

Sympathy for the devil poem analysis



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In the poem Sympathy for the devil, the speaker uses many different historical allusions and understatement to gain the readers sympathy for him. The speaker of the poem is the Devil and he tries to make it sound as though he is forced to be around all of the death and despair so that the reader might feel bad for him. He uses the historical allusion of “ I was around when Jesus Christ had his moment of doubt and pain” to show that he has been around for a very long time and he has seen some of the most sorrowful deaths in history.

The speaker tries to make the reader feel sorry for him because he has seen so much death. Throughout the poem he makes it very clear that he himself did not murder or cause any of the deaths that he talks about by making the understatement “ I was round when” and “ I watched “. Those kind of understatement show that he was not the reason for the deaths even though he was there when they occurred and therefore he should not be to blame but in fact he wants remorse.

The biggest understatement that the speaker use is the second to last stanza when he list the contradictions “ Just as every cop is a criminal, And all the sinners saints, As heads is Tails”. In that stanza he tries to show that people should not be judged for what they see or are around because no one is perfect. The best way that he attempted to elicit sympathy for himself is by being polite by saying “ Please allow” and “ Let me please”. Him being polite was probably his best chance to gain any kind of sympathy from the reader because usually if you are nice to a person they are generally nice to you.