

CISCE VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES

LESSON: ICSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (ENGLISH PAPER 2)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (ACT 3 SCENE 2)

October 12th, 2020

Response to Questions posed by students during the live Lesson:

S.No.	Questions	Answers
2.	Is it important to quote the exact words on the casket?	<p>No not really – it's fine if you do ... but a paraphrase is equally acceptable.</p> <p>Gold: "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire"</p> <p>The one who chooses the Casket of Gold would gain/ attain something that many others would yearn for.</p> <p>Silver: "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves"</p> <p>The one who chooses the Silver casket would get exactly what he deserved.</p> <p>Lead: "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath"</p> <p>The one who chooses the Casket made of Lead should be prepared to give and to risk everything he possesses in return for its contents.</p>

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3.	There are many Classical and Biblical allusions in the play. How important is it to study them? How do we answer a question based on such a reference?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, allusions are important – and you need to be familiar with them. A playwright uses allusion to help the audience quickly understand both character traits and plot development. In The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare uses biblical as well as classical allusions familiar to his audience to help them make connections, understand character, and determine importance of events. • If you are tested on an allusion, you will need to give a very brief account of the original incident/ story from the Bible or the Classics and also mention the relevance of the comparison between the characters in the allusion and the characters in the context of the play.
4.	What does Portia mean when she says, Bassanio will make a ‘swan-like end’ if he fails the Casket Test?	<p>Portia says, ‘<i>Let music sound while he doth make his choice; Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,</i>’ when Bassanio goes to make his choice. The term ‘swan song’ is a metaphorical phrase for a final gesture, or performance. The phrase refers to an ancient belief that swans sing a beautiful song just before their death, having been silent during most of their lifetime.</p> <p>What Portia wants music to be played when Bassanio makes his choice. Then, if</p>

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		he chose the wrong casket, his departure would be as gracious as that of a dying swan (i.e. accompanied by beautiful music)
5.	Why does Salerio insist that Lorenzo accompany him when he goes to deliver Antonio's letter to Bassanio?	Salerio wants Lorenzo present when he delivers Antonio's letter to Bassanio – he knows that the letter contains news of Antonio's losses, so perhaps he feels that Lorenzo's presence would lend Bassanio the moral support he would need.
6.	What message does the scroll in the Lead casket contain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Congratulates him for not basing his choice on outward appearances. (ii) wishes that he may continue to make wise choices that result in good fortune. (iii) Urges him to be content with winning Portia and not seek any other fortune. (iv) says if he were pleased with the outcome of his choice, he should claim Portia as wife with a kiss.
7.	What is the meaning of the song?	The song is about "fancy", or attraction. The lyrics state that attraction, which is born and nurtured in the eyes, that is outward appearances does not last – it dies out quickly. The song hints that that what appeals to the eye is not necessarily

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		valuable.
8.	Why is Bassanio so disturbed by Antonio's letter?	Loyalty to Antonio and a deep sense of guilt and remorse leave Bassanio disturbed. This comes from the knowledge that it was to secure the money he (Bassanio) needed that Antonio signed such a bond with Shylock. So, he was directly to blame for putting Antonio's life at risk.
9.	How does Portia know that Antonio's letter contains bad news?	Portia is an intelligent young woman – she observes Bassanio's expression as he reads the letter. She notices that he turns pale and that his facial expression worsens as she watches. She guesses correctly that the letter contains some really disturbing and distressing news.
10.	What does Portia say she plans to do after Bassanio leaves for Venice? What does she really intend to do?	Portia says that she and Nerissa would withdraw from the company of men and live ' <i>as maids and widows</i> '. However, her intension is to travel to Venice with Nerissa and participate in Antonio's trial. They would be disguised as a lawyer and lawyer's clerk respectively.