Vikram’s English Academy

Test: The Merchant of Venice (Act 3 Scene 2)

Std: X- Euro Duration: 40 mins Marks: 25

1. Bassanio has already stated to Portia that he is speaking upon the rack. She teases him saying that he may be lying as he is speaking upon the rack where men can be forced to speak anything. 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. The humour is created by Bassanio talking like a prisoner and Portia as a Judge or Queen.
2. She says in case he chooses the wrong casket, the end of Bassanio’s attempt would be like the end of a swan. Just like a swan fades away 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 sounds can also be compared to the dulcet sounds which creep during the dawn into the dreaming bridegroom’s ear summoning him to his marriage.
3. Bassanio addresses the gold as gaudy. He says that it had proved to be a hard food for Midas. He says that he will have none to do with the gold casket. Bassanio addresses the silver casket as made of silver which is pale and as a common drudge between ordinary people. He says this because silver was a common medium of exchange at that time.
4. 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.
5. Bassanio compares the painter to a spider, as in making the golden hair of Portia the painter has weaved a web. This golden mesh entraps the hearts of men faster than the spider’s web can trap gnats.
6. After congratulating Bassanio and Portia, Gratiano says that he would not be able to add more joy to them. He requests Bassanio that whenever he meant to solemnise the bargain of his faith, at the same time he should allow him to get married too. On Bassanio telling him to find a wife first he says that he has already done so and intermission does not pertain to him.
7. Lorenzo apologises for intruding at this place. He says that he did not want to come but was convinced by Salerio to come along with him.
8. Portia and Bassanio are supposed to go to Church and get married. But when she hears the letter of Antonio she tells Bassanio to leave all business and be gone. She does so as she understands the urgency of the situation.
9. Antonio had six ships which were supposed to return from Tripolis, Mexico, England, Lisbon, Barbary and India. All of them had drowned and not even a single ship had escaped the dreadful touch of rocks which marred merchant vessels.