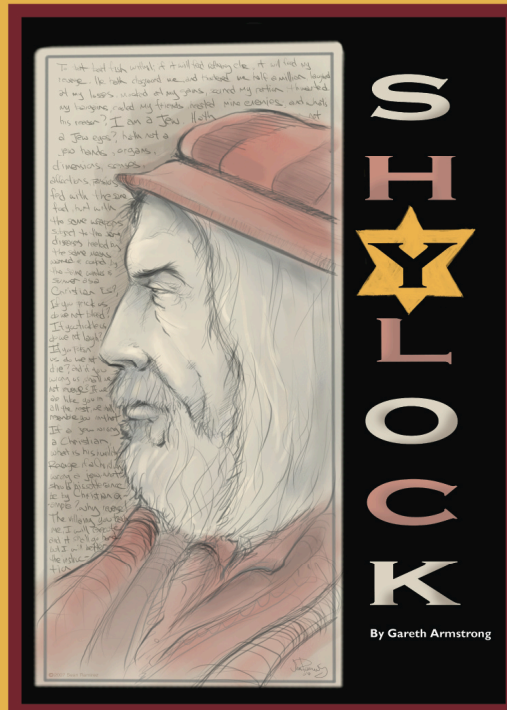




October 10 - November 11, 2007



# SHYLOCK

BY  
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***STUDY GUIDE***

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## ABOUT

### THE ORLANDO SHAKESPEARE THEATER:

We've got a new name and a new logo! We are proud to announce that, thanks to you, our patrons and donors, we have grown from an initial one-month "festival" 19 years ago, to a regional "theater" that features a year-round schedule of nine main-stage productions, three workshops, twelve staged readings, special events and fundraisers, a thriving partnership with UCF and robust educational programming with classes and seminars for pre-K through seniors. Also, thanks to you, three of this past season's productions broke all attendance records at the Lowndes Shakespeare Center.

We are a non-profit, professional theater that presents productions of Shakespeare, classic and contemporary plays, as well as the Darden Theater for Young Audiences Series. The Festival also cultivates new scripts and playwrights through the annual Harriet Lake Festival of New Plays and fosters innovative educational programs to serve the community.

**Scholarships:** Through the generosity of many Central Florida businesses and foundations, the Theater is able to visit a number of schools every year to present our unique workshops FOR FREE! To find out if you qualify for a scholarship please call the Education Director at 407-447-1700 x208.

## MEET THE CHARACTERS:

**\*\*Shylock** is a 'One-Man Show,' which means that all of the characters are played by one performer. Characters with an "\*" speak within the play; others are referenced or talked about.

### ***From The Merchant of Venice:***

**\*Shylock**—Wealthy Jewish moneylender who hates the title figure in *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio, because of the abuse Antonio gives him. Shylock seeks his revenge by claiming a pound of his flesh, as provided for in their loan agreement.

**\*Tubal**—Another wealthy Jewish moneylender. (Narrator of *Shylock*), minor character in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock's best, and only friend.

**Antonio**—Title character in *The Merchant of Venice*. He is a wealthy Christian merchant who becomes indebted to Shylock after failing to repay a loan. Antonio is very anti-Semitic.

**Bassanio**—Christian and Antonio’s best friend who asks to borrow money from Antonio so he can pursue Portia.

**Jessica**—Shylock’s daughter who elopes with Lorenzo.

**\*Portia**—Lover of Bassanio, and rich young Christian woman who disguises herself as a young male lawyer to save Antonio from Shylock’s revenge.

**Lorenzo**—A Christian who elopes with Jessica.

**\*Duke of Venice**—The ruler of Venice, Christian, and judge of Antonio’s trial.

**Goaler or Officer**—Minor character that never speaks, but arrests Antonio at Shylock’s suit, probably also a Christian.

### ***From The Bible:***

**Abraham & Moses**—Prophets of the Old Testament in The Bible.

**Judas**—According to the Gospels Judas was a disciple of Jesus Christ who betrayed him.

**Jesus**—Believed by Christians to be “the son of God”. He was born and raised a Jew before founding the Catholic Church.

**\*Pilate**—Roman Governor who released the criminal Barabas instead of Jesus and washed his hands of the responsibility of Jesus’ death leaving the blame on the Jews.

**\*Barabas**—Title character in *The Jew of Malta*, by Christopher Marlowe. He is an example of a Jew as the comic villain. Also, in *The Bible*, he is the criminal Pilate releases instead of Jesus.

**Gideon**—Jew asked by God to condemn the worship of idols. Gideon demanded proof of God’s power first. An organization named after him distributes Bibles in hotels rooms and other public meeting spaces.

**Schellach**—Jewish ancestor of Abraham who lived to be 403 years old. Shylock’s names is derived from this name.

### ***From History:***

**St. William**—Little boy who died mysteriously. Became a holy Martyr and inspired The Blood Libel-the excuse for the wholesale massacre of Jews.

**Pope Innocent III**—Leader of the Roman Catholic Church (c.1161-1216) who first directed Jews to wear distinctive badges.

**William Shakespeare**—Greatest playwright in the history of the English language. Lived 1564-1616. Among many other plays, *The Merchant of Venice* is where Shylock makes his first appearance.

**\*Richard Burbage**—Lead actor of Shakespeare's acting troupe.

**King James I**—Reigning monarch of England after Queen Elizabeth I, who ruled during the second half of Shakespeare's career. Saw *The Merchant of Venice* twice!

**Richard Malebisse**—English Christian who led attack on Jewish community because he couldn't repay his debts to his Jewish moneylenders.

**Henrietta Bowdler**—Renaissance Theatre critic published under her brother's name, Reverend Thomas Bowdler.

**\*William Prynne**—Puritan who didn't like actors or the theatre.

**\*Charles Macklin**—aka Charlie Macglouchlin, Irish actor who resurrected Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* after almost a century of censorship. Famous for playing Shylock as strong, vengeful bright eyed villain.

**\*Edmund Kean**—Young, brilliant, hard drinking actor who was next great Shylock after Macklin's death.

**Sir Henry Irving**—The greatest actor-manager of the nineteenth century, whose greatest role was Shylock. He played the role over a thousand times, which inspired the translation of the play into over twenty languages.

**Max Reinhardt**—German, Jewish producer who produced famous amazing production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

**Rudolph Schildkrant**—German, Jewish actor who played Shylock.

**Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels**—Hitler's close friend and successor who was in charge of all Nazi propaganda during Hitler's reign.

**Adolf Hitler**—Leader of Nazi Germany from 1933-1945, and brought about the death of over six million Jews in the Holocaust.

#### ***Other Characters:***

**Barbara Streisand**—American, Jewish modern day stage performer.

\***Romeo**—Character in *Romeo and Juliet*, young lover played by Burbage.

**Dracula**—Personification of excuse for The Blood Libel-the excuse for the wholesale massacre of Jews.

\***Street Urchins**—Children in the street who mock Shylock.

\***Puritans**—Critics of the theatre and of actor's moral character.

\***Psychiatrist**—(present day) a Psychiatrist to Shylock.

## **Plot Summary of *Shylock*:**

The story *Shylock* is told through the eyes of Tubal, the only other Jewish character in all of Shakespeare's works, reliving not only Shylock's journey in the play *The Merchant of Venice*, but also the history of Jewish persecution throughout the ages.

Tubal, Shylock's best friend, (actually his only friend,) introduces himself and his status in the Jewish community. He proceeds to summarize "IL PECORNE", Shakespeare's source material for *The Merchant of Venice*, which is almost exactly the same story. The biggest difference between the two stories is that Shakespeare makes the character Shylock a more humanized, rounded out character in *The Merchant of Venice*.

We are taken back to 1190 in York when Richard Malebisse led the first major persecution of Jewish people in England because he couldn't pay his debts to his Jewish moneylender. Christians did not participate in money lending, citing a prohibition in The Bible, but Christians allowed Jews to be moneylenders, and hated them for it. After a hundred years of Jews being killed, beaten, and burnt they are finally exiled from England and every other country in Western Europe ultimately arriving in Venice.

Back to *The Merchant of Venice*: Shylock considers Antonio's request to borrow money. Shylock agrees, despite Antonio's history of public abuse towards Shylock, on the condition that if Antonio cannot repay his debt Shylock will get a pound of Antonio's flesh. Antonio laughs at this offer, mocking Shylock, but accepts it.

Tubal then takes us through a brief history of Jews in literature up to Shakespeare's time being used as comic villains.

Shylock is about to go out for dinner with Antonio when he takes time to lecture his daughter, Jessica, about staying inside at night. It was dangerous for Jews walking around at night in the ghettos in Venice, and Jews were easily recognizable because of the "Badges" they were forced to wear.

Tubal takes us through a brief history of how the Jews came to be forced to wear badges hundreds of years before the Nazi's ever showed up.

Back to *The Merchant of Venice*: Shylock returns home just missing his daughter running away with a Christian, Lorenzo, and taking lots of Shylock's money and jewels. Shylock is devastated.

Tubal takes us through a brief history of censorship of Shakespeare until it is finally restored in the nineteenth century and becomes so popular it is translated in over twenty languages world-wide, including Yiddish.

Back to *The Merchant of Venice*: Shylock takes Antonio to court after he is unable to pay back his debt. The court is very much opposed to Shylock, a Jew, getting a pound of Antonio's Christian flesh. It looks like Shylock will win until Portia, the wife of Antonio's best friend, appears disguised as a young, male lawyer and finds a loophole stripping Shylock of all of his money and giving it to Antonio. Shylock leaves the court disgraced and dejected. Tubal is left with a renewed sense of pride in his Jewish heritage, while mourning Shylock's loss and misfortune.

*THE END*

## **Discussion Questions**

Discuss the following topics in an essay or out loud with your class.

1. What does it mean to be persecuted? Have you ever been treated unfairly for any reason? How did that make you feel? How could you have been treated more fairly?
2. When is it appropriate to confront someone about being mistreated? How best could you go about settling your differences without threatening them or risking your own safety?
3. Imagine that all people with blue eyes are considered inferior to those with brown eyes, or all people who are right handed are inferior to those who are Left handed. How do you think your day-to-day life might be altered?
4. Have you ever witnessed someone else being treated unfairly? Did you do something to stop it, or did you join in treating that person unfairly? How could you have changed what happened?
5. What other examples of people fighting over their differences are still happening today? Choose an event from the news dealing with racism, sexism, persecution of religion, or any other social injustice. Consider both

sides of the conflict. Brainstorm alternate ways in which the conflict might have been resolved differently. How could it have been avoided?

## **About the Author of *Shylock*:**

GARETH ARMSTRONG

Gareth Armstrong was born in Wales and graduated in Drama from Hull University. He has worked extensively in British regional theatre, the West End and as a member of The Royal Shakespeare Company. He was a founding Artistic Director of The Made In Wales Stage Company and of the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff. In 1998 he wrote and performed *Shylock*, which has toured to over thirty countries worldwide. The play has been published in English, translated and performed in Catalan, Spanish and Italian, and will soon be seen on television in Dutch. Gareth also records audio-books, commentaries and voice-overs, and is a frequent broadcaster with the BBC.

## **Middle School LEARNING PLAN:**

**This LEARNING PLAN is designed for grades 6-9.**

**Objectives:** To explore creatively in writing, and considering what it's like in someone else's shoes. Also, considering the commitment and skill needed to perform multiple characters in a single play.

**Standards and Benchmarks:** Participation in the Shakespeare Alive experience and attendance at a live performance of a Shakespearean play can aid student's development toward meeting the following Sunshine State Standards:

*Theatre Arts Standards TH.D.1.3 & 4*

*Theatre Arts Standards TH.E.1.3 & 4*

And

*Language Arts Standards LA 8.2.1.1-5*

*Language Arts Standards LA910.2.1.1-5*

*Language Arts Standards LA 1112.2.1.1-5*

AND

*Social Studies Standard SS.A.2.4*

**Materials Needed:** Paper and writing utensil.



**Challenge:** It requires a great deal of concentration and specificity to perform multiple roles in one show. A ‘One-Man Show’, or ‘One-Woman Show’, like *Shylock*, depends on the performer’s ability to create distinct qualities for each character so that the audience feels as if there is more than one actor on stage.

**Lesson Process:**

1. Have your students pick out a famous villain from history, movies or television. How does that person talk, walk, sound? What does that person look like? Ask your students to write down all the qualities about the villain that are different from their own.
2. Next have them pick a famous hero from history, movies or television. It doesn’t matter if the two characters existed in the same time period, country, or even universe! Encourage your students to get creative. Now have them write down all the qualities about the hero that are different from their own.
3. The students should then write a 1-2 page dialogue between the characters about something they might disagree on. They can even throw in themselves as a mediator between the two characters. Encourage your students to avoid physical violence between the characters. Challenge them to resolve the conflict in some other way.
4. Finally, finding clear vocal and physical choices for each character have your students act out their scene. The audience should pay close attention to the student’s performance writing down two aspects of the performer’s presentation that they appreciated.
5. Afterwards, open a discussion about how it felt being in someone else’s shoes. Did your perception of them change?

## **High School LEARNING PLAN**

**This LEARNING PLAN is designed for grades 9-12.**

**Objectives:** To explore creativity in writing, communicating a distinct character voice, and considering multiple perspectives on an issue.

**Standards and Benchmarks:** Participation in the Shakespeare Alive experience and attendance at a live performance of a Shakespearean play can aid student’s development toward meeting the following Sunshine State Standards:

*Theatre Arts Standards TH.D.1.3 & 4*

*Theatre Arts Standards TH.E.1.3 & 4*

And

*Language Arts Standards LA 8.2.1.1-5*

*Language Arts Standards LA910.2.1.1-5*

*Language Arts Standards LA 1112.2.1.1-5*

AND

*Social Studies Standard SS.A.2.4*

**Materials Needed:** Paper and a writing utensil.

**Challenge:** Shakespeare used many different techniques to help show the unique voice, status, and motivation of each of his characters. A few such techniques were writing in verse for nobility, writing in prose for characters in the servant class, or using rhyme to heighten romantic or comic situations. Encourage your students to establish conventions to make individual characters distinct.

**Lesson Process:**

1. *Shylock* includes dialogue from many different characters from many different time periods, mixing fictitious characters with real people from history all dealing with a similar issue. Have your students write a short story based on a problem in society they feel strongly about. Establish the problem, set up what is at stake for characters to lose, and conclude with a possible solution. The situation doesn't have to be realistic and the solution doesn't have to end positively for all characters. Encourage your students to get creative. Make sure there are characters to support both sides of the issue. Include characters from different time periods, books, movies, television, and/or their own lives.
2. Each character should have a different voice. Explore different writing styles for each of the characters; for instance, a modern day rapper would speak differently than Captain Jack Sparrow who would speak differently than Queen Elizabeth I.
3. When writing dialogue from different character's perspectives consider what it is they want, and what is driving them to pursue it.
4. Read the stories out loud. Encourage your students to put on a different voice for each character while reading, being as distinct and different as possible for each character. Next, act it out if they feel moved to do so (and it is safe and appropriate).
5. Conclude with a discussion about what it felt like to consider a different perspective for each character. Did student's perspectives change?