Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Test: The Merchant of Venice Act 1, Scene 2**

**ANSWER KEY**

1. How does Nerissa react to Portia’s complaint at the start of the scene? 2

Ans. When Portia complains that her little body was aweary of the world, Nerissa says that if Portia’s miseries were as plentiful as her good fortunes, only then that would be the case. For then, according to Nerissa, the good fortunes dominated the miseries.

1. Which examples does Portia give to prove that doing is not as easy as saying? 2

Ans. Portia says that doing is not as easy as saying. If it was, chapels would have been replaced with churches because everybody would visit the churches, making the chapels too small and poor men’s cottages would have been princes’ palaces.

1. What does Portia say about Count Palatine? 4

Ans. According to Portia, Count Palatine does nothing but frown. The expression is as if he wants to say that if Portia does not choose him, she can choose anyone else. He hears merry tales but does not smile and Portia fears that he would prove to be a weeping philosopher when he grows old. She says that she would be rather married to a skull than to him.

1. How is the appearance of the English Lord described? 3

Ans. The English Lord is called as a dumb-show. Portia also calls him as a proper’s man’s picture. He is oddly suited with his doublet bought from Italy, his round hose bought from France and his bonnet from Germany. His behaviour has been borrowed from everywhere according to her.

1. What does Portia tell Nerissa to do in order to avoid getting married to the German Lord? 3

Ans. Portia requests Nerissa to keep a glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket. She is sure that if the devil be within, and temptation outside, he would choose it. She also calls him a sponge.

1. How is the first description of Bassanio done in the scene? 2

Ans. Bassanio is described as a Venetian scholar, soldier who had already visited Belmont earlier. He was in the company of Marquis of Montferrat.

1. From this scene, what do you understand about Portia as a person? 4

Ans. Portia is a good daughter to her father. Though she is not happy about the condition of the caskets, she decides to abide by it. She says that even if she grows as old as Sibylla, she would die as chaste as Diana unless she can be obtained by the manner of her father’s will. She also seems to be a racist. She is not happy knowing about the arrival of Morocco and says that even if he had the condition of a saint and the complexion of the devil, she would rather want him to shrive her than to marry her. We also get to know that she had some feelings for Bassanio.