**Excerpt from *The Courtier* by Baldassare Castiglione, 1528**

The well-rounded man represents the ideal of the Renaissance. Our best portrait of an ideal Renaissance type was written by Baldassare Castiglione in the following excerpt, where he revived the classical ideal of the well-rounded man and combined him with modern ideas of the humanities and a liberal education. *Answer the following questions while you read.*

1. Should the ideal man mainly focus on developing his personal qualities, or should he concentrate on service to his fellow man?
2. Write down 7 characteristics a Renaissance man should have, according to Castiglione.
3. How will these qualities influence a man’s interactions with women, according to Castiglione?

For this evening’s game, let us select someone from the company and give him the job of portraying the perfect Courtier, explaining all the conditions and special qualities that a Courtier must have.

Since one cannot spend all his time in every exercise and since repetition is tiresome, we must always vary our life with various occupations. For this reason, I would have our Courtier sometimes take part in quieter and more peaceful exercises, and in order to escape envy and to seem agreeable to everyone, let him do what others do, yet never departing from praiseworthy deeds, and governing himself with that good judgment which will keep him from all foolishness; but let him laugh, joke, banter, frolic, and dance, but in such a way that he shall always appear genial and discreet, and that everything he may do or say shall be stamped with grace.

I would have him accomplished in letters, at least in those studies which are called the humanities, and able to speak and understand not only the Latin language, but also the Greek. Let him know the poets, and the orators, and the historians. Let him be proficient in writing verse, prose, especially in this vulgar tongue of ours; for besides the enjoyment he will find in it, he will never lack agreeable entertainment with the ladies, who are usually fond of such things. If other jobs or lack of study prevent his reaching such perfection, let him be careful to suppress his work so that others may not laugh at him, and let him show them only to a friend who he can trust: because at least the exercise will enable him to judge the work of others.

My lords, you must know that I am not content with the Courtier unless he is also a musician, and besides being able to understand and read notes, he must be able to play different instruments. For music is the best relaxation or medicine for the troubled spirit and the most becoming and praiseworthy in time of leisure and especially in the courts, where besides the relief from boredom that music gives us, many things are done to please the ladies, whose tender and gentle spirit is easily affected by harmony and filled with sweetness. Thus, it is no surprise that in ancient and modern times musicians have always been favored and have found refreshing spiritual food in music.

I wish to discuss another matter, which I think is very important and therefore think our Courtier should not overlook: and this is to know how to draw and to know the art of painting. Do not be surprised that I want this art, which today seems to be that of an artisan and not for a gentleman; I remember having read that the ancients, especially in Greece, had the boys of noble birth study painting in school as an honorable and necessary thing, and it was recognized as the first of the liberal arts, while at the same time by public edict forbidden to slaves. Among the Romans, too, it was held in highest honor.

And truly one who does not honor this art seems unreasonable to me, for this universal fabric that we see – with the vast heaven with mountains, valleys, and rivers…may be said to be a great and noble picture, composed by the hand of nature and of God; and whoever is able to imitate it, seems to me to deserve great praise; nor can it be imitated without the knowledge of many things, as he who tries well knows.