

Lion of St. Mark – Study Guide Questions

Characters:

1. Who was braver, Antonio Ziani or Giovanni Soranzo?
2. Which character is more interesting?
3. Is Soranzo justified in his vendetta against Ziani?
4. Why do you think the author created Seraglio? What role does he play?
5. Was the Sultan a good leader of his people?
6. Who won the debate between Ziani and Abdullah Ali about religion and culture?
7. Who are the most intriguing secondary characters?
8. If The Lion of St. Mark were to be made into a film, which actors would you want to play the roles of Ziani, Soranzo and the sultan?

Plot:

1. How important was the Venetians' form of government to their survival as a state?
2. Should the Venetians have sent troops and ships to help defend Constantinople?
3. Why were the defenders of Constantinople defeated?
4. If you were Antonio, would you have refused Abdullah Ali's hospitality?
5. Which assassination attempt did the one in the book remind you of? Why?
6. Were the Venetians unified in their war against the Turks?
7. What can we learn from the Venetians and how they defended their empire?
8. What was the bravest action of any character(s) exhibited in the book?

Setting:

1. What impresses you most about the city of Venice?

2. What city in the world, if any, is the most like Venice?
3. How would you compare Constantinople to Venice?
4. Why was the Venetians' government so effective?
5. Why were the Venetians so powerful economically?
6. Why were the Venetians so powerful militarily?
7. What were the weapons of mass destruction in Renaissance times?
8. What did the Venetians do/have that is worth emulating today?

Themes:

1. Were the Venetians a force for good or evil in the world?
2. Who bore the brunt of the responsibility for the defense of the Republic?
3. What was Venice's relationship with other Italian city states? With the pope?
4. Since only a few thousand men were eligible to vote, was Venice really a republic?
5. What enabled *La Serenissima* to remain independent for 1,100 years?
6. How did the Venetians achieve unity in their national purpose?
7. Did the people control their government or did their government run them?
8. What can we learn from the Venetians?

Culture:

1. What role did religion play in daily Venetian life? In preserving their way of life?
2. How tolerant were Venetians of other religions? Foreigners?
3. What actions in the book were indicative of "Venetian ways"?
4. What did Venetians prize most?

5. How did Venice preserve their culture and pass on it from one generation to the next?
6. Why did other states hate, fear and envy Venice?
7. In today's world, which country is most like Venice?
8. What can we learn from the Venetians?