Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Test: The Merchant of Venice Act 3, Scene 2**

SET A ANSWER KEY

1. In what way is the rack an element of humour in the banter between Portia and Bassanio? 3

Ans. Bassanio asks Portia to allow him to choose the casket. He says that he lives upon the rack. Portia says if he lives upon the rack then surely there would be some treason mingled with his love. She asks him to confess what treason it is.

1. How is the metaphor of a swansong used by Portia? What role would music play if Bassanio chooses the correct casket? 4

Ans. Portia instructs the musicians to play music while Bassanio is making the choice of casket. She says that if he chooses the wrong casket, the end of Bassanio’s attempt would be like the end of a swan. Just like a swan fades with music, Bassanio’s attempt too would fade away with music. If Bassanio chooses the right casket then the music would do the role of a flourish when the true subjects bow down to a newly crowned monarch. These sound can also be compared to the dulcet sounds which creep during the dawn into the dreaming bridegroom’s ear summoning him to his marriage.

1. How does Bassanio express his emotions after being ‘bereft’ of all words? 3

Ans. Bassanio claims that Portia’s speech has left him bereft of all words. He says that only the blood in his veins is able to talk to her. He expresses this by the example of the pleased multitude of subjects after a fairly spoken oration by a beloved prince. Though the subjects have not understood the speech well they are aware about the eloquence of the speech. Bassanio compares this situation to himself.

1. What reason does Lorenzo give for coming to Belmont? 2

Ans. Lorenzo arrives to Belmont and tells that his purpose was not to have seem Bassnaio there but was convinced by Salerio to do so.

1. What change of plan does Portia do at the end of the scene? Why? 2

Ans. Portia tells Bassanio to accompany her to the church and call her as wife. But, after listening to Antonio’s letter, she tells Bassanio to dispatch all business and leave immediately.

1. Where were the ships of Antonio headed? What had happened to all of them? 3

Ans. Antonio’s ships were headed to Tripolis, Mexico, England, Lisbon, Barbary and India. Not even one single vessel had escaped the dreadful touch of merchant-marring rocks. All the ships had miscarried.

1. What promise does Bassanio give to Portia before leaving? 3

Ans. Bassanio says that as Portia had given him the kind permission to go, he would make haste and promised her that till he returns, no bed would ever be guilty of his stay and rest would not be an interposer between the two of them.