

# Merchant of venice by william shakespeare analysis

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The Merchant of Venice Essay ' Shylock was justified in taking revenge on Antonio. ' Do you agree? In ' The Merchant of Venice' by William Shakespeare, Shylock the Jew is portrayed as the antagonist of the story. Cunning, vengeful and cruel are words you may use to describe this malicious character, but does he really deserve this reputation? Upon the mention of Shylock, the saying ' Never judge a book by its cover' comes to mind. Though Shylock is seen as a cruel and spiteful character, if one takes the time to seriously analyze the story, you will find that Shylock's behavior is not without reason.

Under the circumstances that had befallen him, it is relatively normal that Shylock would wish to seek revenge towards Antonio, seeing as Antonio had not treated Shylock amiably in the past, calling him ' cut throat dog' and even going as far as to spitting on his Jewish robes. But Shylock did take the whole ' revenge' factor a little too far, and most, if not all people would agree that his desire for revenge should not be justified.

However, there are always two sides to every story, and I believe that in this case, not many people take Shylock's side of the story into enough consideration. I believe that if one takes the time to analyze the situation thoroughly without showing favor for either sides, you will realize that Shylock has not made any unfair demands towards Antonio. Looking further into the matter, it is seen that Shylock and Antonio were both business men, and they had signed a contract, clearly outlining the bond, also including the chilling results of a broken bond.

As Antonio was a known business man, he knew exactly what would happen to him if he did not return the money by the due date, but he was so certain that his ships would be back before the given time that he did not think much about the risk and danger he was putting himself into by agreeing to the bond. Since Antonio knew the consequences he would face from the moment he signed the bond, he is legally and rightfully bound to it. So from this point of view, you can see that this situation is in Shylock's favor, as he is not the one who has broken the bond.

From this angle of view, it is clear that it is Antonio and his fellow friends who refuse to uphold the agreements in the bond. In this case, it is only fair that Shylock should enforce the bond, no matter how cruel, as the revenge was rightfully his. During the time of the trial, it was revealed that Shylock was going through a troublesome time, not only with Antonio, but also with his only daughter Jessica, who had eloped with Lorenzo, a Christian.

When she left, she also took a large amount of his riches with her, causing Shylock the loss of both his daughter and a significant portion of his wealth. After this traumatizing event, Shylock's loathing towards Christians would have risen considerably, since he strongly believed that he had been wronged, and that his daughter's undutiful behavior was caused by her Christian husband. This attitude and state of mind may have very likely contributed towards his unmovable thirst for revenge against Antonio and his fellow Christians.

From the court scene, it can be seen that Shylock was very determined to uphold the law of Venice, and refused to destroy the bond even when offered

double, even triple of the original amount of money owed. This shows that though he has ulterior motives to denying the extra payment, he takes contracts seriously and is indeed ' a man of his word'. He also fully agrees with all of Portia's statements and interpretations, despite the fact that she is also a Christian, and seemed to particularly enjoy her statements regarding the fulfillment of his bond with Antonio.

All in all, I personally believe that Shylock's character in The Merchant of Venice has not been given full justice, especially regarding the bond between himself and Antonio. Also as I have mentioned before, his malicious behavior can be traced back to various events in his life, and he is not seeking revenge without solid evidence, and it is Antonio that hides from his responsibilities regarding the broken bond. Shylock is a very good example on which the saying ' Never judge a book by its cover' is proven to be completely accurate.