**JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE**

**SUBJECT- ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**CLASS – IX WORKSHEET 1**

**MERCHANT OF VENICE**

**ACT 1 SCENE 1**

**Place –** A street in Venice

**CHARACTERS:**

**Antonio:** The Merchant

**Salarino and Salanio:** Friends

**INTRODUCTION:**

The opening starts with Antonio’s friends Salarino and Salanio complaining to him that a sadness has taken over him. He replies that he himself does not know the reason for his sadness. In this scene both the friends are giving various reasons for his sadness, but Antonio assures them that none of the reasons given by them are true.

**TEXT:**

**ANTONIO**

***In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.***

***It wearies me; you say it wearies you.***

***But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,***

***What stuff ’tis made of, whereof it is born,***

***I am to learn.***

***And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,***

***That I have much ado to know myself.***

**SALARINO**

***Your mind is tossing on the ocean,***

***There, where your argosies with portly sail,***

***Like signors and rich burghers on the flood***

***Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,***

***Do overpeer the petty traffickers,***

***That curtsy to them, do them reverence,***

***As they fly by them with their woven wings.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**ANTONIO**

To tell the truth, I don't know why I am so sad. This feeling makes me depressed, and you say that it depresses you too. But I don't know how I caught, found, or came by this sadness, what it consists of or how it originated. I am yet to find out. This depression makes me such a dull fellow, that I am having so much trouble in recognising myself.

**SALARINO**

Your mind is focused on the ocean where your merchant ships filled with cargo move on the waves like great lords and wealthy citizens. The large ships pass in a magnificent procession and overtake the smaller merchant ships, which bow them and show respect as they speed past them with their canvas sails or the little boats bow before the greatness of your ships.

**WORD MEANING:**

1. In sooth - truly
2. Want-wit - dull fellow
3. Ado - trouble
4. Argosies - large merchant ships
5. Signiors - Gentlemen
6. Burghers - important citizens
7. Pageants - decorated carts in movable exhibition
8. Woven wings - canvas sails

**TEXT:**

**SALANIO**

***Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,***

***The better part of my affections would***

***Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still***

***Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind;***

***Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;***

***And every object that might make me fear***

***Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt***

***Would make me sad.***

**SALARINO**

***My wind cooling my broth,***

***Would blow me to an ague, when I thought***

***What harm a wind too great at sea might do.***

***I should not see the sandy hourglass run,***

***But I should think of shallows and of flats;***

***And see my wealthy Andrew dock’d in sand,***

***Vailing her high top lower than her ribs***

***To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,***

***And see the holy edifice of stone,***

***And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,***

***Which touching but my gentle vessel’s side,***

***Would scatter all her spices on the stream,***

***Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,***

***And, in a word, but even now worth this,***

***And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought***

***To think on this, and shall I lack the thought***

***That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?***

***But tell not me. I know Antonio***

***Is sad to think upon his merchandise.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**SALANIO**

Believe me sir, if I had such business operations in danger, the greater part of my mind would always be fixed on my dealings across the seas. I would then be plucking the grass and throwing it up in the air to find in which direction the wind is blowing. I would carefully look into the maps to study the seaports, channels and harbours and everything that might pose danger to my business would no doubt make me sad.

**SALARINO**

When I blow wind on my soup to make it cool, I tremble with fever to think of the damages strong winds might do to my ships on the sea. The sight of the sand running through the hourglass makes me think of the dangerous shallow waters and sand banks. These make me imagine that my loaded ships is grounded in sand, her mast dipped down lower than her sides as if trying to kiss the sand that surrounds her. If I go to church and see the holy building of stone, it makes me think of the dangerous rocks in the sea that can damage my ships. If these rocks touch the sided of my ship, would scatter her cargo of spices on the water and throw out my rich silks to dress the roaring waves. In short it makes me think that at one moment I have so much and the next moment I have nothing! Is it possible that I can think about this without thinking that if such thing happened, it would be very sad? I know Antonio is sad because he is thinking of his rich cargo.

**WORD MEANING:**

1. Peering – looking carefully
2. Wind – breath
3. Broth – soup
4. Ague – fever
5. Andrew – large ship
6. Dock’d – stuck
7. Vailing – lowering
8. Ribs – sides
9. Bechanced – happened
10. Enrobe – clothe, cover

**TEXT:**

**ANTONIO**

***Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,***

***My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,***

***Nor to one place, nor is my whole estate***

***Upon the fortune of this present year:***

***Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.***

**SALARINO**

***Why then, you are in love.***

**ANTONIO**

***Fie, fie!***

**SALARINO**

***Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad***

***Because you are not merry: and ’twere as easy***

***For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry***

***Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,***

***Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:***

***Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,***

***And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper,***

***And other of such vinegar aspect***

***That they’ll not show their teeth in way of smile,***

***Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.***

**SALANIO**

***Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,***

***Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:***

***We leave you now with better company.***

**SALARINO**

***I would have stayed till I had made you merry,***

***If worthier friends had not prevented me.***

**ANTONIO**

***Your worth is very dear in my regard.***

***I take it your own business calls on you***

***And you embrace the occasion to depart.***

**EXPLANATION:**

**ANTONIO**

Believe me, it is not true. I thank my good fortune that my business is not dependant on a single ship nor on any single location. Nor does my financial position depend on the business ventures of this year. Therefore it is not my cargo ships that make me sad.

**SALARINO**

Why, then you must be in love.

**ANTONIO**

What nonsense!

**SALARINO**

What, not in love either! Then we may say that you are sad because you are not happy. It would be easy for you to laugh and jump about and say that you are happy because you are not sad. Now, by Janus, the two headed Roman god, I declare that nature has created some strange men! Some of them look out through their eyes half-closed with laughter and laugh foolishly like parrots if they hear the sound of a bagpipe. There are other men with such gloomy faces that they will not smile at anything, even if the grave Nestor swears that the joke is most amusing.

NOTES:

*JANUS – A Roman god of doors, who had two faces: one frowning while the other smiling. Both his heads looked in opposite directions. He is referred here to indicate that has created different types of men with different outlooks.*

*And laugh like parrots at a bag piper – laughs even at a big-piper as foolishly as a parrot laughs at anything. Bag-pipes make a dull noise and someone as brainless as a parrot can laugh at it.*

*Nestor – Nestor was an old and wise Greek general who fought in the Trojan War, he was of very serious nature and a joke had to be extremely funny if Nestor laughed at it.*

**SALANIO**

Here comes your noble relative, Bassanio along with Gratiano and Lorenzo. Goodbye Antonio. We will leave you now in a better company.

**SALARINO**

I would have stayed with you till I had made you happy, if the arrival of worthier friends had not prevented me from doing so.

**ANTONIO**

I have a great regard for you. I think that you have some business to attend that is why you are making use of this opportunity to leave

**WORD MEANING:**

1. Ventures – business
2. Bottom – ship
3. Vinegar aspect – sour expression
4. Bagpipe – a musical instrument
5. Kinsman – dear friend, relative

**EXERCISE:**

**QUESTION 1:** Where does this scene take place and who all are present?

**QUESTION 2:** What are the reasons given by Salarino and Salanio for Antonio’s sadness?

**QUESTION 3**: Who was Nestor? Why is he mentioned in the play?

**QUESTION 4:** Why does Salarino talk about Janus?

**QUESTION 5:** How can you say that Antonio was in a sad mood? How does he describe his sadness?

**QUESTION 6:** In your own words, elaborate how Salarino has described the ships of Antonio.

**QUESTION 7:** What would the wind cooling the broth remind Salarino of?

**QUESTION 8:** Whom does Salarino refer to as worthier friends?

**NOTE:**

**Please do all this work in your old copies which will be checked when the school reopens. Please consider this important.**