**18th May, 2020 JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE Module – 2**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**MERCHANT OF VENICE**

**Act 1 Scene 1 (Continued)**

***(A street in Venice)***

***Enter Bassanio***

**CHARACTERS:**

**ANTONIO: The Merchant**

**BASSANIO: A loving friend**

**INTRODUCTION:**

In this scene Antonio’s dearest friend Bassanio, expresses his desire to win Portia, a rich heiress of Belmont. Bassanio is portrayed as a spendthrift character in the play; he is usually in debts because of his lavish lifestyle. He owes a lot of money to Antonio, still he seeks another loan from Antonio to visit Belmont and prove himself a worthy suitor to Portia. However, all the money Antonio possesses had been invested in his ships and he has no cash in hand, so he advises Bassanio to take a loan from anybody in Venice using his good name as a credit.

**TEXT:**

**ANTONIO**

***Well; tell me now, what lady is it***

***To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,***

***That you today promised to tell me of?***

**BASSANIO**

***‘Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,***

***How much I have disabled mine estate,***

***By something showing a more swelling port***

***Than my faint means would grant continuance:***

***Nor do I now make moan to be abridged***

***From such a noble rate; but my chief care***

***Is, to come fairly off from the great debts***

***Wherein my time, something too prodigal,***

***Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,***

***I owe the most, in money and in love;***

***And from your love I have a warranty***

***To unburden all my plots and purposes***

***How to get clear of all the debts I owe.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**ANTONIO:**

Well, tell me now, who the lady is to whom you have decided to visit secretly. You promised me to tell me about her today.

**BASSANIO:**

You know, Antonio, how I have spent my means by keeping up a more fashionable standard than my modest income will allow me to continue. I do not complain that I can no longer live such a lifestyle of nobles. My main worry now is to come out honourably of my heavy debts that I have incurred due to my youth and lavish lifestyle. I owe you the most, Antonio, both in terms of money and love. Your friendship gives me enough strength to disclose all my plans and intentions to you, by which I hope to clear off all the debts that I owe.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Swore a secret pilgrimage – promised to visit secretly
2. Disabled – depleted, squandered
3. Swelling port – fashionable style
4. Faint – limited
5. Make moan – complain
6. Abridged – curtailed
7. Noble rate – lordly way of living
8. Prodigal – lavish, extravagant
9. Gaged – involved
10. Warranty – assurance

**TEXT:**

**ANTONIO**

***I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;***

***And if it stand, as you yourself still do,***

***Within the eye of honour, be assured,***

***My purse, my person, my extremest means,***

***Lie all unlock’d to your occasions.***

**BASSANIO**

***In my school – days, when I had lost one shaft,***

***I shot his fellow of the self – same flight***

***The self – same way with more advised watch,***

***To find the other forth; and by adventuring both,***

***I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,***

***Because what follows is pure innocence.***

***I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth***

***That which I owe is lost; but if you please***

***To shoot another arrow that self way***

***Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,***

***As I will watch that aim, or to find both,***

***Or bring your latter hazard back again,***

***And thankfully rest debtor for the first.***

**ANTONIO**

***You know me well, and herein spend but time***

***To wind about my love with circumstances;***

***And out of doubt you do me now more wrong***

***In making question of my uttermost,***

***That if you had made waste of all I have:***

***Then do but say to me what I should do,***

***That in your knowledge may by me be done,***

***And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**ANTONIO**

Tell me everything, good Bassanio. If your plans are perfectly honourable as you are, you may be sure that my money, my body and all my resources will be available for your use.

**BASSANIO**

In my school days, when I had lost an arrow. I used to shoot another arrow in the same direction, but keeping more careful watch this time, in order to find the first one. By risking the second arrow I often recovered both. I have mentioned this childhood example because what I have to propose now is quite innocent. I owe so much to you and like a self – willed young man ***(a person to does whatever he wants, no matter what other people think)***, I have lost everything that I have got from you. But, if you give me another loan like the first one, I have no doubt that I will invest it more carefully and shall recover the both the loans for you. If not, I can repay the second loan at any rate and will remain your grateful debtor for the first.

***Notes:***

*In the last two line of his speech, Bassanio means that he will be so careful in his scheme that even if he does not recover the lost money which he had originally borrowed from Antonio, he will ensure that the second loan will be returned at any rate and he will still remain indebted to Antonio for the original loan.*

**ANTONIO**

You know me so well, but still you are wasting time by appealing to my love with indirect talk. Surely you wrong me more by doubting my utmost readiness to help you with a bigger amount of money, than you would actually spend. I am ready to help you even if it means making me lose all my wealth. You have to only tell me what you want me to do. If you know I can do it, I will be obliged to do it. So please speak.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Extremest means – utmost resources
2. Unlock’d – open
3. Occasions – needs
4. Shaft – arrow
5. Fellow – a similar arrow
6. The self-same – exactly the same
7. More advised watch – watching it more carefully
8. Adventuring – risking
9. Urge – offer
10. Willful youth – self-willed young mane
11. To shoot another arrow – give another loan
12. Latter hazard – the second loan
13. Spend but time – only waste time
14. Circumstance – indirect and complicated way
15. Making question – doubting
16. Uttermost – extreme efforts
17. Made a waste of – destroyed
18. Prest unto it – engaged to do it

**TEXT:**

**BASSANIO**

***In Belmont is a lady richly left;***

***And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,***

***Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes***

***I did receive fair speechless messages:***

***Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued***

***To Cato’s daughter, Brutus’ Portia;***

***Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;***

***For the four winds blow in from every coast***

***Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks***

***Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;***

***Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos’ strand,***

***And many Jasons come in quest of her.***

***O my Antonio, had I but the means***

***To hold a rival place with one of them,***

***I have a mind presages me such a thrift,***

***That I should questionless be fortunate!***

**ANTONIO**

***Thou know’st that all my fortunes are at sea;***

***Neither have I money, nor commodity***

***To raise a present sum: therefore, go forth;***

***Try what my credit can in Venice do:***

***That shall be rack’d, even to the uttermost,***

***To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.***

***Go, presently inquire, and so will I,***

***Where money is; and I no question make,***

***To have it of my trust or for my sake.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**BASSANIO**

In Belmont there is a lady who has inherited much wealth. She is fairer than the word fair itself. She is beautiful and more than that, she has wonderful personal qualities. At times I have received lovely silent messages from her eyes. Her name is Portia and she beautiful than was the daughter of Cato, who was wife of Brutus. Indeed the whole world is aware of her worth and suitors are sailing towards her from every coast. Her pretty hairs fall from her forehead like the Golden Fleece and her home in Belmont is like the ancient kingdom of Colchos, and many a Jason comes there to attempt to win her. O, Antonio, if I had money to compete with them, my instincts tell me I should surely be the winner.

**ANTONIO**

You know all my money is invested in my ships as the sea. Neither I have cash, nor anything on which cash can be raised. But go out and see what my credit can raise in Venice. It shall be stretched to the utmost limit to enable you to go to Belmont and win over the beautiful Portia. Go at once and inquire, I shall do the same. I have no doubt that you will be able to borrow money either because of my business credit or on account of my personal security.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Richly left – who has inherited great wealth
2. Fairer than that word – better than fair
3. Speechless – unspoken
4. Nothing undervalued – in no way inferior
5. Four winds – all four directions
6. Seat – house
7. Strand – shore
8. Presages – promises
9. Thrift – success
10. Questionless – without doubt
11. Fortunes – wealth
12. Present sum – money that is required now

***Notes:***

***Brutus’ Portia:*** *Portia here is compared to Portia in Julius Caesar, who was daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus (a brave Roman general), the leader of conspiracy against Julius Caesar.*

***Golden Fleece:*** *The reference is made to the ancient Greek legend. “Fleece” refers to the crop of wool of a sheep or ram. A famous hero called Jason, with his companions, the Argonauts (a band of heroes in Greek Mythology), went on a voyage to Colchos on the east coast of the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece which was fastened to an oak by the local ruler and the fleece was guarded by a dragon. Jason obtained it with the help of his wife Medea.*

***Many Jasons:*** *Many suitors came, just as Jason came in quest of the Golden Fleece.*

**WORKSHEET 2:**

**Answer the following question:**

1. What assurance does Antonio give Bassanio when he asks him about his plans?
2. Why does Bassanio need money?
3. Why does Bassanio refer to his childhood sport of arrow?
4. What is Bassanio’s plan?
5. Who lives in Belmont? How has Bassanio got interested in her?
6. How does Bassanio describe Portia?
7. What is the purpose of Bassanio in telling about Portia to Antonio?
8. Explain in your own words the meaning and significance of the ‘golden fleece’.
9. Who are Cato and Brutus? Why are they referred in the play?
10. How does Bassanio propose to pay back the previous loan as well as the present loan?
11. Why is Antonio unable to help Bassanio at once?
12. What does Antonio instruct Bassanio to do in order to get the money?

**Note: Please do all this work in your note books which will be checked when school will reopen. Please consider this important.**

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