

Captain vere

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Billy Budd, Sailor Captain Vere had a strong personal liking for Billy ever since he got recruited into the Bellipotent warship. However, his affection for him comes to test when Billy is accused of plotting mutiny. The master – of art, Claggart, accuses him of using his charming looks and liking by fellow crewmembers to initiate a mutiny (Melville & Milder, 78). According to him, the crewmembers would support Billy in ensuring the success of the plot. Captain Vere becomes suspicious over Claggart's accusation and thus summons Billy to his cabin. In the room, Captain requests Billy to defend himself against the claims.

However, Billy is unable to defend himself since he cannot communicate properly when under duress. Therefore, he remains quite since he avoids stuttering. With only one means for defense, Billy strikes a blow to Claggart's forehead and thus making him bleed in the ears and nose to death (Calhoun, 2). Vere constitutes a jury, which decides on Billy's case and later sends him to the gallows after being found guilty of murder. Despite doubting Claggart's accusations, he does not request for proof even though Claggart claims that he can prove the claims (Melville & Milder, 123). However, he shies away from requesting the evidence and even makes it a secret. As the Captain, he would demand proof and conduct investigations to ascertain such claims. In case he could find any evidence, he could have then proceeded in summoning Billy to the cabin to listen to his views about the claim.

Moreover, since he knew Billy had a problem in communication more so when under stress, he could have summoned him in private to listen to his side of the story when not stressed. This is because, stress free, Billy could have responded to the accusation and thus would not have been sent to the <https://assignbuster.com/captain-vere/>

gallows. However, he blundered when he requested Claggart to confront Billy with the claims despite knowing that Billy would not respond due to the influence of stress. Furthermore, by making such accusations discrete, Billy limited chances of determining the truth since fellow crewmembers. This is because probably they could have confirmed or denied the accusation against Billy (Melville & Milder, 115).

When Claggart's dies, Vere considers it a divine judgment in that he believes Claggart's evil deeds result in his death. According to him, Claggart is the devil while Billy is an angel. Therefore, the angel has stricken dead the devil for his evil deeds. However, his perception of the situation is controversial since he declares that the angel must die even though he has killed the devil. His stake on the situation also contravenes his perception and love for Billy. Despite knowing that Billy is innocent, his declaration that he must die already shows his decision on Billy's fate (Melville & Milder 189).

Captain Vere's decision not to wait for the admiral to determine the case also creates doubt over his love for Billy. His resolution to initiate a quick prosecution for Billy seems a rash. His reason for initiating quick prosecution and determination of the case is to avoid sending dangerous message to the crewmembers. However, this reason seems illogical since one cannot be prosecuted based only on laws. This is because in some situations, the principles of justice prevail upon the law. Therefore, instead of waiting for the admiral to decide on Billy's case, he quickly assembles a jury to determine the case (Melville & Milder, 209). Furthermore, he handpicks the jury, he prosecutes, he decides for the jury and therefore, is responsible for Billy's death. For instance, he directs the jury to decide on Billy's fate even though the jury is reluctant and requests enough time to make the ruling.

<https://assignbuster.com/captain-vere/>

Captain Vere demands that the jury make two decisions; either acquit Billy off the charges or condemn him for being responsible for Claggart's death. Under Vere's demand, the jury decides on Billy's fate by proving him guilty of murder and thereafter, sending him to the gallows (Melville & Milder, 152).

Vere's actions and behavior are for protecting the integrity of the crew. His fear is that the law guiding the navy officers may be compromised and that it could send wrong messages to the crew (Calhoun, 6). Such messages can cause a downfall of the entire British navy and thus fail the country.

However, Vere's conduct is unjustifiable since it leads to execution of Billy, an innocent man. Despite believing Billy's innocence, his support for quick prosecution and determination of the case limits Billy's chances for a fair trial since he is unfairly condemned and executed. Moreover, Vere could understand that there are times when the principles of justice overcome the laws. This is because man creates such laws while at the same time cannot influence the principle of justice. In addition, such laws can be modified to suit the prevailing circumstances and situations without compromising justice.

Works Cited

Calhoun, Byron J. " Captain Vere As Outsider And Insider: Military Leadership In Billy Budd, Sailor." *War, Literature & The Arts: An International Journal Of The Humanities* 21. 1/2 (2009): 1-10.

Melville, Herman, and Robert Milder. *Billy Budd, Sailor: And Selected Tales*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998. Print.