Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: Then Lady of Shalott

1. Describe the setting of the island and its surrounding.

Ans: On either side lie long fields of barley and rye, they are vast and look as if they meet the sky. They stretch as far as the horizon. Through these fields run a road to Camelot that has many towers. There are lilies everywhere around the island of Shalott. The Lady of Shalott resides in Camelot.

1. What are the reapers doing and what do they hear?

The reapers are reaping bearded barley in the early morning. And as they carry on with their work, they hear a song that echoes cheerily from the river that is winding. In the moonlight, the reapers are tired piling sheaves hear the song sung by the Lady of Shalott.

1. How does she spend her time? Why?

She weaves a magic web (tapestry) day and night with bright or gay colours. She has heard a whisper or a rumour that a curse can befall upon her if she looks down from the window of Camelot. She has no idea what the curse is all about so she weaves steadily and there is nothing else in her life to do.

1. Mention the importance of the mirror. What causes the mirror to break?

The mirror is very important as that mirror gives Lady of Shalott the opportunity to connect with the world in some way. She is able to observe the shadows of the world and she can see people’s reflection to pass her time. The mirror broke on the arrival of Sir Launcelot. He sang and his song distracted her. She left the web and left the loom, she walked three paces in the room and she looked down the Camelot.

1. How does the Lady Shalott experience the world?

The Lady Shalott experiences the world by taking a look in the mirror and observing the reflection of the world.

1. Which line is repeated in the poem? Why?

‘The Lady of Shalott’ is repeated in the poem because this poem revolves around the lady, her life, the curse that befalls on her and her story. She is the protagonist and the poem narrates the situations she encounters and even her end. The repetition of this line makes the poem impactful.

1. How is Launcelot’s entry described by the poet?

Sir Launcelot came riding between the fields of barley sheaves. The sunlight came through the leaves and shone upon the brazen greaves that Sir Launcelot wore. He carried a shield that had an engraved red-cross knight kneeling to a lady. His shield sparkled in the field that appeared yellow in colour. His broad forehead glowed in sunlight. The hooves of his horse shone and underneath his helmet his black curly hair blew against the breeze.

1. What does the Lady do as she hears his arrival? What happens next?

As he arrives, the lady left the web, she left the loom, she made three paces in the room. She saw a water-lily blooming for the first time as till now she only saw the reflection. Then she saw the helmet and the plume. She looked down to Camelot. But because of all this, the curse befell upon her. The web flew out and floated wide. The mirror cracked from side to side. She realised that the curse is upon her.

1. Where does the Lady travel? How?

The lady travels in the boat to float down to Camelot. She found a boat beneath a willow that was afloat. Round the prow she wrote ‘The Lady of Shalott’.

1. What were the two effects of the curse on her?

Her blood was frozen slowly and her eyes were darkened wholly.

1. What happens to the lady? How do people react on seeing her? How does Launcelot react to her death?

The people around wondered who she was where she came from. Even the sound of the royal cheer in the lighted palace died when they saw her dead body. The knights at Camelot prayed to God out of fear. Sir Launcelot said that she had a lovely face and makes a prayer that God should grant her his mercy.