta half his wealth either. Barabas's wealth is worth more than half of the city, and he will not willingly hand it over. Then we will take it all, Ferneze responds. "*Corp di Dio* (Body of God)," Barabas cries, finally agreeing to pay. It is too late, Ferneze says. Barabas refused, and now Malta will seize his entire estate.

Notably, Ferneze is not simply exploiting the Jews, he is actively trying to convert them, thereby decreasing the number of Jews in Maltese society. Barabas blasphemes when he cries "Body of God." This expression again underscores Barabas's own religious hypocrisy—he cites his Jewish identity but has no problem taking God's name in vain.

Barabas is shocked and asks if Ferneze plans to steal his **gold** on the grounds of religion. No, Ferneze says, he simply plans to take from the Jews to save Malta. It is for the greater good, Ferneze continues, and Barabas should freely give to save Malta. Plus, it is only money, and Barabas can make more. Nothing comes from nothing, Barabas reminds Ferneze, but one of Ferneze's knights interrupts. "'Tis not our fault," the knight says, "but thy inherent sin." Barabas is furious. He says that Ferneze and his men use scripture to justify their wrongs and then steal from the Jews. Barabas admits that "some Jews are wicked," but he says that "all Christians are [wicked]." Christians condemn Jews for their "sin" and still claim to be righteous.

Here, Barabas blatantly calls Ferneze and the Christians hypocrites. The knight again refers to the Jews' "inherent sin" (Christ's crucifixion), and Barabas points out the Christians' claim to righteousness and the forgiveness of sins. If the Jews truly are responsible for Christ's death, Barabas implies, the Christians should forgive this sin, but they don't. Instead, the Christians marginalize and mistreat the Jews, and then they expect them to willingly give up their fortunes to support the same nation that largely rejects them. In Barabas's estimation, this makes "all Christians" wicked, as compared to only "some Jews."

Ferneze immediately dismisses Barabas, saying that all of Malta knows how Barabas obtained his wealth. If Barabas is truly worried about righteousness, he should go quietly about rebuilding his wealth. "Excess wealth is cause of covetousness," Ferneze says, "And covetousness, oh 'tis a monstrous sin." Barabas insists that stealing is worse, especially since it will only force him to steal to recover his wealth. The knight again interrupts and suggests they also seize Barabas's mansion and turn it into a nunnery. Ferneze agrees, and another officer enters and reports they have secured Barabas's wealth, which is worth more than all of Malta's wealth combined. They have secured the money from the other Jews as well, the officer adds.

Ironically, Ferneze claims that "excess wealth" and "covetousness" is a "monstrous sin," but his men still collect the money from the other Jews even though they have enough from Barabas alone. Malta doesn't need the other Jews' money to pay the tribute, but they take it, which speaks to Malta's corruption, anti-Semitism, and hypocrisy. Turning Barabas's house into a nunnery adds insult to injury—not only does he lose his home; it is now symbolic of the very religion that despises and persecutes him.

Barabas asks Ferneze if he plans to take Barabas's life, too, since Ferneze has taken all his **gold**, but Ferneze claims he would never resort to such violence. This, however, does not comfort Barabas. Poverty is worse than death, and there is nothing left for Abigail. Ferneze tells Barabas that he should feel good about their agreement—it is "right," he says. Ferneze calls his officers and tells them it is time to gather the money for the Turks. Yes, the knight says, they must pay immediately. If they are late, they will "break the league, / And that will prove but simple policy."

Clearly, Barabas values his gold over his life, as he believes that poverty is worse than death. Ferneze's claim that his decision is "right" again underscores his bigotry and highlights his personal manipulation of religion and holy scripture to persecute the Jews. The knight's claim that breaking the league with the Turks would be "simple policy" implies that going back on the deal would be senseless and corrupt, as to do so would be a betrayal and violates the covenant between Malta and Turkey, even if it is a bad deal.

"Ay, policy," Barabas says to the other Jews as Ferneze and his men exit, "That's their profession." The other Jews try to calm Barabas down, but he will not listen to them. They said nothing as Ferneze took his wealth, so Barabas does not want to hear them now. Perhaps Ferneze would not have taken all he did if the others had not given in so easily. The other Jews beg Barabas to "remember Job." Barabas laughs. Job was not nearly as rich as he was. Barabas asks the others to leave him, and they exit.

Barabas says "policy" is Ferneze's "profession" because Ferneze, presumably, regularly resorts to corrupt and dishonest means in the running of Malta. This accusation suggests that Machiavellian tactics are frequently employed in matters of state, even if such corruption is not openly admitted. Job is a biblical figure and prophet to the Gentiles (those who are not Jewish). When the Jews ask Barabas to "remember Job," they are asking him to be patient and tolerant of the Christians, but Barabas refuses and will not lose his money.

As the Jewish men exit, Barabas marvels at how simple they are. Barabas was born to be better than such "common men," and he will not let Ferneze get in his way. Abigail enters in hysterics. She offers to go to the senate-house, cry at their feet, and rip out her hair until they right the wrongs done onto him. Barabas says that there is nothing that can be done, but he does have a large cache of **gold** hidden in the floorboards of his mansion that will go a long way in rebuilding his wealth. Abigail breaks the news that she was kicked out of the house to make room for the nuns. The mansion has been seized, and Barabas will not be permitted back, not even for his personal possessions.

Barabas's belief that he is better than the other Jews because of his wealth underscores the power of money in Maltese (and, by extension, English) society. Barabas is not "common" like the other Jews, he is rich, and he will get his money back no matter what it takes. Barabas's cache of hidden gold again speaks to his greed, and Ferneze's refusal to allow Barabas back in the house and his remorselessness in kicking Abigail out further reflects Ferneze's Machiavellian tactics and suggests corruption is commonplace in matters of state.

Barabas begins to lament his plight and does not know what he has done to deserve such poor treatment. He knows people will expect him to just hang himself, but Barabas refuses to give in at any cost. He turns to Abigail. "We ought to make bar of no policy," Barabas says and tells Abigail to go back to the house and ask to be accepted as a nun, so she can get at the **gold** hidden under the floorboards. "For religion / Hides many mischiefs from suspicion." Abigail resists. Such deceit is not right, she says, but Barabas convinces her. "Counterfeit passion is better / Than unseen hypocrisy," he says.

When Barabas tells Abigail that they "ought to make bar of no policy," he implies that they should employ Machiavellian tactics, too, just like Ferneze and the Maltese government. Barabas's claim that religion "hides many mischiefs from suspicion" harkens to Ferneze's own use of religion to justify his abuse of the Jews, and Barabas asks Abigail to do the same and join the convent under false pretenses. Such deceit, or "counterfeit passion" is not nearly as sinful as Ferneze's religious "hypocrisy," Barabas implies.

As Barabas and Abigail talk, Friars Jacomo and Bernardine pass by with two nuns and the Abbess on their way to the new convent. Abigail stops the Abbess and, claiming to be but "the hopeless daughter of a hapless Jew," asks if she might be admitted to the nunnery. Jacomo looks to Bernardine. Abigail's desire comes from "the spirit," Jacomo says. "Ay, and of a moving spirit too, brother," Bernardine answers. The Abbess agrees to take Abigail to the nunnery, and Barabas feigns anger over Abigail's conversion, sending her out of his sight.

Abigail's claim that she is "the hopeless daughter of a hapless Jew" reflects society's bias, as she expects the Abbess to take pity on her because she is Jewish. This line also mirrors a line from Thomas Kyd's famous play, The Spanish Tragedy, in which the play's protagonist, Hieronimo, claims to be "the hopeless father of a hapless son." Kyd and Marlowe were contemporaries and roommates for a time, and these similar lines underscore the influence the two playwrights clearly had on one another. Bernardine's reference to Abigail's "moving spirit" is vaguely sexual and suggests the friars are interested in Abigail in a sexual way, which violates their priestly vows and exposes the friars' own hypocrisy.

As Abigail and Barabas exit with the Abbess and Friars Jacomo and Bernardine, Don Mathias, a local Christian, enters. He is shocked to see that Barabas's daughter has become a nun. Abigail is better suited for a "lover's arms" than a nunnery, Mathias claims, as Don Lodowick, Ferneze's son, enters behind him. Lodowick asks Mathias why he looks so upset, and Mathias says he has just watched the most beautiful woman—the daughter of Barabas the Jew—become a nun. Lodowick's interest is piqued. If she is really that beautiful, Lodowick says, he and Mathias will go visit her soon. Mathias agrees, and the two men exit.

Both Mathias and Lodowick appear romantically interested in Abigail. Mathias's comment that Abigail is better suited for a "lover's arms" implies that he wants to be that lover, and his disappointment at her religious vows further reflects his feelings for her. Mathias presumably knows Abigail, but Lodowick is only interested in her because he has heard she is beautiful, which suggests he is quite superficial. Mathias and Lodowick appear to be friends, and it is obvious that Mathias is in love with Abigail, yet Lodowick doesn't hesitate to steal Abigail away from his friend, again underscoring the thread of betrayal that runs throughout the play.

ACT 2, SCENE 1

Barabas enters with a light. It is night, and he is creeping around his old mansion in the dark. He cannot believe that he has lost everything, and he again laments his plight and Ferneze's cruelty. The Jews have seen much darkness, Barabas says, and his own world will remain dark until he sees Abigail again. Suddenly, Abigail appears at a window—she has found Barabas's hidden **gold**. "Receive thy happiness," Abigail says as she throws several bags down to Barabas.

Abigail's reference to Barabas's gold as his "happiness" again implies that Barabas values his gold above nearly everything else, except, perhaps, for Abigail. Barabas's claim that his world will be dark until Abigail returns suggests she is the most important thing in his life; however, Barabas easily puts Abigail puts at risk (if she is caught throwing down the gold, she will likely be severely punished), which suggests Barabas's gold is really what matters.

"Oh my girl, / My **gold**, my fortune, my felicity," Barabas cries, holding the bags close to his body, "Oh girl, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my bliss!" Abigail tells Barabas to gather his bags and be gone. The nuns will soon rise for the first prayers of the day, and they will find his presence suspicious. Barabas agrees and blows a kiss to Abigail. As he exits, Barabas asks Apollo to bless Abigail and says, "*Hermoso placer de los dineros* (beautiful pleasure of money)."

As Abigail throws down the gold, Barabas starts out talking about her, but he quickly switches to talking about his gold. In this way, Barabas conflates his love for his daughter with his love for his gold, suggesting that he loves his gold as much, if not more than Abigail. Even Barabas's prayer to Apollo (which is doubly interesting given Barabas's Jewish faith) begins with Abigail but ends with reference to his money.

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Ferneze enters with Martin Del Bosco, the Vice-Admiral of Spain, along with several knights and officers. Bosco claims he has come to Malta on his ship, the Flying Dragon, by order of Spain's "Catholic king." Bosco and his men fought many Grecians and Moors along the way, and they came upon a Turkish fleet near Corsica and destroyed many of their ships. Bosco and his men captured one Turkish ship, killed the captain, and took the men for slaves. Now, they have come to Malta to sell the Turkish slaves at the market.

At the time Marlowe wrote The Jew of Malta, *Spain was overwhelmingly Catholic, and Bosco's mention of Spain's "Catholic king" is meant to appeal to Ferneze and the Maltese as fellow Christians. Most of the Turks are likely Muslim, and Marlowe is subtly pointing out their religious differences.*

Ferneze has heard all about Martin Del Bosco, and he warmly welcomes the Spanish men to Malta. But, Ferneze says, Malta's agreement with the Turks prohibits the selling of Turkish slaves in Malta. Bosco is surprised that Malta is in league with the Turks. He reminds Ferneze of Rhodes, a "Christian isle" that was recently taken over by the Turks. Bosco asks Ferneze how much money Malta owes Selim-Calymath. Ferneze answers 100,000 crowns, and Bosco tells him to keep the money. The King of Spain has the title to Malta, Bosco says, and he will easily fight off the Turks. Malta will be ruled by Bosco, and he promises not to leave until Malta is safe from the Turks.

The island of Malta has been owned by several countries and groups of people throughout history, including the Arabs, Greeks, and the Italians. Here, Marlowe implies that Malta is owned by Spain, regardless of the deal Malta has with the Turks. Bosco again points out their religious differences when he says he is surprised at Malta's deal with the Turks (the Turks are Muslim and Malta is Christian, just like the island of Rhodes). Bosco implies that the Turks will likely take Malta over anyway, so Ferneze is better off to betray their deal, keep the money, and accept Spain's help.

Ferneze immediately agrees and tells Bosco that he may sell his Turkish slaves in Malta. Ferneze then makes Bosco the General of Malta and promises that Malta's knights will follow him in battle against the Turks. "So will we fight it out," Ferneze says as he exits with Bosco and the knights, adding, "Honour is bought with blood and not with **gold**."

Ferneze's decision to let Bosco sell the Turkish slaves again speaks to Ferneze's Machiavellianism. Because it benefits him personally, he allows Bosco to sell the slaves, even though it is morally reprehensible and betrays his covenant with the Turks. Ferneze's claim that honor is bought with blood and not gold again hints at his corruption, as he clearly has no qualms about murder.

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Barabas enters the market, where many slaves are on display with their prices written on their backs. Everyone thinks that Barabas is penniless since Ferneze seized his estate, but the small fortune hidden in the floorboards saved Barabas, and he has come to the market to buy a slave. Barabas again complains about the "swine-eating Christians" who wanted Abigail to become a nun and scoffs. Abigail is at home in Barabas's fancy new mansion (which is just as luxurious as Ferneze's house), and she is still Jewish.

Barabas's remark about the "swine-eating Christians" implies that he despises the Christians as much as they hate him, and it further underscores their religious strife. The price of the slaves clearly marked on their backs is a strong visual that speaks to the value of money in relation to human life. Not every slave is worth the same amount, which creates a hierarchy even within the slaves themselves and contributes to the obvious social inequality in Maltese society.

Barabas swears revenge against Ferneze and his son, Don Lodowick. Barabas is not capable of forgetting the slight of Ferneze's theft. He says that "Jews can fawn like spaniels" when they want to—he learned long ago to let it go when people called him a "dog"—but he will have his revenge. As Barabas rants, he sees Lodowick enter the market. Lodowick heard that Barabas was there, and he is hoping to catch a glimpse of Abigail and see if she is as beautiful as Mathias claims. As Lodowick approaches, Barabas quietly says that he will now prove himself "to have more of the serpent than the / dove; that is, more knave than fool."

Barabas swears revenge on Lodowick simply because he is Ferneze's son, which underscores Barabas's desire for revenge and the corruption and immorality that underpin his character. Lodowick has nothing to do with Ferneze's theft of the Jews' money, yet Barabas considers Lodowick guilty by association. Barabas's comment that Jews can "fawn like spaniels" reflects anti-Semitic opinions that the Jews are no better than dogs and suggests that Barabas has internalized this hateful bias, as he easily slips into a submissive role when he suits him. Barabas's claim that he will prove himself to be "more knave than fool" implies he has a plan and is actively scheming to get his revenge.

Lodowick asks Barabas where he is going, and Barabas answers that he is going nowhere now. Barabas claims it is "a custom held with us" to stop and "turn into the air to purge ourselves" when a "Gentile" speaks. Lodowick ignores Barabas's comment and asks if Barabas can help him find a diamond. Barabas claims that Ferneze has all his diamonds; the only diamond Barabas has left is his daughter, Abigail. (In an aside, Barabas says that he would rather see Abigail dead than with Lodowick.) Lodowick asks if Barabas's "diamond" sparkles "without a foil," and Barabas assures him that the diamond has never been "foiled." Lodowick then asks if the diamond is "square or pointed," and Barabas says it is "pointed," but in another aside Barabas adds, "but not for you."

A Gentile is someone who is not Jewish, and Barabas's claim that it is a Jewish custom to purge one's self after speaking with a Gentile further underscores the hate Barabas feels for Christians. Barabas implies that speaking to a Christian somehow taints him as a Jew, and he must "purge" the negative presence immediately. Lodowick and Barabas's mention of a "diamond" is clearly about Abigail, and this association again conflates Barabas's daughter with his wealth. Lodowick asks if Abigail's beauty needs a "foil" (something of lesser beauty to enhance her own), and Barabas claims that she has never been "foiled," which is to say that she is still a virgin and is therefore chaste and pure—and therefore worth more. Lodowick asks if the "diamond" (Abigail) is "pointed," which is his way of asking if Abigail is promised to anyone. Barabas implies that she is indeed promised to Lodowick, but his quick aside obviously suggests otherwise.

Barabas points to a Turkish slave and notes the price of 200 crowns. Barabas wonders if Turks are worth that much, and Lodowick notes a Moor worth 200 silver coins. Barabas asks why the Turk is worth more than the Moor and is told that the Turk is younger and in better shape. Barabas asks if the Turkish slave is in possession of the Philosopher's Stone, and the young Turk assures him that he is not. Barabas decides that he will have a slave who is skinny and "sickly," so it will cost less to feed and keep him.

Clearly, Barabas does not think the slaves are worth their price. He asks if the Turk worth 200 crowns is in possession of the Philosopher's Stone (an alchemical substance that can turn base metals to gold) because that is the only way Barabas believes the Turk is worth so much money. His decision to buy a "sickly" slave who costs less to feed again speaks to Barabas's greed and implies he values his wealth over human life.

Barabas is shown a skinny slave named Ithamore, who comes from Arabia. Barabas pays 100 crowns and marks Itahamore's price on his back. Then, Barabas turns to Lodowick and tells him to come and visit soon. They will talk about the "diamond," Barabas says. As Lodowick exits, Mathias enters the market with his mother, Katherine. Mathias wonders what business Lodowick has with Barabas and worries that it might be about Abigail. Barabas watches Mathias enter. He knows that Mathias and Abigail love one another, but Barabas must "frustrate both their hopes" to get his revenge on Ferneze.

Barabas marks Ithamore's price on his back so there is no confusion as to the slave's personal worth. Moreover, Barabas clearly values his revenge more than Abigail. He knows that Abigail loves Mathias, but Barabas is willing to "frustrate" and sacrifice this love to exact his revenge. This implies that Barabas's money is more important to him than Abigail is, and it further showcases his greed and despicable Machiavellian nature.

Katherine and Mathias inspect the slaves for sale, and Mathias pretends not to know Barabas. Then, Mathias quietly asks Barabas why he was talking to Lodowick, but Barabas tells him not to worry. They were talking about "diamonds," Barabas says, "not of Abigail." Katherine notices the hushed conversation and asks Mathias if he is talking to a "Jew." Mathias admits he is, but he tells his mother they are talking about a book Mathias wants to borrow. Katherine forbids Mathias to talk to Barabas. "He is cast off from heaven," she says. Katherine and Mathias pay for their slave and exit.

Obviously, Barabas is lying and wants Mathias to think that he still has a chance with Abigail, even though Barabas has already promised her to Lodowick. This is yet another example of betrayal within the play, as Barabas makes a deal with both Mathias and Lodowick only to go back on his word. Katherine's obvious distaste for the Jewish community (she, too, believes Jews are responsible for Christ's crucifixion and are "cast off from heaven") again reflects Malta's anti-Semitic society. Marlowe's targeted audience likely would have sympathized with Katherine, which also underscores the bias of broader English society in the 1500s.

Barabas asks Ithamore about his birth and profession. Ithamore says he is of low birth, and he claims that his profession is whatever Barabas wants. In that case, Barabas says, he will teach Ithamore his "trade." First, Ithamore must be devoid of "compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear," and he must "smile when the Christians moan." Ithamore is excited by Barabas's words. "Oh brave, master, I worship your **nose** for this," Ithamore says. Barabas next tells Ithamore a bit about himself. Barabas likes to take late-night walks, murder sick people, and poison wells. When Barabas was young, he studied medicine and killed many people with his potions. Since then, he has been "extorting, cozening, [and] forfeiting" countless people into bankruptcy and debtors' prison. Local hospitals are littered with the orphans of Barabas's victims, and some have even committed suicide in their grief, but Barabas just smiles at their pain.

Barabas's "trade" is clearly Machiavellian deviousness, which is why Ithamore must lack all compassion and empathy to take part in it. Barabas is not only a greedy and deceitful cheat, he is also murderous. He kills indiscriminately, but he especially hates Christians and revels in their pain. As a Turk, Ithamore is likely Muslim, and he clearly hates the Christians as well. He tells Barabas he worships his "nose" for his execution of Christians, which is a reference to Barabas's enormous nose and the offensive stereotype that all Jews have large, hook noses.

Ithamore next tells Barabas about himself. He enjoys burning down Christian villages, cutting the throats of Christian travelers, and crippling Christians on pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Barabas can't believe his luck. "We are villains both," he says. "Both circumcisèd, we hate Christians both." Don Lodowick again enters the market, asking Barabas where the "diamond" is that he promised. Barabas guides Lodowick to his mansion and yells for Abigail to open the door. Abigail appears, and Barabas tells her "entertain" Lodowick. In an aside, Barabas quietly tells her to treat Lodowick like a "Philistine"—promise to love him but remember that he does not come from "the seed of Abraham."

Clearly, Ithamore hates the Christians as a Muslim just as much as Barabas hates them as a Jew (and he is just as wicked as Barabas), which further underscores religious strife in the play, and Barabas's language reflects this hatred. Circumcision (the removal of the foreskin of the penis soon after birth) is a religious practice often observed in Judaism and Islam but often not performed in Christianity. Again, Lodowick's reference to the "diamond" is code for Abigail, and Barabas wants Abigail to "entertain" Lodowick (pretend to love him as part of Barabas's revenge scheme) even though Lodowick is a "Philistine" and doesn't come from "the seed of Abraham" (i.e. he isn't Jewish).

Abigail is reluctant and reminds Barabas that she loves Mathias. Of course, Barabas says, promising Abigail that she will have Mathias. But for now, Barabas needs her to distract Lodowick for a bit. She agrees and exits with Lodowick. Alone, Barabas celebrates his scheming. Lodowick will soon kiss Abigail and fall in love with her, and then Lodowick and Mathias will kill each other, and Barabas's revenge on Ferneze will be complete. Suddenly, Mathias enters, and Barabas asks him to stop and visit.

This passage again underscores Barabas's desire for revenge and the lengths he will go to have it. Barabas knows that Abigail loves Mathias, yet Barabas hopes his plan will end in Lodowick and Mathias's deaths, which will surely break Abigail's heart and rob her of her happiness. Barabas doesn't think twice about sacrificing Abigail's happiness in the name of his revenge, which again highlights his Machiavellian deviousness and suggests that Barabas's love for his gold is greater than his love for Abigail.

Mathias immediately asks where Abigail is, and Barabas answers by telling Mathias how he intends for Abigail to marry him. Yes, Mathias says, "or else thou wrong'st me much." Barabas begins to cry and tells Mathias that Lodowick has been pursing Abigail behind Mathias's back, sending her letters and gifts. Abigail sends them back and locks the door, but Lodowick persists. Now, Barabas is sure Abigail is somewhere with Lodowick. Mathias draws his sword and swears he will kill Lodowick. Barabas stops him. Please, Barabas begs. "If you love me, no quarrels in my house." Then, Lodowick and Abigail appear holding hands. Mathias promises (with much difficulty) not to kill Lodowick—not now, at least—and exits.

Mathias's claim that Barabas will "wrong'st [him] much" if Barabas doesn't allow Abigail to marry him implies that Barabas has already promised him Abigail's hand, and Barabas obviously doesn't have a problem going back on that promise and betraying Mathias and *Abigail. Here, Barabas puts on quite the act to convince Mathias that Lodowick and Abigail are in a relationship behind his back, and Mathias easily takes the bait. Barabas's plea that Mathias will not fight in his house if Mathias "loves [him]" is certainly ironic. Clearly, Barabas loves only himself and his gold, and he will sacrifice anyone for his wealth and revenge.*

Lodowick and Abigail approach, and Lodowick asks if that was Mathias he saw leaving. Barabas confirms it was and informs Lodowick that Mathias has sworn an oath to kill him. Lodowick can't imagine why his friend would want to kill him, and Barabas informs him that Mathias is angry over Abigail. Lodowick turns to Abigail and asks if she loves Mathias. Barabas tells Lodowick to look to Abigail's smile for her answer. Abigail smiles at Lodowick, but in an aside, she admits that she does love Mathias and is smiling "against [her] will." Lodowick can no longer contain his affection and asks Barabas if he will have his "diamond." Barabas says Lodowick will (the "diamond" is "unsoiled," he adds), unless Ferneze will object to his son marrying a Jewish girl—even a rich one.

Barabas's machinations are on full display here. While it may be true that Mathias wants to kill Lodowick, this is only because of Barabas's scheming, and Barabas's continued conniving ensures that Lodowick feels the same way. Abigail smiles "against [her] will" despite her love for Mathias, which suggests she will do anything for her father, who clearly doesn't care about her. When Lodowick asks outright if he will have Abigail (his "diamond"), Barabas again reminds him that she is "unsoiled," or pure and virginal, which presumably makes her worth more money. Of course Ferneze will object to his son marrying a Jew (he thinks the Jews are damned), but it doesn't matter, since Barabas knows that Abigail will never marry Lodowick.

Lodowick assures Barabas that he is interested in Abigail, not Barabas's money, and needs only Barabas's consent to marry her. In another aside, Abigail asks Barabas if she must really agree to marry Lodowick. Barabas tells her it is just a farce; she doesn't really have to marry him. "It is no sin to deceive a Christian," Barabas says. Abigail begins to cry, and Lodowick asks if she is alright. Of course, Barabas says, claiming it is a Jewish custom for newly betrothed maidens to weep. Mathias again enters, and Lodowick vows revenge before he exits.

Clearly, Abigail isn't alright, but her misery has little effect on Barabas's scheming, and he continues with his plan despite the pain it is causing his daughter. Barabas's claim that is not a sin to deceive Christians again speaks to the play's religious strife and hypocrisy. It is a sin to deceive anyone, but the religious bias and hate runs so deep in Marlowe's play, and so it goes, in 16th-century English society, that this fact is lost.

Mathias begs Barabas to let him kill Lodowick, but Barabas again tells Mathias to stand down. Mathias can exact his revenge later, Barabas suggests, and Mathias agrees. Barabas again promises that Abigail will marry Mathias, but he says that Lodowick has gone to tell Mathias's mother, Katherine, that Mathias is in love with Abigail. "She'll die with grief," Mathias says and exits.

Like Barabas, Mathias is intent on revenge, which suggests that betrayal and revenge go hand in hand. Of course, Lodowick is not on his way to visit Katherine (this is simply more of Barabas's machinations), but the implication here is that Mathias's mother will "die with grief" because her son is in love with a Jewish girl, which further highlights anti-Semitism and hate.

Alone with Barabas and Ithamore, Abigail promises that she will make Mathias and Lodowick friends again, and that she will have Mathias as her love. Barabas ignores her and tells Ithamore to lock her back in the house. After Ithamore locks Abigail away, Barabas asks Ithamore if he is enjoying himself. Ithamore admits that he is, and that he is impressed with Barabas's scheming. Barabas gives Ithamore a letter and tells him to deliver it to Mathias and claim it is from Lodowick. The letter is a fake challenge from Lodowick to Mathias, and it is sure to turn them against each other.

Again, Barabas is hoping that Lodowick and Mathias will kill each other in a duel, and his forged letter ensures this battle. Notably, Barabas ignores Abigail and locks her in the house, which again suggests that Barabas doesn't love his daughter or respect her in the least. He claims to love her most, but he uses her as a pawn in his revenge scheme, and he refers to her as a material asset worth only what a prospective husband is willing to pay.

ACT 3, SCENE 1

Bellamira, a local prostitute, enters and laments the state of her business since the Turkish fleet has blocked Malta's port. The decreased traffic has forced Bellamira to be "chaste" "against [her] will," but she is certain that her beauty will not fail her. Pilia-Borza, a thief who often works with Bellamira, enters and hands her a bag of money. Bellamira is disappointed to find the bag full of silver, but Pilia-Borza promises her "the Jew" has plenty of **gold**. Pilia-Borza broke into Barabas's counting-house while out walking the night before. A sound scared Pilia-Borza away, and he was only able to grab the silver, but he will go back and get the gold.

Bellamira is "chaste" "against [her] will" because the Turkish fleet has stopped any ships from leaving or entering Malta, and without sailors and merchants, Bellamira's business as a prostitute is sparse. Like Barabas, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza are both dishonest and conniving, and they have set their sights on Barabas's gold. The criminal pair is also greedy like Barabas, and they aren't satisfied with a bag of silver coins when they know Barabas has piles of gold for the taking.

Pilia-Borza sees Ithamore approach and tells Bellamira not to look at the slave. Bellamira and Pilia-Borza rush off, but not before Ithamore notices Bellamira's beauty. Ithamore can tell that the woman is a prostitute by the way she is dressed, but Ithamore doesn't care. He would pay 100 of Barabas's crowns to win her love. As Ithamore marvels at Bellamira's beauty, he mentions that he has delivered the letter to Mathias. Now, all that is left to do is wait for Mathias and Lodowick to kill each other.

Not unlike the slaves at the market, Ithamore places a value on human life and determines Bellamira to be worth 100 crowns. Of course, Ithamore doesn't have any money, so he offers Barabas's, which suggests Ithamore doesn't have a problem taking Barabas's money either. Furthermore, Ithamore is clearly comfortable taking part in Barabas's conniving and Machiavellian schemes.

ACT 3, SCENE 2

Mathias enters, followed by Lodowick, who is reading a letter. Lodowick grows angry as he reads and asks what wicked man has dared to write such a letter. Mathias claims he wrote the letter and wants his revenge. The two men draw their swords and fight, as Barabas watches quietly from above. He rejoices as Lodowick and Mathias stab each other and fall to the ground dead. Barabas bids them farewell and exits.

Here, Lodowick is reading a letter, even though Ithamore specifically said he delivered a letter to Mathias. However, the original text, according to scholars, is doubtful and difficult to read, and some scholars argue the original publisher may have attributed the lines incorrectly. Either way, Barabas's machinations were successful, and his revenge is underway.

Ferneze and Katherine rush in, along with a group of citizens, and find Lodowick and Mathias dead. Ferneze and Katherine are distraught, and they both swear to avenge their respective sons' deaths. Katherine and Ferneze look to each other for revenge, but then they remember that their sons loved each other. Someone must have turned Mathias and Lodowick into enemies, Katherine says. She suggests they find the culprit and seek vengeance there. Ferneze agrees. In the meantime, he will have Lodowick and Mathias entombed in a single monument and visit them daily until the offender is revealed. Ferneze and Katherine exit with the bodies of their sons and their mutual grief.

Both Katherine and Ferneze want revenge as well, which again suggests that betrayal and revenge go hand in hand. For Katherine and Ferneze, revenge is justice, and following the deaths of their sons, revenge is their chief concern. Notably, Ferneze promises to entomb the men together and visit their monument daily until *the offender is found. This distinction implies that Ferneze will stop visiting after he gets revenge, further underscoring the importance of payback in the play.*

ACT 3, SCENE 3

Abigail enters with Ithamore, who is laughing. Abigail asks what is so funny, and Ithamore says he is laughing at Barabas and his "bravest policy." Abigail asks what he is talking about, and Ithamore says he is speaking of the mishap between Mathias and Lodowick. Barabas forged a challenge, Ithamore excitedly tells Abigail. Ithamore delivered that challenge, and now both Mathias and Lodowick are dead. Abigail is shocked. She asks if her father is really to blame, and Ithamore confirms he is. Abigail orders Ithamore to the nunnery to fetch her a friar, but before he goes, Ithamore asks her if the nuns ever have "fine sport with the friars." Abigail ignores his question, and Ithamore exits.

Ithamore says Barabas has the "bravest policy," meaning Ithamore believes that Barabas's schemes are admirable, which further highlights Ithamore's own Machiavellian tendencies. Ithamore praises Barabas and laughs as men die and Abigail mourns. The reference to "fine sport" is Ithamore's way of asking if the nuns have sex with the friars, an accusation that is made repeatedly throughout the play that again underscores the religious hypocrisy that pervades the play. The nuns and friars both take a vow of chastity, yet Marlowe suggests this vow is often ignored.

Alone, Abigail laments Barabas and his "policy." She admits that Barabas has every right to hate Lodowick for the "sin" of being Ferneze's son, but Mathias has done nothing to deserve such treatment. Abigail feels as if her father has killed her, too, and she cries that there is no love left in the world. Ithamore enters with Friar Jacomo, interrupting Abigail's dirges. She dismisses Ithamore and wastes no time telling Jacomo that she wishes to be admitted to the convent as a nun.

Again, Barabas's "policy" is a reference to his Machiavellian scheming and machinations. Abigail laments Mathias's death because of her love for him, but she admits her father had the right to hate Lodowick simply for being Ferneze's son. While Abigail certainly struggles with her morals throughout the play, her contention that Lodowick deserved to die suggests she isn't so moral after all.

Jacomo is confused, especially since Abigail only recently decided that the nunnery was not for her. Yes, Abigail says, but certain events have caused her to see things differently, and now she is convinced the nunnery is the place for her. Jacomo asks what is weighing so heavily on her soul, and Abigail says that it is "[her] father's fault." Jacomo asks how Barabas can possibly be to blame, but Abigail refuses to give him any details. In an aside, Abigail admits that her father does not deserve her loyalty, but she will never betray him, and Jacomo leads her off to the nunnery.

Abigail takes zero responsibility for her own role in Lodowick and Mathias's deaths. She blames only Barabas, but at any time, Abigail could have refused to play along with her father's schemes. Of course, Abigail's willingness to obey her father is another sign of her loyalty to him, which she will not break even after he has betrayed her so badly and engineered the death of her love.

ACT 3, SCENE 4

Barabas enters, reading a letter from Abigail. He is shocked that his daughter has joined the convent, and now she expects him to atone, too. Barabas worries that Abigail knows about his involvement in Mathias and Lodowick's deaths, for it certainly appears as if she does not love Barabas anymore. Ithamore suddenly enters and interrupts Barabas. "Come near my love," Barabas says to Ithamore, "my second life." He asks Ithamore when he last saw Abigail, and Ithamore claims he saw her earlier in the day with Friar Jacomo.

Clearly, Barabas views Abigail joining the nunnery as a betrayal of him and, presumably, their Jewish faith, even though Barabas doesn't actually observe his faith in any real way. Now that Barabas considers Abigail lost to the Christians, he speaks to Ithamore as his "love" and "second life." Ithamore quickly moves into Abigail's place in Barabas's heart, which reflects how shallow Barabas really is and again suggests he never really loved his daughter like he claimed to.

Barabas is certain that Jacomo is to blame for Abigail's conversion. Abigail has definitely joined the convent, Ithamore confirms, but she sent for the friar herself. "False, credulous, inconstant Abigail!" Barabas cries. He claims his daughter is a "disgrace," and he swears that she will never inherit a trace of his wealth. Barabas vows that she will die by his "bitter curse," just "like Cain by Adam, for his brother's death."

Barabas's love for Abigail is conditional, as evidenced by his claim that she is "inconstant" and a "disgrace" for joining the convent. Still, Barabas's thoughts go immediately to his money, which again reflects his greed and overwhelming love for his gold. Notably, Cain was cursed by God, not Adam. Barabas's mistake here again reveals his religious hypocrisy, as he doesn't appear to know the Bible well.

Ithamore tries to interrupt Barabas's rant, but Barabas doesn't listen and tells Ithamore not to defend Abigail. Barabas further says that he could not stand it if Ithamore hated him like Abigail clearly does, but Ithamore promises complete devotion to Barabas and says he would do anything for his master. Barabas says that Ithamore is his only friend, and he promises that Ithamore will inherit all his wealth upon his death. Until then, Barabas says that Ithamore is welcome to half of all that he has, offering him new clothes and the keys to his house. But first, Ithamore must fetch Barabas a pot of rice. Ithamore agrees and exits.

While Barabas swears his love to Ithamore and claims that Ithamore can have all that he has, Barabas doesn't actually give him anything. Likely, Barabas's love for Ithamore is just another Machiavellian scheme to recover his lost wealth and exact his revenge. Barabas complains that Abigail hates him, but he refuses to take responsibility for why she likely hates him (he essentially murdered her love), which again reveals Barabas's deceitfulness and despicable nature.

Ithamore soon returns with a pot of rice, and Barabas tells him that he will soon witness Abigail's death and become Barabas's only heir. Ithamore is excited to hear it and asks if Barabas plans to poison the rice. Yes, Barabas says, with a special powder he bought from an Italian port. The poison is strong, but it takes 40 hours to take effect. Barabas says that Ithamore is to take the pot of rice to the nunnery and drop it off as alms. Ithamore must be careful not to be seen, Barabas says, dropping in the poison. Ithamore immediately agrees, but Barabas tells him to slow down and let him stir. The rice will be fatal, Barabas says, like that "which great Alexander drunk," or "like Borgia's wine."

Barabas's likens his poison to that which killed Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) and Cesare Borgia (1475-1507), who were both reportedly poisoned to death. Barabas tells Ithamore to slow down, as if Barabas wants to relish the process of killing his daughter and an entire convent of nuns. This kind of cruelty and hate makes it difficult for the reader to sympathize with Barabas. As Marlowe's play is a tragedy, the reader can assume that Barabas will likely meet some tragic end, but it is impossible to feel sorry for Barabas after proving himself such a despicable human being.

Barabas hands the poisoned rice to Ithamore and tells him to hurry back after he has dropped it at the convent; Barabas has more work for Ithamore to do. Ithamore agrees and hurries off. As Ithamore exits, he says that Barabas may pay him later. Once Ithamore is gone, Barabas says that he plans to pay Ithamore "with a vengeance."

At this point, Barabas has no reason to seek vengeance against Ithamore, since Ithamore is yet to betray him. Still, Barabas appears completely obsessed with thoughts of revenge, which suggests that vengeance is a slippery slope. Barabas begins only seeking revenge against Ferneze, but now he is seeking revenge against Abigail, the Christian convent, and Ithamore.

ACT 3, SCENE 5

Ferneze enters with Martin Del Bosco, several knights, and a Turkish bashaw. Ferneze warmly welcomes the bashaw and asks what brings him to Malta. "The wind that bloweth all the world besides, / Desire of **gold**," the bashaw answers. Ferneze pretends not to know what the bashaw is talking about. There are no gold mines in Malta, Ferneze says, the bashaw will have to go to India for that. The bashaw corrects Ferneze and says that he was sent by Selim-Calymath to collect the tribute money. Ferneze's 30-day grace period is over.

Of course Ferneze knows that the bashaw has come to collect the tribute money, he is simply stalling because he has no intention of paying and plans to betray the deal Malta has with the Turks. The bashaw's claim that "desire of gold" is the wind that blows "all the world" certainly seems to be true in The Jew of Malta, *yet Marlowe also implies that such unbridled greed does not pay and often leads to loss and pain.*

Ferneze promptly informs the bashaw that he will not pay the tribute money to Selim-Calymath and the Turkish Empire. Furthermore, Ferneze says, the "heathens" are not welcome in Malta, and he expects them to exit the port so Malta's merchants can return to their business. Very well, the bashaw says. Since Ferneze has broken the league and refuses to pay the tribute, he can expect Selim-Calymath himself to come and destroy Malta. The bashaw bids Ferneze goodbye and exits. Ferneze turns to the knights and tells them to ready the men of Malta. They will welcome Calymath and his war.

Ferneze is obviously talking about the Turks when he says the "heathens" are not welcome in Malta, which is likely a dig at the Turks' Muslim identities. As a Christian island, Malta views the Muslim Turks as outsiders (just as they view the Jews), which further highlights religious strife in the play and reveals the Christians' hypocrisy. As Barabas points out earlier, it is a Christian mantra to forgive and have tolerance, and the Maltese Christians observe neither.

ACT 3, SCENE 6

Jacomo and Bernardine enter. Jacomo says that all the nuns are sick, and no medicine will help. The nuns will surely die, he claims. Bernardine says the Abbess has just sent for him to hear her confession. "Oh, what a sad confession will there be!" Bernardine cries. Jacomo quickly exits, on his way to hear another nun's confession, and Abigail enters. She tells Bernardine that all the other nuns are dead and that she will soon be dead, too. Abigail claims that she has lived righteously since coming to the convent, but she did sin terribly before, and now she needs Bernardine to hear her confession.

The Abbess's "sad confession" is ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways. Her final confession may be "sad" because she is a nun and is therefore pure with very little to confess; or, the nun's confession is "sad" because she has many sins to confess—beginning with the sexual relationships with the friars that Marlowe keeps alluding to. Abigail's final confession, too, appears hypocritical. She has been a nun for mere days yet claims to be righteous.

Abigail asks Bernardine if he knows Mathias and Lodowick, and Bernardine says he does. She reveals that Barabas promised her to both Mathias and Lodowick, even though she never loved Lodowick and only wanted Mathias. It was because of Barabas's scheming that Mathias and Lodowick turned against each other, Abigail admits, and it is because of Barabas that the two men are dead. Bernardine curses Barabas's wickedness, and Abigail begs Bernardine not to tell her father. Bernardine reassures Abigail that "canon law forbids" him to reveal someone's confession, and she is glad to hear it. She asks Bernardine to save Barabas and convert him, and then she dies.

Abigail's belief that Bernardine can absolve her of her sins seems a bit misguided, especially since Marlowe has already established the church in Malta to be largely hypocritical. The "canon law" that forbids Bernardine from revealing Abigail's confession is known as the Seal of Confession, and it is one of a Catholic priest's most sacred vows. The confessional seal cannot be broken for any reason, and any priest who may overhear another's confession is also bound by this same seal. In short, a priest can never utter any part of a confession at any time, to anyone, for any reason.

Bernardine looks at Abigail's dead body and is disappointed that she died a virgin, but he is excited to find Barabas "and make him stand in fear of [Bernardine]." Jacomo enters and tells Bernardine that all the nuns are dead and that they must bury them. Bernardine suggests they bury Abigail first, and then Jacomo can help him find Barabas. Jacomo asks what Barabas has done, and Bernardine says he has something done something terrible. Jacomo asks if Barabas killed a child, but Bernardine says it is much worse. "'Twas told to me in shrift," Bernadine says. "Come let's away." The two friars grab Abigail's body and exit.

"Shrift" is another word for confession, and while Marlowe doesn't explicitly state it here, it is implied that Bernardine tells Jacomo all about Abigail's confession. Bernardine can't wait to find Barabas and "make him stand in fear of [him]," meaning Bernardine is planning to use Abigail's confession for his own benefit to blackmail Barabas in some way. Again, Bernardine is a complete hypocrite. He ignores his priestly vows when it suits him, which is also reflected in his disappointment that Abigail died a virgin. As a priest, Bernardine should be celibate, but he doesn't appear to be.

ACT 4, SCENE 1

Barabas and Ithamore enter to the sounds of funeral bells. Barabas rejoices that the nuns are dead and admits that he was worried his poison would not work. Every year the nuns "swell" but still live, and now they are all dead. Ithamore worries that they will be caught, but Barabas says it is impossible. No one knows what they have done, and if Ithamore talks, Barabas says he will slit Ithamore's throat. Ithamore suggests they poisons all the monks next, and Barabas tells him to slow down.

Barabas's claim that the nuns "swell" each year is another dig at the nuns' supposed celibacy. He claims the nuns "swell" because they are frequently pregnant, an accusation that again underscores religious hypocrisy in the play, and therefore in English society as well. Christian nuns claim purity and piety by way of their profession, yet Marlowe suggests the nuns aren't so pure.

Ithamore asks Barabas if he feels any grief over Abigail's death, and Barabas quickly says no. He is only sad that she lived as a Christian. Barabas claims to smell Jacomo and Bernardine as they enter. "God-a-mercy **nose**," Ithamore says and suggests they leave, but the two friars are already upon them, calling Barabas a "wicked Jew" and telling him he is "damned." Barabas tells Ithamore that the friars must know about the poisoned rice and have come to expose them.

Again, Barabas is a cold and calculating man devoid of any love or compassion, and his absence of grief over Abigail's death further reflects this. Barabas's claim to smell the friars coming and Ithamore's thankfulness for Barabas's huge nose again reflects the common anti-Semitic stereotype that all Jews have big noses. Jacomo and Bernardine's claim that Barabas is a "wicked" and "damned" Jew also reflects this hate. Barabas is wicked and damned because he is a deceitful murderer, but the friars imply he is damned because he is Jewish.

Bernardine and Jacomo begin talking at once and Barabas keeps interrupting them. When the friars mention Abigail, Barabas orders them not to speak of her. The men then tell Barabas that they know he is guilty. Of "fornication?" Barabas asks. He admits to the sin but says it happened far away and the woman is long dead. Bernardine next asks Barabas if he remembers Lodowick and Mathias, and when Barabas says he does, Bernardine says they died because of a false letter.

Barabas tells the friars not to speak of Abigail because he has disowned her, even in her death. Barabas views Abigail's conversion as a betrayal, and one he likely won't forget. Barabas mentions sex ("fornication") because he believes the friars are guilty of the same sin, again underscoring the priests' religious hypocrisy.

Barabas immediately knows that Abigail exposed him in a confession to Bernardine, so Barabas quickly changes his tactics. "Oh holy friars," Barabas says to Bernardine and Jacomo. Barabas asks if it is too late to convert to Christianity and unburden his soul of his sins. He admits that he has sinned as a Jew, and he is ready to repent. He wants to pray on his knees in Jerusalem, and he is willing to give his entire fortune to the church who accepts and baptizes him.

Barabas doesn't mean anything he says here—it is simply part of his Machiavellian machinations. He knows the friars can bury him with Abigail's confession, so he is trying to get on their good side by claiming he wants to convert. He addresses the men as "holy friars," but this is clearly sarcasm, since Barabas doesn't believe the men to be holy at all.

Jacomo and Bernardine immediately begin to bicker over Barabas. "Oh good Barabas come to our house," Jacomo says. "Oh no, good Barabas, come to our house," Bernardine says. Soon the friars are physically fighting over Barabas, and Ithamore begs Barabas to stop them. Barabas tells Bernardine that he will join his church and orders him to go with Ithamore and leave Barabas with Jacomo. Alone with Jacomo, Barabas tells him that he really plans to join Jacomo's church. Jacomo is glad to hear it, and before he exits, he promises to come back later.

Jacomo and Bernardine's fight again underscores their religious hypocrisy. They reject and condemn Barabas as a Jew, but they accept him as a Christian because he is rich and comes with a lot of gold, which also reveals their greed. They care little about converting Barabas and bringing him to Christianity—they are more interested in his money. Of course, their disagreement is moot, since Barabas doesn't really plan to convert.

Alone, Barabas hatches a plan to kill both Bernardine and Jacomo. Abigail clearly exposed Barabas's involvement in Mathias and Lodowick's deaths in her confession to Bernardine, and Jacomo knows all about it. Therefore, Barabas says, both men pose a threat and must die. Ithamore enters and says that Bernardine is sleeping in the next room, and no one will be able to hear him if he cries for help. Barabas orders Ithamore to remove his belt and fashion it into a noose, then they go into the room where Bernardine sleeps.

Again, Barabas is a cold and calculating man who kills indiscriminately without hesitation, and Ithamore is no better. In a span of days, Barabas has been responsible for the deaths of Lodowick, Mathias, Abigail, and countless nuns, and he is planning to add the friars to his list. What began as Barabas's revenge against Ferneze has become a killing spree, which further highlights the slippery slope of revenge.

Barabas and Ithamore wake Bernardine, and he knows instantly that the men mean to strangle him. "What, will you have my life?" Bernardine asks. Yes, Barabas says, "you would have had my goods." After killing Bernardine, Barabas and Ithamore prop Bernardine up on his staff, and leave him standing there for Jacomo to find.

Here, Barabas equates his wealth with Bernardine's life. As Bernardine was going to take Barabas's gold upon his conversion, Barabas feels justified in taking Bernardine's life and considers it a fair trade, further highlighting Barabas's greed.

Jacomo enters soon after and finds Bernardine standing alone in the dark. Seizing the opportunity to eliminate his competition and obtain Barabas's wealth, Jacomo grabs the staff and hits Bernardine over the head. Barabas and Ithamore rush in, and Barabas declares that Jacomo has murdered Bernardine. Jacomo swears he killed Bernardine in self-defense, and since no one knows but Barabas and Ithamore, Jacomo begs them to let him go. Barabas refuses; it would be a sin to ignore the law and withhold evidence in a crime.

This passage, too, underscores religious hypocrisy within the play, as well as Barabas's Machiavellian machinations. Jacomo is a priest, yet he still plots theft and murder. (He is unsuccessful on both accounts, but the intention is still there.) Barabas's claim that it would be a sin to ignore the law and withhold evidence is certainly ironic, since Barabas clearly doesn't care about the law.

Ithamore asks Barabas if he is still interested in converting to Christianity, since it appears to be a religion filled with murderous friars, and Barabas says Ithamore has a good point. Barabas tells Jacomo that he will remain a Jew after all, and then he tells Ithamore to take Jacomo to the court, which will be in session tomorrow. As the men exit, Jacomo yells at Ithamore not to touch him. "I am a sacred person," Jacomo cries.

Jacomo's claim that he is "a sacred person" again reveals his hypocrisy: he claims piety and the moral high ground, yet he easily schemes and sins. In this way, Marlowe not only questions the piety of the Catholics (and other religions as well), he suggests that everyone—even priests—are capable of Machiavellianism.

ACT 4, SCENE 2

Bellamira and Pilia-Borza enter, and Bellamira asks if he delivered the letter to Ithamore. Pilia-Borza confirms he did, and she asks if he thinks Ithamore will come. Pilia-Borza thinks so, but he can't be sure, and he adds that Ithamore is a fool if he ignores a woman as beautiful as Bellamira. She asks where Pilia-Borza met Ithamore, and he says he found Ithamore down by the gallows, where he was watching a friar hang.

Bellamira and Pilia-Borza are scheming, too, which further illustrates how common Machiavellianism is in the world of the play and how frequently people rely on immoral tactics for personal gain. Bellamira and Pilia-Borza are clearly setting a trap for Ithamore.

Ithamore enters, talking about Jacomo's death. The friar was unexpectedly calm during the execution, and after his prayers, he practically jumped off the platform, his arms spread like a bird. A strange man with a mustache gave Ithamore a letter from the beautiful Bellamira, but Ithamore can't imagine what she sees in him, a lowly slave. She claims to love him, but as Ithamore approaches her house, he says that he is "not worthy to look upon her."

This passage again brings up the idea of people's worth. Ithamore, a mere slave, is "not worthy" of a woman as beautiful and Bellamira, which further underscores inequality in the play and in English society. Jacomo is calm during his execution, which suggests he has atoned for his sins and expects to be forgiven and go to heaven, but Marlowe implies this is doubtful.

As Ithamore approaches, Bellamira warmly welcomes him, calling him her "sweet love." Ithamore is suddenly worried about the way he looks and if he is clean enough, so he plans to steal some money from Barabas to get cleaned up and buy new clothes. Ithamore quickly makes an excuse about checking on a ship and says he must go, but Bellamira begs him to stay. Pilia-Borza reminds Ithamore that Bellamira loves him, and Ithamore says he would give all Barabas's wealth for Bellamira, calling her "Allamira."

It's clear that Bellamira doesn't really love Ithamore; she is simply deceiving him to get at Barabas's money. Unable to see this, Ithamore again implies he isn't worth as much as Bellamira and plans to steal Barabas's money to impress her. Like Barabas, Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Ithamore are greedy and will go to great lengths to satisfy their desire for gold. Ithamore claims to love Bellamira and will steal for her, but he calls her "Allamira" and doesn't even know her well enough to know her correct name.

Pilia-Borza says Ithamore *can* give Bellamira all Barabas's wealth, but Ithamore assures him it is impossible—Barabas buries his wealth in an unknown location. Upon hearing this news, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza engage in a short aside. "What shall we do with this base villain then?" she asks Pilia-Borza. He tells her to be patient and follow his lead. Pilia-Borza asks if Ithamore knows any "secrets" about Barabas—the kind that can be especially damaging. Ithamore says he does and immediately asks for a pen. He will write Barabas and demand half his wealth for Ithamore's silence.

This passage reflects more Machiavellian scheming. Pilia-Borza asks Ithamore if he knows any "secrets" about Barabas because he is looking to blackmail Barabas and extort his fortune for their silence. Ithamore agrees immediately, which speaks to his own wickedness and capacity for Machiavellianism.

Pilia-Borza tells Ithamore to ask for at least 100 crowns, and he further tells Ithamore to act menacing. Ithamore begins. "Sirrah Barabas," he writes. Pilia-Borza interrupts and tells him to ask for 200 crowns. Ithamore writes and orders Barabas to send him 300 crowns (plus 100 crowns for the messenger, Pilia-Borza), or he will expose Barabas's crimes. He signs the letter, and Pilia-Borza exits to deliver it. Alone with Bellamira, she asks Ithamore to "lie in her lap" and promises to marry him.

"Sirrah" is a derogatory term used during the 16th century to denote someone of low social status. Ithamore's use of "Sirrah" is likely a slight against Barabas's Jewish religion, but it is also ironic: as a slave, Ithamore himself would have been referred to as "Sirrah." Bellamira's invitation for Barabas to "lie in her lap" is vaguely sexual and implies she is using sex to ensure her scheming and win Ithamore's affection.

Pilia-Borza soon returns. He says that Barabas embraced him after reading the letter, and then Barabas "laughed and jeered." Barabas said he loved Pilia-Borza and that Ithamore was a "faithful servant," and then he gave Pilia-Borza 10 crowns. Ithamore is shocked. Pilia-Borza tells him to write again and ask for 500 crowns. Ithamore quickly pens the letter, and Pilia-Borza again exits to deliver it. Alone again, Ithamore gives Bellamira the 10 crowns. She tosses the money aside and kisses him.

Barabas "laugh[s] and jeer[s]" when he reads the letter because he is happy that Ithamore has betrayed him. Barabas was looking to avenge Ithamore before he even betrayed him, so he is thankful to have a reason to kill him. Ithamore is "faithful" because Barabas knew he would betray him. Ithamore is conniving and greedy, like most of Marlowe's characters, which implies such qualities are inherent human traits.

ACT 4, SCENE 3

Barabas enters reading Ithamore's letter. He can't believe the slave is demanding 300 crowns. Barabas knows Bellamira is to blame, and now he must slit Ithamore's throat as well. Even worse is Pilia-Borza, a worthless slave, with his mangled hands and "some fingers cut quite off." As Barabas reads the letter, Pilia-Borza enters with Ithamore's second letter. Pilia-Borza demands more **gold** and tells Barabas that 300 crowns will not be enough. He gives Barabas the letter and says they must have 500 more crowns.

Greed is on full display here, as Ithamore's demands rise from 300 crowns to 500. Furthermore, Pilia-Borza's mangled hands and missing fingers indicate that he is a thief—thieves were often punished during the 16th century by cutting off their fingers. Pilia-Borza's missing fingers and his attempts to blackmail Barabas reflects both his greed and his Machiavellian nature.

Barabas asks Pilia-Borza why Ithamore does not come himself. If Ithamore asks Barabas, Barabas will gladly give him the money. Pilia-Borza says that Barabas will indeed pay the money—"or else." Barabas grows angry and knows that he must get rid of Pilia-Borza, so he pleasantly asks Pilia-Borza to dine with him. In a short aside, Barabas admits that he plans to poison the thief, but Pilia-Borza rejects the invitation and again demands the **gold**. Barabas says he can't pay him because he has lost his keys, and Pilia-Borza tells him not to worry, because he can easily pick the lock. Or, Barabas says, Pilia-Borza can sneak in through the window of the counting-house.

Clearly, Barabas knows that Pilia-Borza has previously broken into his counting-house, and he wants Pilia-Borza to know it, too. Pilia-Borza's claim that Barabas will pay "or else" suggests they are prepared to kill him or turn him over to the authorities, who will be sure to hang him for murder. Barabas switches his demeanor and is immediately pleasant, which is no doubt more of his Machiavellian machinations at work.

Pilia-Borza immediately knows that Barabas is referring to the theft in his counting-house, but Pilia-Borza doesn't care. He tells Barabas that he knows enough about him to see him hanged, and Barabas knows that Ithamore has definitely betrayed him. Barabas tells Pilia-Borza that it is not the money that upsets him; Barabas is heartbroken that his servant would turn on him like this. Barabas says he loves Ithamore more than he loves himself, and since Barabas doesn't have any children, he plans to leave all his wealth to Ithamore upon his death.

Pilia-Borza doesn't care if Barabas knows about his theft because he is certain Barabas is guilty of much worse. Barabas is clearly trying to lure Pilia-Borza into the house so that he can kill him, but Pilia-Borza refuses to take the bait.

Pilia-Borza tells Barabas that he is all talk and no **gold**, so Barabas reluctantly gives him a handful of coins. Barabas tells Pilia-Borza to take the money as a sign of good will and again asks Pilia-Borza to dine with him. Pilia-Borza again turns down the request and says that he will see Barabas soon enough to get the rest of the gold. As Pilia-Borza exits, Barabas knows he must do something, so he decides to visit Bellamira's house in disguise and kill her, Ithamore, and Pilia-Borza.

Pilia-Borza seems to sense that Barabas is trying to trick him, and he again refuses to enter the house. Pilia-Borza's suspicion again underscores how common betrayal and corruption are in Maltese and, Marlowe implies, English society, as Pilia-Borza seems certain that Barabas is not being truthful, about the money or his intentions.

ACT 4, SCENE 4

Pilia-Borza enters with Bellamira and Ithamore. The three are drinking and celebrating, and Bellamira and Ithamore are professing their love for one another. Bellamira raises her glass and suggests they drink to Barabas, but Ithamore says he will drink to Barabas when he sends him more **gold**. Pilia-Borza asks what Ithamore will do if Barabas does not send the gold, but Ithamore says not to worry. He knows that Barabas is a murderer, and he will surely pay.

Bellamira and Ithamore's celebration reflects their greedy and corrupt nature, as they relish the thought of taking from another. Ithamore doubly betrays Barabas—first by attempting to blackmail him and then by admitting to Pilia-Borza and Bellamira that Barabas is a murderer, which, by extension, makes Ithamore a murderer, too.

Bellamira is surprised and says that she did not think Barabas was brave enough to commit murder. He is, Ithamore confirms. Ithamore admits to helping Barabas kill Mathias and Lodowick without ever touching them, and he further admits to delivering the poisoned rice to Abigail and the nuns and strangling Bernardine with his belt. In a quick aside, Pilia-Borza suggests to Bellamira that they tell Ferneze, but Bellamira says they should wait and get more **gold** first. "Come gentle Ithamore," Bellamira says, "lie in my lap."

Bellamira again asks Ithamore to "lie in [her] lap" and uses sex to manipulate him and advance her own Machiavellian machinations. Pilia-Borza's suggestion that they go to Ferneze suggests that Pilia-Borza thinks turning both Barabas and Ithamore in would be more lucrative, but Bellamira thinks they can get more out of Barabas first, which again speaks to their insatiable greed and corruption.

Suddenly, Barabas enters with a lute, disguised as a French musician. Bellamira immediately asks him to play. "Must tuna my lute for sound," Barabas says, "twang twang first." Bellamira asks Pilia-Borza to get her the posy in Barabas's hat, and Barabas gives Pilia-Borza the flowers. Bellamira smells the flowers and hands it back to Ithamore and Pilia-Borza, who also sniff the petals. Barabas snickers in a quick aside. "I am revenged upon 'em all," he says quietly, "I poisoned it."

Barabas's French disguise and ridiculous French accent is quite sarcastic and funny, especially since Pilia-Borza, Bellamira, and Ithamore don't realize they are being duped. Presumably, Barabas poisons them with the same poison he used at the nunnery, which means it will take at least 48 hours for them to die. Barabas again refers to his revenge, illustrating how guided and obsessed he is with getting even.

Pilia-Borza suggests they send another letter to Barabas with the French musician and demand more **gold**, but Ithamore says he is done with letters and tells the disguised Barabas to leave. Ithamore orders Pilia-Borza to tell Barabas to pay 1,000 crowns immediately. He says Pilia-Borza should mention nuns and rice or Friar Bernardine—either statement will make Barabas pay. As they exit, Ithamore says it is not a sin "to undo a Jew"—it is a "charity."

Ithamore's claim that it is "charity" "to undo a Jew" again reflects the anti-Semitic sentiments of the time. Jews are officially unwanted in Maltese (and English) society, so Ithamore doesn't see anything wrong with causing a Jew's destruction. This passage also reflects Ithamore's greed. His last demand was only 500 crowns, which he has now doubled.

ACT 5, SCENE 1

Ferneze enters with Martin Del Bosco and several knights and officers. Ferneze tells the men to take up arms and fortify Malta. Selim-Calymath and the Turks have come, and they will take Malta or die trying. Suddenly, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza enter, asking to speak to the governor. Ferneze turns them away, calling Bellamira a lowly prostitute, but Bellamira says she knows who killed Lodowick. It was not Mathias, she says, but the Jew, Barabas. Pilia-Borza confirms Bellamira speaks the truth and says that Barabas also killed the nuns, Abigail, Friar Bernardine, and who knows how many others.

Obviously, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza have decided to turn both Ithamore and Barabas in to Ferneze to get more money and satisfy their greed. Bellamira plays on Barabas's Jewish identity, clearly hoping that his religion will be enough for Ferneze to consider Barabas guilty. This subtle contempt again underscores Malta's anti-Semitic society and their belief that all Jews are guilty and damned.

Ferneze says he must have proof of Barabas's guilt, and Bellamira tells him that Barabas's slave, Ithamore, will confess to every murder. Ferneze orders his men to fetch Barabas and Ithamore. "I always feared that Jew," Ferneze says. The officers enter with Barabas and Ithamore and order Barabas to confess, but he pretends not to know what they are talking about. Ithamore immediately confesses to delivering the letter to Lodowick, giving the poisoned rice to the nunnery, and strangling Bernardine, but Barabas demands to sit before a judge. Ferneze agrees, and as the officers drag away Barabas, Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza, Barabas prays that his poison will soon take effect.

Ferneze fears Barabas because Barabas is Jewish, which again reflects Ferneze's (and broader society's) fear and contempt for the Jewish community. Barabas's trip before a judge will likely be only a formality, after which he will surely be executed along with Ithamore. But Barabas's machinations and revenge are not yet complete, since it is still expected that Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza will soon die from Barabas's poisonous flowers.

Katherine enters and asks Ferneze if he has found their sons' murder. Yes, Ferneze says, it was Barabas, the Jew. He explains to Katherine that Barabas's slave, Ithamore, delivered a forged letter to Lodowick that turned the men against each other. She asks where Barabas is now, and Ferneze says he is in jail, awaiting trial. Suddenly, and officer bursts in and tells Ferneze that Ithamore, Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Barabas are dead. Ferneze is shocked, and Bosco notes how suspicious the timing is. It is not suspicious, Ferneze says, but "just," and he orders Ithamore, Bellamira, and Pilia-Borza to be buried, but he tells his men to throw Barabas over the city walls for "vultures and wild beasts" to feed on.

Ferneze is so intent on Barabas's death and exacting his own revenge that he is blind to the suspicious circumstances of Barabas's supposed death, even when Bosco points it out to him. In Ferneze's estimation, revenge and Barabas's death is justice, regardless of how it happens. The fact that Ferneze buries the others but throws Barabas's body to the scavengers reflects his hate for Barabas as his son's killer and a Jew, and as such, Barabas does not rate a proper burial.

After Ferneze's men throw Barabas over the city walls, Barabas wakes up, having taken a "sleepy drink" to fool them. He decides that he will help Selim-Calymath conquer Malta, kill all the citizens, and make Ferneze a slave. Calymath and the Turks approach, assuming Barabas is a spy. He tells Calymath that he is indeed a spy—for the Turks. He says he is the Jew named Barabas, and he will help the Turks enter the city through a secret passageway he knows about in the city walls. Calymath asks if Barabas is the Jew taxed by Ferneze to pay the tribute, and Barabas confirms that he is.

Barabas's "sleepy drink" is more evidence of his cunning and Machiavellianism. He goes to great lengths to deceive Ferneze and the others, and then he plans an elaborate attack to kill the Maltese citizens and enslave Ferneze. Barabas's desire to exact revenge on Ferneze for stealing his wealth has morphed into a plan to conquer the entire nation of Malta. Again, Marlowe seems to imply that revenge can easily spiral out of control.

Barabas tells Selim-Calymath that Ferneze stole his money and accused him of heinous crimes, but Barabas was able to escape. Calymath asks if Barabas broke out of prison, but Barabas tells him he drank a potion made of "poppy and cold mandrake juice." Barabas slept so deeply, they thought him dead and threw his body over the city walls. Calymath comments on Barabas's cunning, and as the men exit, he tells Barabas that he will make him the new governor if he is able to help them conquer Malta.

Of course, what Barabas does not admit here is that he is guilty of the heinous crimes Ferneze accused him of. In this way, Barabas manipulates and deceives Calymath, too, which further underscores Barabas's corruption and Machiavellian nature. Barabas's Machiavellianism results in political power, which Marlowe suggests is also commonplace.

ACT 5, SCENE 2

Barabas enters with Selim-Calymath and the Turks, holding Ferneze and his knights as prisoners. Calymath says the Turks have conquered Malta and taken the people captive, and he ask Ferneze if he has anything to say. Ferneze says he has nothing; he is conquered and must submit. Yes, Calymath says, the Christians must submit to their "Turkish yokes." Then Calymath turns to Barabas. "We make thee Governor," Calymath says to Barabas, "Use them at thy discretion."

This passage, too, reflects widespread Machiavellianism. Selim-Calymath quickly conquers Malta and takes everyone captive as slaves under "Turkish yokes," and when he makes Barabas governor, he gives Barabas free reign to do whatever he wants to Ferneze and the others. Calymath knows Barabas won't be kind, and he doesn't care.

"Oh fatal day to fall into the hands / Of such a traitor and unhallowed Jew!" Ferneze cries, "What greater misery could heaven inflict!" Calymath bids Barabas farewell and leaves him with Ferneze and his knights. Barabas orders the Turks to take Ferneze and the knights to prison, and Ferneze curses Barabas, swearing revenge, as the Turks drag him away. Alone, Barabas congratulates himself on his successful scheming. Now, he is the Governor of Malta, but everyone still hates him and likely wants him dead. Barabas decides that the only thing to do is maintain his power with the same scheming he used to secure it.

Here, Marlowe implies that governing and politics always involve some level of Machiavellianism. Barabas must instill fear in the Maltese citizens if he expects them to obey him, otherwise they will rise up and kill him. The only way Barabas can effectively rule the people is through corruption, which he is clearly adept at. Ferneze's cries of the "misery" of falling into the hands of an "unhallowed Jew" again reflects the 16th-century's anti-Semitic society, as Ferneze and Malta's capture is made worse by Barabas's Jewish identity.

Barabas sends a guard to fetch Ferneze, and when Ferneze and Barabas are alone, Barabas asks him what he should do with his new power. Malta's future and Ferneze's life are in Barabas's hands, and he can put an end to both. Ferneze says he sees nothing but Malta's destruction and Barabas's cruelty, but Barabas tells him not to be so negative. Barabas will let Ferneze live—as long as Ferneze lives for Barabas. Ferneze asks Barabas if he will "be good to Christians," and Barabas asks what it would be worth to the Christians if he delivered them Selim-Calymath and the Turks, dead. Ferneze says such an act would be worth "great sums of money" to the Christians, and they would probably want Barabas to remain their governor, too.

It is ironic that Ferneze asks if Barabas will "be good to the Christians," since the Christians have done nothing but marginalize, insult, and exploit Barabas as a Jew. Again, it appears as if money is more important to Barabas than religion and the way he was treated by the Christians, as he easily excuses them in exchange for the "great sums of money" Ferneze promises for Calymath and the Turks' deaths. In this way, this passage underscores both Barabas's greed and his religious hypocrisy, which clearly outweigh his desire for revenge.

Barabas tells Ferneze that he is free to go and visit Malta's citizens and see how much money he can collect, and then Barabas promises to kill Selim-Calymath and his men and free Malta from the Turkish power. Barabas will invite Calymath to a feast, and at a predetermined time, Ferneze will "perform / One stratagem that [Barabas will] impart to thee." Afterward, both Ferneze and Malta will be free. Ferneze shakes Barabas's hand, swears to carry out the plan, and exits.

Notably, Barabas can't execute his plan without Ferneze, and he needs Ferneze to "perform / One stratagem." In short, Barabas will have to trust that Ferneze will not betray him, which Marlowe suggests isn't likely, since betrayal and corruptions are so widespread.

Alone again, Barabas remarks on his ability to scheme and connive and decides that whoever is still alive at the end of the feast—Ferneze or Calymath—will be his new friend. Barabas claims that Jews are used to such deviousness, and Christians are, too, for that matter. Then, Barabas exits, planning his feast.

During Marlowe's time, Jews were stereotypically thought to be dishonest and devious, which underscores the anti-Semitism of the time; however, Marlowe suggests that Christians are just as dishonest as Jews, which implies such deceit is a innate human quality and not dependent on one's religion.

ACT 5, SCENE 3

Calymath enters and assesses Malta. The Turks have taken Malta and destroyed it, but they have also rebuilt it, and Calymath is certain that it will not be conquered. He looks out to the Mediterranean and thinks about the other islands, like Calabria and Sicily, and wonders if they can be taken as easily. Then, a messenger enters with word from Malta's governor. Barabas would like Calymath and his men to feast with him before they sail for Turkey.

Calymath's thoughts about conquering the nearby islands reflects the power of the Ottoman Empire during the 16th century, but it also reveals his insatiable greed. Calymath and the Turks are not satisfied with only Malta, they want to take over as many nations as possible.

Calymath doesn't really want to stay and feast with Barabas. Keeping an entire fleet at port for so long is costly, but he decides to stay since Barabas has been so useful to him. The messenger says that Barabas will gift Calymath a priceless pearl for his trouble, and Calymath very much appreciates the offer, but he says that all his men surely will not fit in Barabas's mansion. The messenger informs Calymath that only he will dine with the Barabas; Calymath's officers will feast in a monastery just outside of town. Calymath agrees and tells his men to get ready for a feast.

Of course, Barabas wants to separate Calymath from his men so that he can more easily kill them. If the Turkish soldiers survive and Calymath dies, the men will surely avenge their leader's death and Barabas's plan will be useless. For his scheming to work, the Turkish soldiers must not survive. This fact also reveals Barabas's despicable nature, and he continues to kill large numbers of people indiscriminately to satisfy both his greed and his need for revenge.

ACT 5, SCENE 4

Ferneze enters with Martin Del Bosco and several knights. Ferneze readies the men for the feast and tells them to come to his aid only after they hear cannon fire. If the men do as they are told, Ferneze promises that they will be free. The men run off to await the cannon signal, telling Ferneze that they would rather die than live as slaves to the Turks.

Presumably, Barabas's plan has nothing to do with Bosco and Ferneze's men, and Ferneze's order for the men to rush to his aid at the sound of cannon fire suggests that he is doing his own scheming and plans to betray Barabas.

ACT 5, SCENE 5

Barabas enters with a hammer and greets a group of carpenters busily building a pulley system. Barabas gives the carpenters a pile of **gold** to split, and they exit having completed their work. The messenger enters and informs Barabas that Selim-Calymath and his men will attend the feast just as Barabas has asked. Ferneze enters next and gives Barabas 100,000 pounds that was gathered from the people of Malta. Barabas is disappointed with the sum, but he accepts it and begins to explain his plan to Ferneze.

In the 16th century, a single pound or two was the equivalent of a working-class person's yearly income, yet 100,000 pounds is not enough to satisfy Barabas's unchecked greed. Still, Barabas is eager to tell Ferneze all about his scheme, and he quickly lets the paltry sum go, further suggesting that Barabas's need for revenge is completely out of control.

Barabas tells Ferneze that Calymath's men will be taken to a monastery to feast, under which Barabas has placed several bombs filled with gunpowder. No one will escape the explosion, he says. For Calymath, Barabas has constructed a false floor, and when the cable is cut, Calymath will fall to his death. Barabas gives Ferneze a knife and tells him to cut the cable when he hears the warning shot come from the tower. Ferneze immediately agrees and hurries off.

Again, the successful execution of Barabas's plan hinges on him being able to trust Ferneze, but Marlowe implies this trust is foolish and misguided. At the rate people betray one another in The Jew of Malta, *the reader can assume that Ferneze will not follow Barabas's plan as expected.*

Calymath enters, and Barabas welcomes him warmly, but Ferneze jumps out unexpectedly. Ferneze tells Calymath to stop and says that he will show him "greater courtesy / Than Barabas." The warning shot is heard from the tower, and Ferneze cuts the cable, sending Barabas deep into the pit and boiling cauldron below. Bosco enters with several knights, and Barabas screams for help from the pit, as Ferneze informs Calymath that the floor was rigged to kill him. Barabas begs for his life, but Ferneze refuses to pity a "base Jew." Barabas bitterly confesses to all his crimes and dies.

Ferneze's claim that he will show Calymath more courtesy than Barabas implies that Ferneze doesn't plan to kill Calymath as Barabas does. Ferneze's refusal to help Barabas because he is a "base Jew" again reflects the anti-Semitism of the time. To be "base" is to occupy the absolute lowest social station, which is exactly how Ferneze and broader 16th-century society values Barabas and the Jewish people. Still, it is difficult to feel sorry for Barabas in his death. He is a deplorable and immoral man (which has nothing to do with his religion), and since Barabas embodies only the most harmful Jewish tropes, Marlowe's representation of Barabas reinforces the same hateful stereotypes.

Ferneze explains to Calymath that Barabas intended to end Calymath's life, so Ferneze decided to save him. He invites Calymath to eat with him, but Calymath says he must get back to his men. Ferneze asks if Calymath heard the cannon fire, and when he confirms that he did, Ferneze tells him that was the sound of his men dying. There was an explosion in the monastery, and there are no survivors.

Here, Ferneze confirms that Calymath's men are dead. Like Barabas's plan, Ferneze's own scheme also hinges on the death of the men, since taking Calymath prisoner and reclaiming Malta would be impossible with the Turkish fleet intact. Again, this mass killing reflects the level of Machiavellian scheming often employed in matters of state and politics.

Calymath curses Barabas's deceitfulness, and Ferneze agrees that treason is "a Jew's courtesy," but that same treason delivered Calymath to Ferneze and Malta. Now, Calymath is their prisoner, and he will never return to Turkey. Calymath begs for Ferneze to release him, but Ferneze refuses. Calymath shall remain a prisoner and Malta will never be conquered. "So march away," Ferneze says as they exit, "and let due praise be given / Neither to fate nor fortune, but to heaven."

Ferneze's claim that Barabas's deceitfulness is a "Jew's courtesy" implies that all Jews are deceitful, and it is further evidence of the anti-Semitism that pervades most of the play. Ferneze, however, is thankful for this deception because it delivers him Calymath and Malta. Ferneze implies that everything is God's will—from Barabas's Machiavellian ways to Calymath's fall and Malta's survival. Machiavellianism has been condemned as immoral since its creation, but Marlowe never openly discourages such scheming. Instead, Marlowe implies that Machiavellianism is ultimately useless, as no amount of scheming can ever sway God's will.

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