Thomas Bullock CE Primary Academy

English – Shakespeare Unit – Merchant of Venice.

Home Learning – Year 5 – 20th & 21st April – page 1

This play was written in when Elizabeth I was on the throne of England. The way many things were approached at that time was very different to the present. Punishments were often gory and horrific, thankfully things are different today. As you know people often have similar feelings and attitudes but we hope they have changed as we know more about different cultures and equality. This play deals with BIG IDEAS such as: racism, sexism, prejudice, power and love. Wow! It makes it a great play to study.

Activity 1: Read this section about the story outline.

EXPLORING THE STORY

The Merchant of Venice was written between 1596 and 1598 and is a 'comedy' centred around love, money, prejudice and social injustice. Antonio, the Merchant of Venice, lends three thousand ducats to his friend Bassanio so that he can win the heart of the wealthy and beautiful Portia of Belmont. Antonio's own money is tied up in business ventures that depend on the safe return of his ships from sea, so he borrows the money from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender. Antonio has previously insulted Shylock for his high rates of interest and the two men don't like each other so Shylock only lends him the money against a 'bond'. Failure to repay the loan on the agreed date will entitle Shylock to a pound of Antonio's flesh.