

Is shylock a villain or victim

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A victim is someone who has been singled out for cruel or unfair treatment. A villain is a wicked person or a criminal. The question is does Shakespeare portray Shylock, the Jewish moneylender as more of a villain than a victim in "The Merchant of Venice" The first scene is one of the main scenes in which Shylock could be seen more as a victim. In this scene Bassanio goes to Antonio, a merchant of Venice and his good friend. Bassanio asks Antonio if he is able to lend him some money. Antonio promises him the money if he is able to borrow it. Then both Bassanio and Antonio go to Shylock, a rich Jew who lends money and also Antonio's enemy.

Antonio asks for three thousands ducats for three months. However Shylock doubts the security of Antonio's ships but he seems willing to lend the three thousands ducats. He tells the audience why he hates Antonio for a variety of reasons. "I hate him for he is a Christian. He lends out money gratis. I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. He hates our sacred Nation." This controversial and powerful statement is targeted towards the audience; Shylock is almost quoting it to tell his feelings and hatred towards Antonio. This is confusing as Shylock detests Antonio yet he still is willing to lend money to a Christian man whom he hates.

One of the reasons why I considered Shylock to be a villain is because he was very greedy in contrast to Antonio who lent his money to others with no interest. Also, when they merged in their bond together it was quite grotesque for Shylock to ask for a pound of his flesh, if the loan was not returned in time. "If every ducat in six thousands ducats were in six parts and every part a ducat I would not draw them I would have my bond" This quote is from, Act 4 Scene 1, the trial scene Antonio, Bassanio and the Duke

confront Shylock but Shylock still is very consistent in getting the bond, he wouldn't change his mind.

Shylock's greed got the best of him and left nothing. On the other hand I believe Shylock is a victim. When Jessica runs away with Lorenzo, a Christian, Shylock is very stressed out. " My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter fled with a Christian! O my Christian! O my Christian ducats! " Shylock is indeed worried and concerned about her daughter running away but the fact that she is changing religion to Christianity is one of the reasons which encourages Shylock to have his revenge.

Furthermore when Shylock gets the news that his daughter sold the turquoise ring for a monkey Shylock gets quite upset. " It was my turquoise. I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys " His own daughter stole then sold Shylock's most valued possession which makes me sympathetic towards him. My general opinion is that Shylock is a victim. One reason why I think this is because he lives in a society, where Jews are simply rejected. Therefore any Jew in Shylock's position would have done the same thing, to get back at the people that makes his life and others alike miserable.