

Merchant of Venice

Act - 2

Scene - 7

Extract - 1

(i) Who is asked to draw aside the curtains? Who is asked to make his choice?

(ii) What does Portia say later to the prince regarding the right casket?

(iii) Which casket does the Prince of Morocco finally choose? What are the reasons for his choice?

(iv) For what reasons does the prince reject the other two caskets?

(v) What does the prince find when he opens the casket? What does Portia say when the prince leaves the place.

Answers:

(i) Portia asks one of her attendants to pull apart the curtains so that the different caskets are made visible. The prince Morocco is asked to make the choice.

(ii) After reading the inscription on the three caskets, Morocco asks Portia how he will know if he chooses the right casket. Portia replies that her portrait will be in the right casket. If he selects that one, then she will be his wife.

(iii) The Prince of Morocco in the end chooses the golden casket. Morocco argues that base lead can't include the sort of saintly character like Portia. Silver that is ten instances not so good as gold additionally can't keep Portia as he's the sort of wealthy gem. So he concludes that Portia, whom many guys desire and is maximum valuable ought to be contained withinside the golden casket. Besides, the English have a gold coin which with the determine of an angel engraved on it. Portia is an angel and consequently her portrait can be withinside the golden casket.

(iv) He rejects the base lead arguing that it cannot contain such a noble person like Portia and silver which is ten times inferior to gold cannot contain Portia as she is such a rich gem.

(v) When the prince opens the casket he finds a skull and in its eyeless socket a scroll. When the prince leaves the place, Portia calls it a good riddance and wishes that every suitor like him should make a similar choice.

Extract - 2

(i) On which casket do the words, who chooses me shall get as much as he deserves, appear?

(ii) Why does Morocco initially doubt his worth to deserve the lady?

(iii) Why does he change his mind and say that he deserves the lady?

(iv) Give the meaning of:

(a) And weigh thy value with an even hand:

(b) a weak disabling of myself.

(v) Why does Morocco think that Portia's picture is not in the lead casket?

Answers:

(i) On silver casket.

(ii) Morocco initially doubts his worth to deserve the woman because he thinks that though by his own standard, his merits could also be very high, yet those merits might not be sufficient enough to deserve Portia, as her reputation is bigger than his.

(iii) Morocco, after having doubts about his worth to win Portia, afterward changes his mind. He feels that he deserves Portia due to his royal birth, his wealth, his virtues and his upbringing. Above all, he's deserve her due to his deep affection for her.

(iv)(a) And compare your personal worth impartially.

(b) A sign of weakness which would bring discredit on myself.

(v) Morocco read the inscription on the lead casket which stated that whosoever selects it must be prepared to offer all and to risk everything. Morocco declares that nobody except a fool are going to be prepared to risk everything for the sake of lifeless lead. He argues that lead cannot contain such a noble person like Portia.

Extract - 3

(i) Who speaks these words? Where is he? What has he said earlier about his courage?

(ii) What is the significance of the words 'Shrine' and 'Saint' in the context? Which breathing saint does the speaker refer to?

(iii) What warning is given by Portia to the speaker before he makes the choice?

(iv) Give the meaning of:

(a) Hyrcanian deserts:

(b) The Watery kingdom:

(v) Who are 'they' that are referred to in the first line of the extract? What difficulties do they face while coming?

Answers:

(i) The prince Morocco speaks these words. He is in a room in Portia's house getting ready to make his choice of caskets. In an earlier scene, Morocco said that with his sword he had slain the emperor of Persia and a Persian Prince, who had defeated Solyman of Turkey thrice. He boasted that he was courageous enough to confront a hungry lion, defy the most valiant warrior on earth and face the wrath of a mother-bear by separating its young ones from her.

(ii) Shrine is a place where any sacred relic of a holy person or the image of a saint is kept. In this context, the saint is Portia and the shrine is Belmont. The breathing saint is a reference to Portia. Morocco says that people came from every part of the globe to worship at the holy place which enshrines this living object of adoration-Portia.

(iii) Before he makes the choice, the speaker is told by Portia that the correct casket contains her picture and if he chooses it, she will be his wife.

(iv)

(a) Hyrcania was a province of the ancient Persian empire. Hyrcanian deserts were deserts lying in the South of Caspian sea.

(b) The oceans and its fierce waves do not stop suitors

(v) 'They' the refers to the many suitors who come to Belmont from all parts of the globe to woo Portia. While coming they travel through Persian deserts, wilderness of Arabia and even cross the ocean.

Extract - 4

(i) Why does the prince think that Portia's picture not in the silver casket?

(ii) What is the 'sinful thought'? Why is it so?

(iii) Describe the coin referred to in the extract. What is the difference between an angel on the coin and the angel in the casket?

(iv) After opening the casket, the Prince finds a dead skull and a scroll. Explain what is written on the scroll?

(v) What theme is shown in the choice made by Morocco? Which casket he chooses?

Answers:

(i) Sinful thought is the thought that Portia is contained in the silver casket because silver has only a tenth of the value of gold and a rich gem like Portia can never be set in anything less than gold.

(ii) Sinful thought is the thought that Portia is contained in the silver casket because silver has only a tenth of the value of gold and a rich gem like Portia can never be set in anything less than gold.

(iii) The coin referred to in the extract is the gold coin in England on which the figure of Archangel Michael standing and piercing a dragon was engraved on one side. The coin was called an angel and its value was about ten shillings. Morocco says that the figure of the angel on the coin is engraved on the surface of the coin. It is outside, whereas Portia is an angel, who lies on a golden bed within the casket entirely hidden from view.

(iv) On the scroll it is written that things which make the most brilliant show are not always the truest metal. For the sake of mere gold, hundreds have risked and sacrificed their lives. Costly gold plated tombs may be erected, but they have no real value. Decay and death are all they contain.

(v) The theme is the reality and appearance shown by the choice of the prince of Morocco. He chooses the gold casket.