

### **Captain Vere controversial act**

The three main protagonists in the book *Billy Budd*, Captain is the most controversial one. Unlike Claggart, he is intelligent which it brings him wisdom rather than monomania. At all times, he represents the synthesis of heart and mind. However, Vere's most symbolic and controversial act is the trial and execution of Billy Budd, who seems like a son to him. Vere likes Billy and distrusts Claggart, and he seems not to believe Claggart's accusations against Billy. When Billy strikes Claggart, Vere feels sympathy toward Billy. Nevertheless, Vere ultimately decides to convene a court to punish Billy according to the letter of the law.

In fact, Captain Vere was forced to make the misery decision to Billy. When Claggart proceeds to reveal his suspicion that Billy may involve in the mutiny conspiracy to Vere, he is truly surprised by this assertion. As Vere notes that Billy is so roundly liked by the crew that they call him the Handsome Sailor. Claggart explains that Billy creates an aura of friendliness so that his shipmates will defend him and insists that his friendly manner masks an evil nature. Therefore, Vere decides to direct Claggart to confront Billy with his accusation. Claggart speaks with great precision, rendering Billy completely speechless. Even though Vere demands that

Billy speak up to defend himself, but Billy still remains tongue-tied which leads him to fail in the big trouble.

The most controversial part of the story is Captain Vere choose to call a drumhead court instead of hold Billy until later and refer his case to the admiral. He tells the surgeon to inform the lieutenants of what has happened, as well as the captain of the marines. After that, he immediately appoints a small drumhead court consisting of the first lieutenant, the captain of marines, and the sailing master; without further delay. Finally, the court declares Billy is guilty and announces his death penalty. Actually, Captain Vere is trying to avoid any potential mutinous activity that might develop when Billy's plight becomes public. In order to defend his country, Vere decide to resolves the matter secretly and to act on it quickly.

After Billy's execution, Captain Vere vehemently exclaim" Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang "(Sailor 966). Vere equates Billy with an "angel of God," but at the same time says that even if a *real* angel of God had committed murder on his ship, the angel would have to hang. Vere's duty is to oversee the application of the written law, and the law prescribes hanging as a punishment for murder, particularly when the murderous act could be attributed to mutiny. In choosing to obey law over conscience, Vere has no any other way to save Billy.

Although Captain Vere does not seem to believe that Billy has committed a terrible crime, he still has to obey his duty to oversee the application of the written law. Vere ignores his inner emotions, convenes a court to try Billy and finally convicts him to death penalty. In reality, everyone has their own moral principle which Captain Vere thinks anyone who has commit murder must face their consequence. Billy Budd maybe not guilty to any conspiratorial of mutiny, but he definitely murder Claggart in front of Vere.