# Revenge In 'Titus Andronicus' And 'The Merchant Of Venice'

Revenge is the central and the main theme in William Shakespeare's 'Titus Andronicus' and 'The Merchant of Venice. We are able to see how these plays have revenge especially with women' the plays are seen as having revenge against one another and we can see that between the different characters in the play. The revengers take things into their own hands because they feel that the government is not able or is incapable of serving justice to their wronged ones. In Titus Andronicus, the main person is named Titus and he engages in a cycle of revenge with the Queen of Goths' Tamora. The play is the most violent and bloodiest that Shakespeare's has ever done.

In the play, there are different kind of revenges that are not told or unfolded and it puts the characters into violence against one another. The Merchant of Venice exposes the intimate connection between law and revenge because we see that Shylock pursues Antonio's pound of flesh. He can also see how he sticks to the law to seek revenge from Antonio following his long standing grudge against him and the religious community of Christianity. Vengeance brings the worst of women in both Titus Andronicus and The Merchant of Venice, but other women like Livinia fall victims of trevenge.

Tamora and Portia do not have vengeance in their hearts at the beginning of the play but they are motivated by the injustices done to their loved ones to make the people responsible to pay.

They beg for forgiveness just before the crime is committed and once their requests are ignored they then turn into revengers and do way worse than what was done to them. In Titus Andronicus, Tamora's vengeance is done because of the murder of her son and in The Merchant of Venice, Portia's vengeance is also motivated by Shylocks when attempting to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh. Although she does stop him before the damage is all done, she still makes him pay for his actions. However, the revenge does not serve its purpose, to cancel out a crime but instead there continues to be a lot of violence. It does not bring any justice but continues to harm those innocent people as the ones involved continues go back and forth destroying each other's lives and causing lots of pain to there loved ones. It begins when Titus sacrifices Tamora's son to have revenge for his sons' death. Tamara avenges his son by having his sons and lover rape Titus'daughter and killing his sons. The revenge goes on until there is no one left alive and all die they also go to carry out more vengeance. Neither of them reach fairness as the revenge on each other go on several times and at the end there is no justice at all. The five scenes of revenge include the sacrifice of Alarbus, Tamora's son, the rape of Lavinia, Titus' daughter, the wrong accusation and murder of Martius and Quintus Titus' sons, the killing of Demetrius and Chiron and finally the bloodbath that leaves almost evryone dead Lucius and Marcus are all revenges that they seemed for one another. Titus has just fought the Goths in the ten-year battle and they captured the queen and her three sons which calls for a barbarous Roman rite that involves a sacrifice, 'Religiously they ask a sacrifice. To this your son is marked, and die he must,' (Shakespeare 124,125). Titus chose Alarbus as a sacrifice to avenge for his twenty-one sons who died in the battle against the Goths. Tamora's is also begsging for his compassion to spare her son but his pride and victory motivates him to carry out his religious obligation. She feels like what was done to her son is unfair and justice must be

served for her sonn. Alarbus sacrifice was done in a torturous and horrible way which Tamora did not like not even a bit of it. She finds the act a cruel loyalty that was not too religious at all 'cruel irreligious piety!' (Shakespeare). Tamora is very upset and vows to avenge his son. Tamora in a union with Aaron and her sons plan to avenge and Titus begins with hurting his daughter badly, killing his son-in-law then his sons. Aaron, Demetrius, and Chiron to rape Lavinia, Titus' daughter to avenge her son. They cut her tongue out and chop off her hands to keep her from revealing their identities. Tamora's revenge is way worse because the shame and pain of Lavinia would always cause pain to him for as long as he lives. In addition to brutally mutilating Lavinia, they also kill her husband, Bassianus and blame it on Titus sons. Aaron tricks Martius and Quintus into falling in the pit where Tamora's sons had dumped Bassianus' body. He then forges a letter accusing the boys of killing him. Moreover, he then buries a bag of gold at the same place as a pay for the boys for killing Bassianus. The bag and the letter were enough proof for Saturninus to arrest sentence them to death. And Aaron took also took advantage of Titus' desperation to save his son from execution to deliver a false message that required Titus to cut off his hand to save his sons, (Shakespeare, 202,207). Nevertheless, their heads were chopped and send to there father together with his hand, something that motivated Titus to plan a vengeance on Tamora. Titus begins vengeance for his entire family upon receiving the heads of his sons and his hand, (Shakespeare 276). He also becomes very motivated to harm his family when Lavinia reveals the real identity of the people who harmed her by holding a stick with her mouth and between her mutilated arms to write on the ground. He wants Tamora, Aaron, and Saturninus to pay for the pain they have caused his family beginning from the rape and mutilation of his daughter, murder of his son-in-law, death of his sons and loss of his left hand, (Shakespeare, 171, 176). However, he cannot do it without the help of Lucius and Lavinia. Lucius organizes the Goths to come to strike the Roman Empire by convincing them that the people hate their emperor. Also, the Goths are motivated by their desire to revenge upon Tamora. Titus revenge plan involved lots of madness to fool Tamora into getting closer to him. She bought it and paid him a visit with his sons dressed like spirits of Revenge, Murder, and Rape. Tamora posing as revenge urges Titus to convince his son lucius to hold his attack for a while and in exchange, she offers to help him avenge his enemies. They organize a feast in Titus house which was meant to reconcile Lucius and Saturninus. Titus asks Tamora to leave his sons behind, after which he kills them and makes dinner out of their flesh, which he serves Tamora and the other guests. Titus kills Lavinia to end her pain and his, 'Because the girl should not survive her shame / And by her presence still renew his sorrows.' (Shakespeare, 40,41). He says that Lavinia's death was not on him, but on Demetrius and Chiron who damaged her seeking revenge on Titus. We are able to see that He then stabs Tamora to death after which Saturninus stabs him as also. Lucius stubs Saturninus to avenge his father, though bringing to an end the cycle of revenge. There were no more people left to carry out vengeance upon. The feast was the climax of revenge as human flesh was served and six of these people were murdered. The horrible of all is Titus feeding Tamora his son's flesh, (Shakespeare, 61, 63).

The theme of revenge in the play is seen in many different ways and The Merchant of Venice is seen in Shylocks actions to make Antonio pay for the wrongs things that he has done to him and in Portia's actions when she takes everything from Shylock for attempting to kill Antonio. Shylock is a moneylending Jew she lends money and lends 3,000 debuts to Antonio a merchant in Venice using a pound of his flesh as collateral. Antonio defaults to pay his debt, forcing Shylock to use it to revenge upon him for their existing grudge. Being a Christian, Antonio does not support Shylock's usury and his practice of offering interest free loans can bring down Shylock's business. He is rude and disrespectful, and this Is seen in the play by the things that

these people do for seeking one thing.

Shylock gives a long speech to prove his justification to avenge his Jewish community that has suffered persecution from the Christians. He is motivated by his desire to avenge for his ancestors over the wrongs the society has done unto them. He only uses Antonio as a symbol, 'If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,' (Shakespeare). He wants to show that he is the victim in this case And not Antonio. He even lists down the sufferings he has endured in the hands of Christians by virtue of being a Jew. The Christians had the tendency of belittling the Jews and never showing them any sympathy. They rejoiced when things did not work out for them and enjoyed watching them suffer. He has a lot of hate on his heart as we can see in his speech that shows the discrimination faced by the Jews as well as an unending humiliation by the community. As a Jew, he feels that Christians do not treat them as their equals and more importantly as fellow human beings. Moreover, Shylock wants to harm for the lost of his daughter Jessica to a Christian named Lorenzo. Jessica's actions make him the laughing stock of the town. Also, she left with some of his wealth and a ring that Shylock was given by Leah, his late wife.

Shylocks speech is also meant to show that he has all the rights to make someone of the Christian faith pay for the injustices caused to the Jews. He becomes the happiest man when he learns that Antonio has lost his ships thus making it impossible to pay his debt. His dream of revenging upon the Christians has finally come true. He does not show mercy on Antonio even after Portia begs him to do so. He also admits that the offences that Antonio has done unto him cannot compare to the crime he is about to commit of killing him, but that is how he prefers things to be. Shylock wants Antonio to pay for making him the wicked person that he is, 'The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction, '( Shakespeare 72)

Portia's verdict shows how much she wants revenge on Shylock for trying to harm one of her tribe, Shylock is determined to continue to keep to the terms of the contract that required him to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh and no amount of money that could stop him. He even refuses Bassanio's offer of twice the amount owed because all he wanted was revenge. Portia could not sit back and let him kill Antonio, but instead turned the tables and became the one seeking vengeance. She then asks Shylock to cut exactly a pound of flesh and not more or even less than that without shedding any blood since the contract does not involve any amount of blood. Shylock could not stick to Portia's conditions which made him reconsider the money, but it was too late. Portia's verdict made sure that he lost everything including his religious identity. He lost all his property to Lorenzo and Jessica and his conversion to Christianity prevented him from making more wealth since unlike the Jews, Christianity does not allow usury.

To sum up, revenge is is not right and it is illegal. It never comes to an end and keeps dragging innocent people into the mess that it creates. Revenge turns women into merciless creatures as they try to avenge their loved ones. Tamora turns into a murderer in an attempt to avenge her son. Portia takes everything from shylock to avenge Antonio. However, Lavinia falls a victim of revenge following her father's crime. Filled with so much harashness so she then helps her father avenge his family at the end of the play by playing a cook. All these women do not initiate the cycle of revenge but they do anything within their power to hurt those people who harm their loved ones.