Thomas Bullock CE Primary Academy

English – Shakespeare Unit – Merchant of Venice.

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Scene 10: Portia and Nerissa return to Belmont, where they confront their husbands about the rings they gave them, that the men promised to keep forever. Eventually they reveal that 'Balthasar' and the clerk were the women in disguise.

BASSANIO: Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

GRATIANO: Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

NERISSA: Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it, Unless he live until he be a man.

The play ends with this scene where the two men are teased about promising to keep their rings for ever when they handed them over as payment to Portia, dressed as a man and Nerissa, dressed as a man and Portia's clerk. The play ends with the characters and hopefully the audience laughing. No one is hurt physically and it all ends well.

This is the end of the story, obviously the play is actually a lot longer with lots more scenes but these short versions are a quick way to learn about the play and they carry the plot of the story.

It seems amazing to us that the men couldn't recognise their wives!

1) **Why do you think this could be the case? Were the disguises really good or could it have been something else? Think about the role of women at the time.**
2) **Why do the women tease the men about handing their rings over as a payment for the lawyer's work?**

Imagine you are Shylock. Write a letter to your daughter Jessica explaining how you feel about all the things that have happened. Explain your reasons for the things you did and how you feel about Antonio, the Duke, Portia and the lies Jessica told you.