

Student Essay on Shylock's Search for Justice

Shylock's Search for Justice by William Shakespeare

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Essay

In the *Merchant of Venice* Shylock seeks justice to punish Antonio for not repaying the loan. Shylock refuses to accept anything other than the pound of flesh. Shylock says that the contract Antonio signed stipulated for a pound of flesh so that is what Antonio must give up. Portia, disguised as a lawyer, agrees that they must follow the contract because it is law. Next Portia suggests a surgeon to be called to watch over the harvesting of Antonio's flesh to ensure safety. "I cannot find it. 'Tis not in the bond." (Shakespeare 4.1.274). The disguised Portia then tells Shylock he may only cut exactly one pound of flesh, because that is all that the contract stipulates. Shylock realizes the situation he just got himself into and offers to take money. Shylock is told that he must follow the bond. Portia then tells Shylock he is also guilty of conspiring to take the life of a Venetian citizen, this means Shylock must pay half his money to Antonio and half to the State. Antonio unlike Shylock shows mercy and allows Shylock to keep his money as long as it is willed to Lorenzo. The Duke also allows Shylock to live, but he must abide to Antonio's words and become a Christian. This part of the play is a good example of how no one can evade justice, and how everyone will receive justice.