

6 Symbols

Shakespeare's play "The Merchant of Venice" ~~has~~^{contains} many different symbols that appear once or several times. But what importance are they given in the play, what do they symbolize and what are they referring to?

First of all, I want to talk about the pound of flesh, one of the most important symbols in the play. The pound of flesh symbolize the bond between Antonio and Shylock, which is the main theme of the play. It rears often in the play ~~as~~ as a reminder and warning for Antonio. The pound of flesh also symbolizes the loss Shylock suffers of his own ~~own~~ flesh and blood, his daughter Jessica. After she eloped with Lorenzo, Shylock has lost his most precious property, his daughter. In this ~~way~~^{sense} the pound of flesh symbolizes the revenge of Shylock and the compensation of his lost daughter. It's a revenge because in his eyes, Lorenzo is equalized to all the christians and so he ~~sees~~ sees the loss of his daughter as a robbery of his own flesh by the christians and so he seeks to get a pound of flesh back from them.

Secondly I want to talk about the three caskets that, ~~in~~ in my opinion, are the second most important symbol in the play, because they stand for the relation between Portia and Bassanio. As ~~a~~ Portia is to be given in marriage, the candidates have to choose one of three caskets. One golden, one ~~silver~~^{argentine} and one lead. Only the content of the one right box allows the candidates to marry Portia.

In my opinion, the three caskets symbolize three different characteristics of a person. The golden casket stands for a greedy and selfish person that only wants to achieve profit. As these characteristics are mainly negative, it certainly

can't be the one casket that contains Portia. The ~~silver~~^{argentine} casket can't be the one either, because it symbolizes arrogance and again selfishness. These two characteristics are as well described negatively, and Portia won't be given to a man that sees himself as wonderful and precious as herself. Finally the leaden casket is the one to go for, because it symbolizes modesty and hard work. As lead is really heavy, it can also be seen that the marriage is no bed of roses. In addition, the characteristics that come with the leaden casket are the only ones that represent true christian values, so it symbolizes that only a ~~true~~ christian deserves Portia. ₄₀₀

Next, I want to talk about ~~the~~ another recurring symbol, the ring. There ~~are~~ ~~is~~ is a total of three important rings that appear in the play. As a ring symbolizes marriage it is assumable that the rings given to Bassanio and Gratiano have ~~the~~ something to do with their marriages. Precisely they symbolize a reminder to the fidelity to their wives which, again, shows one of the central states in christianism. The third important ring is the one of Shylock ^{childhood love Leah} ~~deed~~. It's a symbol for the love and human characteristics of Shylock in contrast ~~with~~ all the thirst for revenge of his person. As Jessica steals this ring and sells it it again shows the humanity and ~~the~~ Shylocks ability to love. This ~~makes~~ leads us to, for once, sympathise with Shylocks character.

Furthermore I want to talk about another symbol that ~~is~~ acts as a mirror of the whole story, Antonios ships. I think that these ships symbolize the general tension and the conflicts of the story. At the beginning, ~~the~~ ~~ships~~ we have no message of any problems with the ships, the conflict between Antonio and Shylock has not begun yet. As they agree on the deal with the bond,

Antonio gets the message that all the ships sunk. This is like a bad omen referring to the bond. Now Antonio has reason to fear Shylock and he lost all the hope by the lost ships. In the end, as Shylock claims his bond but is stopped ~~at~~ ~~by~~ the last second, the message reaches Antonio that his ships nevertheless securely arrived ~~at~~ in Venice. I think that the symbol of the ship shows the tension and the conflict in the play really good and also gets to symbolize the happy end of the play.

In general we have to say that this play is affected by many christian symbols that appeal to every christian. Furthermore the symbols take up a central role in this play as they are responsible for the main incidents and finally lead the characters in this play to their own individual ~~to~~ happy end.

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