

## OTHELLO

A line-by-line translation

## Act 1, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter RODERIGO and IAGO*

## RODERIGO

Tush! Never tell me. I take it much unkindly  
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse  
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

## IAGO

'Sblood, but you'll not hear me!  
5 If ever I did dream of such a matter, abhor me.

## RODERIGO

Thou told'st me  
Thou didst hold him in thy hate.

## IAGO

Despise me  
If I do not. Three great ones of the city  
10 (In personal suit to make me his lieutenant)  
Off-capped to him, and by the faith of man  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.  
But he (as loving his own pride and purposes)  
Evades them with a bombast circumstance  
15 Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,  
And in conclusion  
Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he,  
"I have already chose my officer."  
And what was he?  
20 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine  
A fellow almost damned in a fair wife  
That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows  
25 More than a spinster—unless the bookish theoretic,  
Wherein the togged consuls can propose  
As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice  
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th' election  
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
30 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
Christian and heathen, must be belee'd and calmed  
By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster  
He (in good time) must his lieutenant be  
And I, bless the mark, his Moorship's ancient.

## RODERIGO

35 By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

## IAGO

Why, there's no remedy. 'Tis the curse of service.  
Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
And not by old gradation, where each second  
Stood heir to th' first. Now sir, be judge yourself,  
40 Whether I in any just term am affined  
To love the Moor.

## RODERIGO

I would not follow him then.

## Shakescleare Translation

*RODERIGO and IAGO enter.*

## RODERIGO

Psh! Don't say that. Iago, I am not pleased that you've  
known about this, especially since I've given you access to  
my wallet as if it were your own.

## IAGO

Christ <sup>1</sup>, you're not listening to me! I never even dreamed  
of such a thing. If I did, you'd have every right to hate me.

<sup>1</sup> A common curse in Shakespeare's time, "'Sblood" is a contraction of "by Christ's blood."

## RODERIGO

You told me that you hated him.

## IAGO

If I don't hate him, you can hate me. Three noblemen of the city tipped their hats to him, making a personal plea for him to make me his lieutenant. And, truly, I know my value, and I'm worthy of that position. But of course *Othello* is too proud to listen and wants to do things his own way, so he speaks in circles with empty talk about war-related titles. And in the end he declines their proposal and says, "Certainly, I have already chosen my lieutenant." And who did he choose? A guy who's basically a mathematician, some Michael Cassio, from Florence. A man practically cursed with a wife <sup>2</sup> too beautiful (whom he can't control). A man who has never commanded a squadron on the battlefield, who knows no more about battle than an old lady. He knows only theory from books, full of the talk of old geezers in togas. His military experience is all ideas, with no real action! But, sir, Othello chose this Cassio for lieutenant, not me—even though he's seen proof of my military prowess with his own eyes at Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on all sorts of battlefields in Christian and Pagan lands. Now, my career's stalled and I'm overtaken by some number cruncher—an accountant! That bean-counter will be his lieutenant before too long, and meanwhile I'll be carrying around his Moorship's <sup>3</sup> flag, thank you very much.

<sup>2</sup> This is the only time in the play that Cassio's wife is mentioned, and she does not appear onstage.

<sup>3</sup> "Moor" was a term for someone of African descent, which is repeatedly used to describe Othello. Here, Iago makes a derogatory pun on the normally respectful phrase "his Worship."

## RODERIGO

God, I'd rather be his executioner than his flag-bearer.

## IAGO

Well, there's nothing I can do. That's the price of military service. Promotions are a matter of favoritism—based on whoever the leader likes—not based on rank, with a second officer stepping up to become a first officer, and so on. So now, sir, you be the judge and tell me: do I have any reason at all to love that Moor?

## RODERIGO

If I were your position I wouldn't follow him. So why do you?

**IAGO**

O sir, content you.

I follow him to serve my turn upon him.

- 45 We cannot all be masters, nor all masters  
Cannot be truly followed. You shall mark  
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave  
That (doting on his own obsequious bondage)  
Wears out his time much like his master's ass  
50 For naught but provender, and when he's old, cashiered.  
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are  
Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,  
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves  
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,  
55 Do well thrive by them. And when they have lined their  
coats,  
Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul,  
And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,  
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,  
60 Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.  
In following him, I follow but myself.  
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,  
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.  
For when my outward action doth demonstrate  
65 The native act and figure of my heart  
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after  
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

**RODERIGO**

What a full fortune does the Thick-lips owe

- 70 If he can carry't thus!

**IAGO**

Call up her father.

Rouse him. Make after him, Poison his delight,  
Proclaim him in the streets. Incense her kinsmen,  
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
75 Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy  
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,  
As it may lose some color.

**RODERIGO**

Here is her father's house, I'll call aloud.

**IAGO**

Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell  
80 As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
Is spied in populous cities.

**RODERIGO**

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

**IAGO**

Awake! What, ho, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves!  
Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!  
85 Thieves! thieves!

*Enter BRABANTIO, above*

**BRABANTIO**

What is the reason of this terrible summons?  
What is the matter there?

**RODERIGO**

Signior, is all your family within?

**IAGO**

Are your doors locked?

**IAGO**

Oh, sir, calm yourself. I'm following him only so I can turn on him later. Maybe we can't all be leaders, but not all leaders can have loyal followers. All the time you see dutiful servants kneeling to their masters and working like mules for nothing but food. And when they get old, they're fired. These honest fools deserve to be whipped! There are others who take the appearance of duty and loyalty, but stay focused on their own interests. They put on a good show of serving their lords, and thrive in their subservient positions. But once they get enough money, they serve only themselves. These are the guys who really have some soul. That's the kind of servant I am. Believe me, as sure as your name is Roderigo: if I were the Moor, I would not want Iago as my servant. In following him, I'm really just following myself. God may judge me. I swear I'm not serving Othello out of love and duty, but merely appearing to, for my own purposes. If my outward appearance showed what my real intentions are, it would be like wearing my heart on my sleeve for birds to peck at. I am not what I seem to be.

**RODERIGO**

What luck Thick-lips <sup>4</sup> has, if he can pull off what he's trying to do.

<sup>4</sup> This is a racial epithet applied to Othello, based on a stereotype Englishmen held about those of "Moorish," or African, descent.

**IAGO**

Call up Desdemona's father. Wake him up. We'll slander Othello in the streets, and ruin his happiness by getting his wife's family all riled up. And even if he's in a paradise right now, we'll fill it with flies. He may still be happy, but we'll douse him in so much irritation that his happiness will lose some of its luster.

**RODERIGO**

Here's Desdemona's father's house. I'll call out.

**IAGO**

Do it! Shout as loud and as seriously as when someone cries "Fire!" in a crowded city at night.

**RODERIGO**

Hey, Brabantio! Sir Brabantio, hey!

**IAGO**

Brabantio, wake up! Thieves! Thieves! Check on your house, check on your daughter, check on your money bags! Thieves! Thieves!

*BRABANTIO enters on a balcony above the two men.*

**BRABANTIO**

What's the reason for your awful shouting? What's the matter out there?

**RODERIGO**

Sir <sup>5</sup>, is all of your family safely inside?

<sup>5</sup> In the original text, Roderigo uses the common Italian form of address for a man, "signior"—appropriate for the play's Venetian setting.

**IAGO**

Are your doors locked?

**BRABANTIO**

90 Why, wherefore ask you this?

**IAGO**

Zounds, sir, you're robbed! For shame, put on your gown.

Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

95 Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise,

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

Arise, I say!

**BRABANTIO**

What, have you lost your wits?

**RODERIGO**

100 Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

**BRABANTIO**

Not I. What are you?

**RODERIGO**

My name is Roderigo.

**BRABANTIO**

The worse welcome.

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors.

105 In honest plainness thou hast heard me say

My daughter is not for thee. And now in madness,

Being full of supper and distempering drafts,

Upon malicious knavery dost thou come

To start my quiet?

**RODERIGO**

110 Sir, sir, sir—

**BRABANTIO**

But thou must needs be sure

My spirits and my place have in their power

To make this bitter to thee.

**RODERIGO**

Patience, good sir.

**BRABANTIO**

115 What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is Venice,

My house is not a grange.

**RODERIGO**

Most grave Brabantio,

In simple and pure soul I come to you—

**IAGO**

Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve

120 God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you

service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your

daughter covered with a Barbary horse. You'll have your

nephews neigh to you. You'll have coursers for cousins

and gennets for Germans.

**BRABANTIO**

125 What profane wretch art thou?

**IAGO**

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and

the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

**BRABANTIO**

Thou art a villain!

**BRABANTIO**

Why? Why on earth are you asking me this?

**IAGO**

Good lord <sup>6</sup>, you're being robbed! You should be

ashamed. Get dressed! It's like your heart is burst open and

you're bleeding away your very soul. At this very

moment—right now—an old black ram is having his way

with your white lamb <sup>7</sup>. Get up, get up! Ring the bell and

wake up all the snoring citizens, or else that devil will make

you a grandfather. Get up!

**BRABANTIO**

What are you saying? Have you lost your mind?

**RODERIGO**

Most noble sir, do you recognize my voice?

**BRABANTIO**

I do not. Who are you?

**RODERIGO**

My name is Roderigo.

**BRABANTIO**

Then you're not welcome here. I've already told you not to

come by my house. I told you bluntly and honestly: my

daughter is not for you. And now you come here in some

kind of madness brought on by feasting and too many

drinks, just to make trouble and ruin my good sleep?

**RODERIGO**

Sir, sir, sir—

**BRABANTIO**

Make sure you understand: I have the will—and the

power—to make you regret this.

**RODERIGO**

Good sir, hold on.

**BRABANTIO**

What are you talking to me about with "robbing?" This is

the city of Venice. My house isn't some unprotected barn.

**RODERIGO**

Honorable Brabantio, I come to you in all honesty and good

will—

**IAGO**

Christ, sir, you're the type of man who would refuse to serve

God if the devil told you to! We've come here to do you a

favor, and you're ignoring us just because you think we're

no good. You're letting your daughter mate with a Barbary <sup>8</sup>

horse. Your grandchildren will neigh to you. You'll have

ponies and colts for descendants.

**BRABANTIO**

What kind of foul-mouthed jerk are you?

**IAGO**

Sir, I am one that comes to tell you that your daughter and

the Moor are doing the deed at this very moment.

**BRABANTIO**

You're a villain!

<sup>6</sup> Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the oath "Zounds," a contracted version of the phrase "by God's wounds."

<sup>7</sup> Iago uses an overtly sexual metaphor which puts primacy on Othello's race.

<sup>8</sup> Barbary refers to a region in northern Africa.

**IAGO**

You are a senator!

**BRABANTIO**

130 This thou shalt answer. I know thee, Roderigo.

**RODERIGO**

Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,  
If't be your pleasure and most wise consent  
(As partly I find it is) that your fair daughter  
At this odd-even and dull watch o' th' night  
135 Transported with no worse nor better guard  
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,  
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,  
If this be known to you and your allowance,  
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs.  
140 But if you know not this my manners tell me  
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe  
That, from the sense of all civility,  
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.  
Your daughter (if you have not given her leave)  
145 I say again, hath made a gross revolt,  
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes  
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger  
Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself.  
If she be in her chamber or your house,  
150 Let loose on me the justice of the state  
For thus deluding you.

**BRABANTIO**

Strike on the tinder, ho!  
Give me a taper, call up all my people!  
This accident is not unlike my dream,  
155 Belief of it oppresses me already.  
Light, I say, light!

*Exit above*

**IAGO**

*[to RODERIGO]*

Farewell, for I must leave you.  
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,  
160 To be producted (as, if I stay, I shall)  
Against the Moor. For I do know the state  
(However this may gall him with some check)  
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embarked  
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars  
165 (Which even now stand in act) that, for their souls,  
Another of his fathom they have none  
To lead their business. In which regard,  
Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,  
Yet for necessity of present life  
170 I must show out a flag and sign of love,  
(Which is indeed but sign). That you shall surely find  
him,  
Lead to the Sagittary the raisèd search,  
And there will I be with him. So farewell.

*Exit*

*Enter BRABANTIO, with servants and torches*

**BRABANTIO**

175 It is too true an evil. Gone she is.  
And what's to come of my despisèd time  
Is naught but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,  
Where didst thou see her?— Oh, unhappy girl!—  
With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—  
180 How didst thou know 'twas she?— Oh, she deceives me  
Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more tapers,  
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?

**IAGO**

And you're a senator!

**BRABANTIO**

You will pay for this, Roderigo. I know what kind of man you are.

**RODERIGO**

Sir, I'll answer for anything I've done. But, I beg you. if  
you're okay with the fact that your fair daughter, at this late  
hour of the night, is handed over to the gross hands of a  
lustful Moor with no guard but a common servant for hire, a  
gondolier even—if you know all this, and you allow it (which  
I think is the case), well then I admit we have insolently  
done you wrong. But if you're not aware of all this, then my  
own good manners suggest that you're wrong to scold us.  
Don't think that I would just play around with such a  
serious matter, contrary to any good manners. I repeat: if  
you haven't given your daughter permission, then she has  
seriously rebelled against your authority. She's giving all  
her obedience, beauty, wit, and wealth to some  
extravagant, wandering foreigner, who seems to have roots  
just about everywhere. Go now and see for yourself. If she's  
in her room, or even in your house, sue me and let the  
government punish me for lying to you like this.

**BRABANTIO**

Hey, strike a match! Light me a torch! Wake everyone up!  
This whole situation is not unlike a dream I had. And I'm  
worried it's coming true. Light—give me light!

*BRABANTIO exits from his balcony.*

**IAGO**

*[To RODERIGO]* Goodbye. I must leave you now. It seems to  
me neither wise nor appropriate given my position in  
Othello's service to be brought forward against the  
Moor—and it seems like I will be, if I stay here. Besides, I  
know that the government cannot get rid of him (even if  
this whole thing may annoy Brabantio), since he's needed  
so greatly to fight in the wars with Cyprus that are going on  
right now. And the government has no one else of his  
capability to lead their forces, not even if they should trade  
their own souls for someone. Although I do hate Othello as  
much as I hate the tortures of Hell, for the time being I must  
show signs of love—which, I assure you, are nothing more  
than empty signs. You go lead the search party to the  
Sagittary Inn, where you will surely find him. I'll be there  
with him. So goodbye.

*IAGO exits.*

*BRABANTIO enters with servants and torches.*

**BRABANTIO**

The evil thing you warned me of is all too true. She is gone.  
And all that's left of my life, which I now hate, is bitterness.  
Now, Roderigo, where did you see her? Oh, unhappy girl!  
Did you say she was with the Moor? Who would want to be  
a father in such a situation as this? How did you know it was  
her? Oh, she has tricked me beyond anything I could have  
thought possible. What did she say to you? Get more  
torches, and wake up my whole family. Do you think they've  
gotten married?

**RODERIGO**

Truly, I think they are.

**BRABANTIO**

185 Oh, heaven, how got she out? Oh, treason of the blood!  
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds  
By what you see them act. Is there not charms  
By which the property of youth and maidhood  
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,  
Of some such thing?

**RODERIGO**

190 Yes, sir, I have indeed.

**BRABANTIO**

Call up my brother—Oh, would you had had her!  
Some one way, some another. Do you know  
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

**RODERIGO**

195 I think I can discover him, if you please  
To get good guard and go along with me.

**BRABANTIO**

Pray you lead on. At every house I'll call.  
I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho!  
And raise some special officers of might.—  
On, good Roderigo. I will deserve your pains.

*Exeunt*

**RODERIGO**

Truly, I think they have.

**BRABANTIO**

Oh, heaven, how did she get out of the house? Oh, she has  
committed treason against her own blood! All you fathers,  
from now on do not trust your daughters' minds based on  
how you see them act. Aren't there magic charms out there  
that can trick and violate young maidens? Roderigo, have  
you read about such things?

**RODERIGO**

Yes, sir. I have indeed.

**BRABANTIO**

Call up my brother—oh, if only you had married her!

*[To members of the search party]* Some of you go one way,  
some go another way.

*[To RODERIGO]* Do you know where we might find her and  
the Moor?

**RODERIGO**

I think I can find him, if you want to get some strong, armed  
men together and come along with me.

**BRABANTIO**

Please, lead the way. I'll call on every house. I know most of  
them well enough to tell them, "Hey, get your weapons!" I'll  
raise up a force of especially strong officers. Go on, good  
Roderigo. I will reward you for your efforts.

*BRABANTIO and RODERIGO exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and attendants with torches*

**IAGO**

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,  
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' th' conscience  
To do no contrived murder. I lack iniquity  
Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times  
5 I had thought t' have yerked him here under the ribs.

**OTHELLO**

'Tis better as it is.

**IAGO**

Nay, but he prated  
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
Against your honor  
10 That, with the little godliness I have,  
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray you, sir,  
Are you fast married? Be assured of this:  
That the Magnifico is much beloved  
And hath in his effect a voice potential  
15 As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,  
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance  
The law (with all his might to enforce it on)  
Will give him cable.

**OTHELLO**

Let him do his spite.  
20 My services which I have done the signiory  
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know—

### Shakescleare Translation

*OTHELLO and IAGO enter with attendants and torches.*

**IAGO**

Even though I have killed men while serving in war, still my  
conscience forbids me from committing any premeditated  
murder. I lack the evil disposition that would sometimes  
serve my purpose. Nine or ten times I've thought about just  
stabbing him right under the ribs.

**OTHELLO**

It's better that you haven't.

**IAGO**

No, he said such insulting, rude things against your sense of  
honor that it took all the goodness in me to hold back from  
hurting him. But I beg you to tell me, sir: are you safely  
married? Because you can be sure that Senator Brabantio is  
well-liked in the city, and has twice as much influence as  
the Duke. He will divorce you two, or at least subject you to  
whatever restraint and punishment he has the power to  
inflict.

**OTHELLO**

Let him do his worst. My good deeds done in service to the  
city government will have more influence than his  
complaints. It's not yet well-known—and I won't spread this

Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,  
I shall promulgate. I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
25 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
As this that I have reached. For know, Iago,  
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
I would not my unhoused free condition  
Put into circumscription and confine  
30 For the sea's worth. But look, what lights come yond?

**IAGO**

Those are the raised father and his friends.  
You were best go in.

**OTHELLO**

Not I, I must be found.  
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul  
35 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

**IAGO**

By Janus, I think no.

*Enter CASSIO, with officers and torches*

**OTHELLO**

The servants of the Duke and my lieutenant?  
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
What is the news?

**CASSIO**

40 The Duke does greet you, general,  
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,  
Even on the instant.

**OTHELLO**

What's the matter, think you?

**CASSIO**

Something from Cyprus as I may divine.  
45 It is a business of some heat. The galleys  
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers  
This very night at one another's heels,  
And many of the consuls, raised and met,  
Are at the Duke's already. You have been hotly called  
50 for.  
When being not at your lodging to be found  
The Senate hath sent about three several guests  
To search you out.

**OTHELLO**

'Tis well I am found by you.  
55 I will but spend a word here in the house  
And go with you.

*Exit*

**CASSIO**

Ancient, what makes he here?

**IAGO**

Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land carrack.  
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

**CASSIO**

60 I do not understand.

**IAGO**

He's married.

news until I hear that it's an honor to boast—but I am  
descended from men of royal lineage. So I'm worthy of the  
noble fortune of Desdemona's family. And know this, Iago:  
if I didn't love the gentle Desdemona, I wouldn't give up all  
my freedom for the confines and restrictions of  
marriage—not in return for all the treasure in the sea. But  
look, what light is that, coming from over there?

**IAGO**


That's the awakened father and his friends. You'd better go  
inside.

**OTHELLO**

Not me. I must let them find me. My qualities, my title and  
legal right to Desdemona as her husband, and my clear  
conscience will show for all to see. Is that them?

**IAGO**

By Janus , I think not.

 Janus is the ancient Roman god  
of beginnings, endings, and  
doorways. He is famously represented  
as having two faces.

*CASSIO enters with officers carrying torches.*

**OTHELLO**

My lieutenant, and the servants of the Duke? May this good  
night be a blessing to you, friends! What's the news?

**CASSIO**

The Duke sends his greetings, General. And he orders you to  
come appear before him immediately, right this very  
instant.

**OTHELLO**

What do you think is the matter?

**CASSIO**


Something about Cyprus, I would guess. It's an urgent  
matter. The warships have sent a dozen successive  
messengers this very night, one after the other. Many of the  
senators have woken up and met, and are now already at  
the Duke's. You've been urgently called for. When you  
couldn't be found at your home, the Duke sent three  
separate search parties to look for you.


**OTHELLO**

It's a good thing I was found by you. I'll just go say one thing  
inside, and then I'll go with you.

*OTHELLO exits.*

**CASSIO**

Flag-bearer , what is Othello doing here?

 The original text's "ancient" is a  
corrupted form of the word "ensign," a  
military officer carrying an ensign flag.

**IAGO**

In truth, tonight he's boarded a ship carrying lots of  
treasure. And if his prize turns out to be legal, he'll be well-  
off forever.

**CASSIO**

I don't understand.

**IAGO**

He got married.

**CASSIO**

To who?

**IAGO**

Marry, to—

*Enter OTHELLO*

Come, captain, will you go?

**OTHELLO**

65 Have with you.

**CASSIO**

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and officers with torches and weapons***IAGO**It is Brabantio. General, be advised,  
He comes to bad intent.**OTHELLO**

Holla! Stand there!

**RODERIGO**

70 Signior, it is the Moor.

**BRABANTIO**

Down with him, thief!

*They draw their swords***IAGO**

You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I am for you.

**OTHELLO**Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust  
them.75 Good signior, you shall more command with years  
Than with your weapons.**BRABANTIO**O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter?  
Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
80 If she in chains of magic were not bound,  
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,  
So opposite to marriage that she shunned  
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation,  
Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,  
85 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight.  
Judge me the world if 'tis not gross in sense  
That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms,  
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
90 That weakens motion. I'll have 't disputed on.  
'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.  
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee  
For an abuser of the world, a practicer  
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—  
95 Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,  
Subdue him at his peril!

**OTHELLO**

Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining and the rest.  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
100 Without a prompter. Whither will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

**CASSIO**

To whom?

**IAGO**

Indeed, to—

*OTHELLO enters.*

Come on, captain, will you go now?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, I'll go with you.

**CASSIO**

Here comes another group of people looking for you.

*BRABANTIO and RODERIGO enter with officers carrying torches and weapons.***IAGO**It's Brabantio. General, be advised that he comes with bad  
intentions.**OTHELLO**

Hey! Stop right there!

**RODERIGO**

Sir, it is the Moor.

**BRABANTIO**

Get him, the thief!

*BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, OTHELLO, IAGO, and others draw their swords.***IAGO**

You, Roderigo! Come on, sir, I'll fight you.

**OTHELLO**

Sheathe your shiny swords, or the dew will make them rust.  
Good sir, your old age commands more respect than your  
weapons do.

**BRABANTIO**

Oh, you foul thief! Where have you hidden my daughter?  
Since you're damned yourself, you probably cast a spell on  
her! I'll stake my case on plain evidence and common sense  
as to whether such a tender, beautiful, and happy virgin  
girl—one who was so opposed to marriage that she  
shunned even the wealthy, good-looking young men of our  
city—would have ever risked her reputation to run away  
from her protected home into the dirty embrace of such a  
thing as you, a thing to be feared and not loved, unless she  
had been caught by magic. Let the world be my judge: isn't  
it completely obvious that you have practiced some evil  
magic on her, and abused her delicate youth with drugs or  
toxins that make her weak? I'll bring you to court. This is  
most likely what happened. Therefore, I hereby arrest you  
as a criminal and a practitioner of illegal black magic.

*[To the officers]* Get a hold of him. If he resists you, subdue  
him even if it means hurting him.**OTHELLO**

Hold on, everyone—both those supporting me, and the rest  
of you. If this were the time to fight, I'd know it without  
anyone telling me. So where do you want me to go to  
answer this accusation of yours?

**BRABANTIO**

To prison, till fit time  
Of law and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

**OTHELLO**

105 What if I do obey?  
How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,  
Whose messengers are here about my side  
Upon some present business of the state  
To bring me to him?

**OFFICER**

110 'Tis true, most worthy signior.  
The Duke's in council and your noble self,  
I am sure, is sent for.

**BRABANTIO**

How? The Duke in council?  
In this time of the night? Bring him away.  
115 Mine's not an idle cause. The Duke himself,  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own.  
For if such actions may have passage free,  
Bondslaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

*Exeunt*

**BRABANTIO**

To prison, until it's time for you to go bear witness at your trial.

**OTHELLO**

What happens if I obey you? How would the Duke like that, when he has just sent messengers here to bring me to him on urgent business of the city?

**OFFICER**

That's true, most noble sir. The Duke is in a council meeting, and I am sure you have also been sent for.

**BRABANTIO**

What? The Duke is having a council meeting? At this hour of the night? Bring him along with us. My cause isn't a frivolous one. The Duke himself, and my fellow senators, will sympathize with my situation as if it were their own. For if we let people get away with things like this, our statesmen will be as good as slaves and pagans.

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS*

**DUKE**

There's no composition in this news  
That gives them credit.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Indeed, they are disproportioned.  
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

**DUKE**

5 And mine a hundred and forty.

**SECOND SENATOR**

And mine, two hundred.  
But though they jump not on a just account—  
As in these cases, where the aim reports  
'Tis oft with difference—yet do they all confirm  
10 A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

**DUKE**

Nay, it is possible enough to judgment.  
I do not so secure me in the error,  
But the main article I do approve  
In fearful sense.

**SAILOR**

15 *[within]*  
What, ho, what, ho, what, ho!

**OFFICER**

A messenger from the galleys.

*Enter SAILOR*

**DUKE**

Now, what's the business?

### Shakescleare Translation

*The DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS enter.*

**DUKE**

This news is so inconsistent that it doesn't have any credibility.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Indeed, it is inconsistent. My letters say a hundred and seven ships.

**DUKE**

And my letters say a hundred and forty.

**SECOND SENATOR**

And mine say two hundred. But, although our letters do not agree on the exact number, that's often the case with estimates. And all the reports confirm that there is a Turkish fleet heading toward Cyprus.

**DUKE**

Indeed, that's clear to see. I am not at ease with the discrepancy in the reports, but I understand the general idea of all of them, and it makes me worried.

**SAILOR**

*[Offstage]* Hey! Hey!

**OFFICER**

It's a messenger from the ship.

*A SAILOR enters.*

**DUKE**

What's going on now?



**SAILOR**

The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes,  
 20 So was I bid report here to the state  
 By Signior Angelo.

**DUKE**

How say you by this change?

**FIRST SENATOR**

This cannot be,  
 By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant,  
 25 To keep us in false gaze. When we consider  
 Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,  
 And let ourselves again but understand  
 That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes  
 So may he with more facile question bear it,  
 30 For that it stands not in such warlike brace  
 But altogether lacks th' abilities  
 That Rhodes is dressed in. If we make thought of this  
 We must not think the Turk is so unskillful  
 To leave that latest which concerns him first,  
 35 Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain  
 To wake and wage a danger profitless.

**DUKE**

Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

**OFFICER**

Here is more news.

*Enter a MESSENGER*

**MESSENGER**

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
 40 Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,  
 Have there injoined them with an after fleet.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?

**MESSENGER**

Of thirty sail. And now they do re-stem  
 Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
 45 Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,  
 Your trusty and most valiant servitor,  
 With his free duty recommends you thus,  
 And prays you to believe him.

**DUKE**

'Tis certain then for Cyprus.  
 50 Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

**FIRST SENATOR**

He's now in Florence.

**DUKE**

Write from us to him. Post-post-haste, dispatch.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, CASSIO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and officers*

**DUKE**

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
 55 Against the general enemy Ottoman—  
 [to BRABANTIO] I did not see you. Welcome, gentle  
 signior.  
 We lacked your counsel and your help tonight.

**SAILOR**

The Turkish forces are heading for Rhodes. Sir Angelo  
 ordered me to bring this news here to the city government.

**DUKE**

What do you think of this change?

**FIRST SENATOR**

This can't be true. It makes no sense. It must be a trick, to  
 draw our attention in the wrong direction. Think about how  
 important Cyprus is to the Turks, and think how much more  
 the Turks care about Cyprus than Rhodes. And also  
 consider that they can take over Cyprus more easily than  
 Rhodes, since it doesn't have the same military defenses  
 that Rhodes has. Considering all this, we cannot think that  
 the Turks would be so foolish as to leave Cyprus for later  
 when it would be easiest to take first. They wouldn't neglect  
 an easy, profitable mission to undertake a dangerous one  
 that wouldn't benefit them as much.

**DUKE**


I agree completely. The Turks cannot be headed for Rhodes.


**OFFICER**

Here comes more news.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

Your Honor, the Ottomites  have steered their fleet of  
 ships toward the island of Rhodes, and added a second  
 fleet to that one.

 "Ottomites" is another term for  
 the Turks.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Just as I thought. How many of them do you think are  
 there?

**MESSENGER**

Thirty ships. And now they are retracing their course  
 backwards, clearly sailing towards Cyprus. Sir Montano,  
 your trusty and bravest servant, has sent me to bring you  
 this news, and he prays you will believe him.

**DUKE**

Then it's certain that they are going for Cyprus. Is Marcus  
 Luccicos not in town?

**FIRST SENATOR**

He's in Florence now.

**DUKE**

Write him a letter from us. Right away, hurry now.


**FIRST SENATOR**


Here comes Brabantio and the brave Moor.

*BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, CASSIO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and  
 officers enter.*

**DUKE**

Brave Othello, we must send you immediately to go fight  
 against the Ottoman forces, enemy to us all.

[To BRABANTIO] I didn't see you. Welcome, noble  sir. We  
 missed your advice and help tonight.

 Shakespeare often uses the term  
 "gentle" to demonstrate a person's  
 social status. The word in this sense is  
 related to the terms "gentleman" or  
 "gentility."

**BRABANTIO**

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me.

- 60 Neither my place nor ought I heard of business  
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care  
Take hold on me, for my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature  
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows  
65 And it is still itself.

**DUKE**

Why, what's the matter?

**BRABANTIO**

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

**ALL**

Dead?

**BRABANTIO**

Ay, to me.

- 70 She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.  
For nature so prepost'rously to err,  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,  
Sans witchcraft could not.

**DUKE**

- 75 Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding  
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself  
And you of her, the bloody book of law  
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,  
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son  
80 Stood in your action.

**BRABANTIO**

Humbly I thank your grace.

Here is the man, this Moor, whom now it seems,  
Your special mandate for the state affairs  
Hath hither brought.

**ALL**

- 85 We are very sorry for't.

**DUKE**

[to *OTHELLO*] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

**BRABANTIO**

Nothing, but this is so.

**OTHELLO**

- Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
90 My very noble and approved good masters,  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true. True, I have married her.  
The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
95 And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace,  
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith  
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used  
Their dearest action in the tented field,  
And little of this great world can I speak,  
100 More than pertains to feats of broils and battle,  
And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,  
I will a round unvarnished tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love. What drugs, what charms,  
105 What conjuration and what mighty magic—  
For such proceeding I am charged withal—  
I won his daughter.

**BRABANTIO**

And I missed your help, too. Your Grace, pardon me. It is neither my official position nor anything I heard about business that has gotten me out of bed. And it is not the general problem of war that brought me here. Rather, my own particular trouble is so great that it is overwhelming, and takes precedence over other problems.

**DUKE**

Why? What's the matter?

**BRABANTIO**

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

**ALL**

Is she dead?

**BRABANTIO**

She's dead to me. She has been abused, stolen from me, and corrupted by spells and potions bought from charlatans. For Desdemona is neither lacking in common sense, nor blind to it. She could not make such a mistake naturally, without some kind of witchcraft.

**DUKE**

Whoever he is that has tricked your daughter in this foul way and robbed you of her, you will get to punish him according whatever your own interpretation is of the law books, which have the power of the death penalty. Yes, even if it turns out to be my own son who is the perpetrator.

**BRABANTIO**

I humbly thank you, your Grace. Here is the culprit: this Moor, who it seems your orders have brought here for state business.

**ALL**

We are very sorry to hear this.

**DUKE**

[To *OTHELLO*] What can you say about this on your own behalf?

**BRABANTIO**

There's nothing he can say, except that what I've said is true.

**OTHELLO**

Most powerful, serious, and honorable sirs—my very noble masters who have proved to be good to me—I tell you it is absolutely true that I have taken away this old man's daughter. It is true that I have married her. But this is the extent of my offense—no more. I am not good with words, and haven't been blessed with the skill of peaceful speech. My skill is in war: from the time I was seven-years-old to just nine months ago, I have used the strength of my arms on the battlefield. I cannot speak about much in this great big world besides wartime deeds and battle. Therefore, I probably won't help my case much by speaking for myself. Nonetheless, if you will be patient, I will tell you the whole straightforward story of my love with Desdemona, and won't embellish it at all. I will tell you what sort of spells, what kind of powerful magic, what drugs, and what charms I have used to win this man's daughter—since that is the accusation.

**BRABANTIO**

A maiden never bold,  
Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion  
110 Blushed at herself. And she, in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, everything,  
To fall in love with what she feared to look on?  
It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect  
That will confess perfection so could err.  
115 Against all rules of nature, and must be driven  
To find out practices of cunning hell  
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again  
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood  
Or with some dram, conjured to this effect,  
120 He wrought upon her.

**DUKE**

To vouch this is no proof,  
Without more wider and more overt test  
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

**FIRST SENATOR**

125 But, Othello, speak.  
Did you by indirect and forcèd courses  
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?  
Or came it by request and such fair question  
As soul to soul affordeth?

**OTHELLO**

130 I do beseech you,  
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,  
And let her speak of me before her father.  
If you do find me foul in her report  
The trust, the office I do hold of you,  
135 Not only take away, but let your sentence  
Even fall upon my life.

**DUKE**

Fetch Desdemona hither.

**OTHELLO**

Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.

*Exeunt IAGO and attendants*

And till she come, as truly as to heaven  
140 I do confess the vices of my blood  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love  
And she in mine.

**DUKE**

Say it, Othello.

**OTHELLO**

145 Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
Still questioned me the story of my life  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
150 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,  
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
155 And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my traveler's history.  
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks, hills whose heads touch heaven  
It was my hint to speak—such was my process—  
160 And of the Cannibals that each others eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Grew beneath their shoulders. These things to hear

**BRABANTIO**

My daughter is a young girl who has never been bold. She is so still and quiet and naturally inclined to blushing. Is it possible that she, in spite of her nature, in spite of her young age, in spite of her nationality, in spite of her reputation—in spite of everything—would fall in love with something she feared to even look at? It would be a foolish misjudgment to think that my perfect daughter could make such a mistake, contrary to all rules of nature. We must find out what cunning evil plots have brought this about. Therefore I say again that he has used some potion on her that affects the blood, or some drug magically enchanted for his purpose.

**DUKE**

You say this, but you have no proof. You have no clear evidence beyond your thin accusations and poor guesses based on his appearance.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Speak up, Othello. Did you subdue and poison this young girl by trickery and force? Or did the marriage come about voluntarily, as two souls are accustomed to come together?

**OTHELLO**

I beg you, send someone to get Desdemona from the Sagittary Inn, and let her talk about me in front of her father. If she speaks badly of me, then you can take away my official position, lose all your trust in me, and even sentence me to death.

**DUKE**

Bring Desdemona here.

**OTHELLO**

Flag-bearer, lead them to her. You know the place where she is the best.

*IAGO exits with attendants.*

And until she comes, I'll tell you the story of how Desdemona and I fell in love as truthfully as I confess my sins to God.

**DUKE**

Go ahead and speak, Othello.

**OTHELLO**

Her father loved me and often invited me to his house, where he would ask about the story of my life, about the battles and sieges I've fought in, and the good and bad fortune I've had. I told him everything, even from when I was a boy, and spoke about disastrous turns of events, moving events on land and on sea, and about times I barely escaped imminent death by a hair's breadth. I told him about how I was taken prisoner by my enemy and sold into slavery, about how I was ransomed back and how I traveled around through vast caverns and empty deserts, through rough, rocky quarries and hills so high they touch heaven itself. I told him about the cannibals that eat other humans, called the Anthropophagi, and about strange men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders. Desdemona was always fascinated by these stories, but household chores would call her away. She did her chores quickly so she could come back and listen voraciously to my stories again. When I had some spare time, she asked me to expand on

Would Desdemona seriously incline.  
 But still the house affairs would draw her hence,  
 165 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
 Devour up my discourse, which I, observing,  
 Took once a pliant hour and found good means  
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
 170 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard  
 But not intently. I did consent,  
 And often did beguile her of her tears  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
 175 That my youth suffered. My story being done  
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.  
 She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing  
 strange,  
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.  
 180 She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished  
 That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me  
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
 I should but teach him how to tell my story  
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.  
 185 She loved me for the dangers I had passed,  
 And I loved her that she did pity them.  
 This only is the witchcraft I have used.  
 Here comes the lady. Let her witness it.

*Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants*

#### DUKE

I think this tale would win my daughter too.  
 190 Good Brabantio. Take up this mangled matter at the  
 best.  
 Men do their broken weapons rather use  
 Than their bare hands.

#### BRABANTIO

I pray you, hear her speak.  
 195 If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
 Destruction on my head if my bad blame  
 Light on the man.— Come hither, gentle mistress.  
 Do you perceive in all this noble company  
 Where most you owe obedience?

#### DESDEMONA

My noble father,  
 200 I do perceive here a divided duty.  
 To you I am bound for life and education.  
 My life and education both do learn me  
 How to respect you. You are the lord of duty.  
 205 I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband.  
 And so much duty as my mother showed  
 To you, preferring you before her father,  
 So much I challenge that I may profess  
 Due to the Moor my lord.

#### BRABANTIO

God be with you. I have done.  
 210 Please it your grace, on to the state affairs.  
 I had rather to adopt a child than get it.—  
 Come hither, Moor.  
 I here do give thee that with all my heart  
 215 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
 I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,  
 I am glad at soul I have no other child.  
 For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
 To hang clogs on them.— I have done, my lord.

#### DUKE

Let me speak like yourself and lay a sentence  
 220 Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers  
 Into your favor.  
 When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
 By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.

225

the story of my travels and fill her in on what she had only  
 heard parts of. I agreed, and my tales often brought her to  
 tears. When I finished my stories, she would sigh. She would  
 always say things like, "That was strange, very strange," or  
 "That was pitiful, so pitiful." She wished she hadn't heard  
 the moving stories, but also wished that God had made her  
 that kind of a man. She thanked me and told me that if I  
 knew anyone who loved her, all he would have to do to woo  
 her was to tell her my stories. Picking up on her hint, I spoke  
 to her. She loved me for the dangers I had endured, and I  
 loved her because she pitied me for having endured them.  
 This is the only witchcraft I have used. Here comes the  
 woman herself. Let her testify.

*DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants enter.*

#### DUKE

I think such a story would win over my daughter, too. Good  
 Brabantio, try to make the best of a bad situation. As they  
 say, a broken weapon is better than none at all.

#### BRABANTIO

Please, hear her speak. If she admits that she flirted back,  
 then I will no longer place all the blame on Othello. Come  
 here, sweet girl. Do you see to whom, out of everyone here,  
 you should be most obedient?

#### DESDEMONA

My noble father, I feel that my loyalty is divided. I owe you  
 for my very life and my upbringing. And because of this I  
 respect you. I have a duty to you, as I am your daughter.  
 But here is my husband. And as my mother showed duty to  
 you, prioritizing you above her own father, so must I show  
 duty to my husband, the Moor.

#### BRABANTIO

God be with you. I'm finished with my business. If you  
 please, your Grace, you can move on to the state affairs. I'd  
 rather adopt a child than father my own. Come here, Moor. I  
 now give you with all my heart my daughter, whom I'd keep  
 from you with all my heart if you didn't already have her.  
 For your sake, precious Desdemona, I am glad that I don't  
 have another daughter. For what you have done would  
 make me a tyrannical parent, and I'd lock her up like a  
 prisoner.

*[To the DUKE]* I'm done with my business, my lord.

#### DUKE

Let me speak, as you have, and offer some proverbs that  
 may help you to be happier with these two lovers. When  
 there's nothing you can do to fix a situation, there's no use  
 crying about it anymore, because you've already survived  
 seeing the worst outcome of your former hopes. To be sad

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.  
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,  
Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.  
The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief,  
230 He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

**BRABANTIO**

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,  
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.  
He bears the sentence well that nothing bears  
But the free comfort which from thence he hears.  
235 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow  
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.  
These sentences to sugar or to gall,  
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.  
But words are words. I never yet did hear  
240 That the bruised heart was piercèd through the ears.  
I humbly beseech you, proceed to th' affairs of state.

**DUKE**

The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for  
Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best  
known to you, and though we have there a substitute of  
245 most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign  
mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you.  
You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of  
your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boist'rous  
expedition.

**OTHELLO**

250 The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize  
A natural and prompt alacrity  
I find in hardness, and do undertake  
255 These present wars against the Ottomites.  
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,  
I crave fit disposition for my wife.  
Due reference of place and exhibition,  
With such accommodation and besort  
260 As levels with her breeding.

**DUKE**

Why, at her father's.

**BRABANTIO**

I'll not have it so.

**OTHELLO**

Nor I.

**DESDEMONA**

Nor would I there reside,  
265 To put my father in impatient thoughts  
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,  
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear  
And let me find a charter in your voice,  
T' assist my simpleness.

**DUKE**

270 What would you, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued  
Even to the very quality of my lord.  
275 I saw Othello's visage in his mind,  
And to his honors and his valiant parts  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.  
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind  
A moth of peace and he go to the war,  
280 The rites for which I love him are bereft me,

after something bad happens only makes it worse. When  
fortune takes something away from you, you make a  
mockery of your trouble by being patient. If you've been  
robbed, it's better to smile and take away the thief's  
pleasure of making you upset than to grieve about it, and  
rob yourself even further of good cheer.

**BRABANTIO**

If that's true, then let the Turks take Cyprus from us, and  
we'll be fine as long as we smile. It's easy to use a proverb  
when you're not the one suffering a loss, and not so easy  
when you're the one suffering grief. These sayings mean  
nothing. I've never heard of a time someone's broken heart  
was made better by words. I humbly beg you to move on to  
the state business.

**DUKE**

The Turks are heading for Cyprus with a strong fleet.  
Othello, you know the strengths of the place the best. And  
although we have someone stationed there who is very  
skilled, everyone seems to think that you would be better in  
that position. So, you must tinge the happiness of your  
recent marriage with this difficult mission.

**OTHELLO**

Honorable senators, I'm so used to the difficult, cruel war  
that it's as comfortable to me as a soft down bed. I am  
naturally eager to take on difficult challenges, and I will  
undertake this mission against the Ottomites. As I am  
obeying you, I humbly ask for appropriate arrangements for  
my wife. She should have a place to live that is worthy of  
her nobility, as well as suitable company.

**DUKE**

She can have all this at her father's house.

**BRABANTIO**

I won't allow it.

**OTHELLO**

Neither will I.

**DESDEMONA**

And I wouldn't want to stay at my father's house, either, as  
my presence would irritate him. Most gracious Duke, listen  
to my proposal, and please voice your support for my  
simple idea.

**DUKE**

What is your idea, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

The quickness and boldness with which I have taken  
control of my future clearly show that I married the Moor so  
that I could live with him. My heart is completely under his  
control. I saw Othello's true nature in his mind, and  
dedicated my soul and all my fortune to his honor and  
bravery. So, my dear lords, if I am left behind while he goes  
off to war, I will be deprived of seeing the very things I  
married him for. And I will have a horrible time here without  
him. Let me go with him.

And I a heavy interim shall support  
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

**OTHELLO**

Let her have your voice.  
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not  
285 To please the palate of my appetite,  
Nor to comply with heat the young affects  
In my defunct and proper satisfaction,  
But to be free and bounteous to her mind,  
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think  
290 I will your serious and great business scant  
When she is with me. No, when light-winged toys  
Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness  
My speculative and officed instrument,  
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
295 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm  
And all indign and base adversities  
Make head against my estimation.

**DUKE**

Be it as you shall privately determine,  
Either for her stay or going. Th' affair cries haste  
300 And speed must answer it.

**FIRST SENATOR**

You must away tonight.

**OTHELLO**

With all my heart.

**DUKE**

At nine i' th' morning here we'll meet again.  
Othello, leave some officer behind  
305 And he shall our commission bring to you,  
And such things else of quality and respect  
As doth import you.

**OTHELLO**

So please your grace, my ancient.  
A man he is of honesty and trust.  
310 To his conveyance I assign my wife,  
With what else needful your good grace shall think  
To be sent after me.

**DUKE**

Let it be so.  
Good night to every one.— [to BRABANTIO]  
315 And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Adieu, brave Moor. Use Desdemona well.

**BRABANTIO**

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.  
320 She has deceived her father, and may thee.


*Exeunt DUKE, BRABANTIO, CASSIO, SENATORS, and officers*


**OTHELLO**

My life upon her faith!—Honest Iago,  
My Desdemona must I leave to thee.  
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her,  
And bring them after in the best advantage.  
325 Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour  
Of love, of worldly matter and direction,  
To spend with thee. We must obey the time.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

**OTHELLO**

Give your support to her idea. I swear by heaven that I am asking for her to come with me not to satisfy my appetite or fulfill hot urges, since those feelings of youth are defunct in me. I am asking in order to be liberal and open to her ideas. And if any of you think that I will be distracted from my serious and great business there if she is with me, may heaven protect your souls, for you are wrong. If winged Cupid  should ever sew shut my eyes and blind me so that I am more concerned with my pleasures than with business, let housewives use my helmet as a skillet and let my reputation be completely ruined.

 Cupid is the ancient Roman god of love.

**DUKE**

As to whether she will stay or go, it shall be as you decide privately. But this business is urgent, and we must act quickly.

**FIRST SENATOR**

You must depart tonight.

**OTHELLO**

With all my heart, I will.

**DUKE**


The rest of us will meet here again at nine in the morning. Othello, leave an officer behind here, and later he can bring you our instructions, and anything else you feel you need.


**OTHELLO**

If you don't mind, I'll leave my flag-bearer behind for the task. He is an honest, trustworthy man, and I'll let him bring my wife to Cyprus, along with whatever else your good grace thinks I might need.

**DUKE**

Let it be so. Good night to everyone.

[To BRABANTIO] And, noble sir, if virtue is a beautiful thing, then your son-in-law is much more fair  than he is black.

 The Duke is making a pun on the word "fair," which can mean either beautiful or pale and light-skinned.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Farewell, brave Moor. Be good to Desdemona.

**BRABANTIO**

Look out, Moor, and keep an eye on her. She has deceived her father, and may deceive you.

*The DUKE, BRABANTIO, CASSIO, SENATORS, and officers exit.*

**OTHELLO**

I would bet my life on her honesty! Honest Iago, I must leave Desdemona with you. Please, have your wife look after her, and bring them along after me when you get the chance. Come with me, Desdemona. I have only an hour to spend with you in love, and to teach you some worldly things. We can't be late.

*OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.*

**RODERIGO**

Iago.

**IAGO**

What say'st thou, noble heart?

**RODERIGO**

330 What will I do, think'st thou?

**IAGO**

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

**RODERIGO**

I will incontinently drown myself.

**IAGO**

If thou dost I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

**RODERIGO**

335 It is silliness to live when to live is torment, and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

**IAGO**

Oh, villainous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years, and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

**RODERIGO**

345 What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond, but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

**IAGO**

Virtue? A fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many—either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry—why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most prepost'rous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts. Whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.

**RODERIGO**

360 It cannot be.

**IAGO**

It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man. Drown thyself? Drown cats and blind puppies! I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness. I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse. Follow thou the wars, defeat thy favor with an usurped beard. I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be long that Desdemona should continue her love to the Moor—put money in thy purse—nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration—put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills—fill thy purse with money. The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth. When she is satiated with his body she will find the errors of her

**RODERIGO**

Iago.

**IAGO**

What is it, noble man?

**RODERIGO**

What do you think I should do?

**IAGO**

Well, go to bed and sleep.

**RODERIGO**

I will drown myself right now.

**IAGO**

If you do that, I'll never love you again. Why would you do such a thing, you silly gentleman?

**RODERIGO**

It is silliness to live when life is torture? When death is the only remedy, then the best prescription is to die.

**IAGO**

Oh, please! I've been around for twenty-eight years, and ever since I've known the difference between a good thing and a bad thing, I've never yet found a man who knew what was good for him. I'd trade in my humanity to become a baboon before I'd ever say that I'd drown myself for the love of some hen.

**RODERIGO**

What should I do? I admit it's embarrassing to be so in love, but I can't help it.

**IAGO**

You can't help it? A lie! It's all up to you. Our bodies are like gardens, and our willpower is the gardener. We can have all sorts of different plants in the garden, but whether they grow well or not is up to our will. If we didn't have an ounce of reason to counterbalance our passions, our base urges would make us ridiculous. But we have rationality to cool our raging emotions, carnal desires, and uncontrollable lust. And what you call love is just an offshoot of this kind of lust.

**RODERIGO**

That can't be true.

**IAGO**

It's just lust, and your will is letting it control you. Come on, be a man. Drown yourself? Drown cats and blind puppies instead! I have told you that I am your friend, and our bond is strong. I am being a good friend to you right now. Sell some things to put money in your wallet. Desdemona can't stay in love with the Moor for long—get money in your wallet—and he can't stay in love with her. It was such a sudden union, and you'll see an equally quick separation. Put money in your wallet. He now finds her sweet, but before long he'll think she's bitter. She'll want to exchange him for a younger man. Once she's had her fill of his body, she'll realize the errors of her decision. So put money in your wallet. If you absolutely must kill yourself, do it a better way than drowning. Gather all the money you can. If a little marriage vow between a wandering barbarian and a gentle Venetian isn't too much for my clever wits, you'll have her soon. So sell your things for some money! To hell



choice. Therefore, put money in thy purse. If thou wilt  
needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than  
380 drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony  
and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and  
supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all  
the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her. Therefore  
make money. A pox of drowning thyself! 'Tis clean out  
385 of the way. Seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing  
thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

**RODERIGO**

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the  
issue?

**IAGO**

Thou art sure of me. Go, make money. I have told thee  
390 often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the  
Moor. My cause is hearted. Thine hath no less reason.  
Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him. If  
thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me  
a sport. There are many events in the womb of time  
395 which will be delivered. Traverse, go, provide thy  
money. We will have more of this tomorrow. Adieu.

**RODERIGO**

Where shall we meet i' th' morning?

**IAGO**

At my lodging.

**RODERIGO**

I'll be with thee betimes.

**IAGO**

400 Go to, farewell.  
Do you hear, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

What say you?

**IAGO**

No more of drowning, do you hear?

**RODERIGO**

I am changed.

**IAGO**

405 Go to, farewell. Put money enough in your purse.

**RODERIGO**

I'll sell all my land.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse.  
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane  
If I would time expend with such a snipe  
410 But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office. I know not if 't be true,  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.  
415 The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now,  
To get his place and to plume up my will  
In double knavery. How? How? Let's see.  
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
420 That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature

with drowning yourself! That's a ridiculous idea. It would be  
better to get hanged for committing a crime in an attempt  
to win her than to drown for being without her.

**RODERIGO**

Will you be loyal to me, if I need your help?

**IAGO**

You can rely on me. Go, get some money. I've said it before,  
and I'll say it again and again: I hate the Moor. My objective  
is set in my heart. And you are equally determined in yours.  
Let's work together to get our revenge on him. If you can get  
Desdemona to cheat on him with you, you'd get some  
pleasure and I'd get some amusement. There's still much  
that may happen. Now go, go and scrounge up your money.  
We can discuss this further tomorrow. Goodbye.

**RODERIGO**

Where will we meet in the morning?

**IAGO**

At my house.

**RODERIGO**

I'll meet you there early.

**IAGO**

Go on, now. Bye. Now are you listening to me?

**RODERIGO**

What?

**IAGO**

No more of this drowning nonsense, you hear?

**RODERIGO**

I've changed my mind about that.

**IAGO**

Then go, goodbye. Get enough money together in your  
wallet.

**RODERIGO**

I'll sell all my land.

*RODERIGO exits.*

**IAGO**

Thus I make this fool into my bank account. I'd be wasting  
my cleverness if I spent time with such an idiot without  
getting some amusement and money out of it. I hate the  
Moor, and there's a rumor going around that he's slept with  
my wife. I don't know if this is true, but even just on  
suspicion, I'll think of it like a sure thing. He holds me in  
high esteem. This will be even better for my plan. Cassio is  
an attractive fellow. Let me think now: how can I get his  
place as lieutenant and raise up my own status through  
trickery? How? How? Let's see. In a little while, I can lie to  
Othello, telling him that Cassio is getting too close with  
Desdemona. Cassio has the good looks and smooth  
manners to be suspected of such a thing. He looks like he  
could get a woman to cheat on her husband. The Moor is  
gullible and trusting. He thinks men are honest when they  
only appear to be. I can lead him around like a donkey.  
That's it. I've laid the seeds of my plan, and it will come to



425 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose  
As asses are.  
I have 't. It is engendered! Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

*Exit*

fruition with the help of Hell.

*IAGO exits.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN*

#### MONTANO

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

#### FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood.  
I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main  
Descry a sail.

#### MONTANO

5 Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land,  
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.  
If it hath ruffianed so upon the sea  
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,  
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

#### SECOND GENTLEMAN

10 A segregation of the Turkish fleet.  
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,  
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds,  
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,  
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,  
15 And quench the guards of th' ever-fixed pole.  
I never did like molestation view  
On the enchafed flood.

#### MONTANO

If that the Turkish fleet  
Be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned.  
20 It is impossible they bear it out.

*Enter a THIRD GENTLEMAN*

#### THIRD GENTLEMAN

News, lads, Our wars are done!  
The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks,  
That their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice  
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance  
25 On most part of their fleet.

#### MONTANO

How? Is this true?

#### THIRD GENTLEMAN

The ship is here put in,  
A Veronesa. Michael Cassio,  
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,  
30 Is come on shore. The Moor himself at sea  
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

#### MONTANO

I am glad on 't. 'Tis a worthy governor.

### Shakescleare Translation

*MONTANO (an official from Cyprus) and two GENTLEMEN enter.*

#### MONTANO

What can you see out on the sea?

#### FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing at all. The waters are rough, and I can't see a single  
sail between the sky and the ocean.

#### MONTANO

The wind's been blowing loudly on land, too. The strongest  
gust I've ever seen shook our walls. If the same kind of wind  
has been raging on the sea, what ships made of oak could  
hold together when waves as tall as mountains strike them?  
What do you think will happen?

#### SECOND GENTLEMAN

The Turkish fleet will be dispersed. From the shore here, the  
billowing water seems to touch the clouds, and the wind-  
shaken, surging waves, with their high crests, seem to spray  
water on the constellations in the sky. I've never seen such  
a rough, raging sea.

#### MONTANO

Unless the Turkish fleet is sheltered from this storm, they  
must be drowned. It's impossible for them to survive the  
storm at sea.

*A THIRD GENTLEMAN enters.*

#### THIRD GENTLEMAN

I've got news, lads. Our war is over! The storm has battered  
the Turkish fleet so badly that their attack has been halted.  
A noble Venetian ship has seen most of the Turkish fleet  
shipwrecked and in trouble.

#### MONTANO

What? Is this true?

#### THIRD GENTLEMAN

The ship that saw all this is now docking here. It came from  
Verona, bringing Michael Cassio, the lieutenant of the  
warlike Moor Othello. The Moor himself is still at sea, having  
been ordered to come here to Cyprus.

#### MONTANO

I'm glad. He's a good governor.

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort  
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly  
35 And prays the Moor be safe. For they were parted  
With foul and violent tempest.

**MONTANO**

Pray heavens he be,  
For I have served him, and the man commands  
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!  
40 As well to see the vessel that's come in  
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,  
Even till we make the main and th' aerial blue  
An indistinct regard.

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

Come, let's do so.  
45 For every minute is expectancy  
Of more arrivance.

*Enter CASSIO*

**CASSIO**

Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle  
That so approve the Moor. Oh, let the heavens  
Give him defense against the elements,  
50 For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

**MONTANO**

Is he well shipped?

**CASSIO**

His bark is stoutly timbered and his pilot  
Of very expert and approved allowance  
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,  
55 Stand in bold cure.

**A VOICE**

*[within]* A sail, a sail, a sail!

*Enter a MESSENGER*

**CASSIO**

What noise?

**MESSENGER**

The town is empty. On the brow o' th' sea  
Stand ranks of people, and they cry "A sail!"

**CASSIO**

60 My hopes do shape him for the governor.

*A shot*

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

They do discharge their shot of courtesy.  
Our friends at least.

**CASSIO**

I pray you sir, go forth  
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

65 I shall.

*Exit*

**MONTANO**

But good lieutenant, is your general wived?

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

But this Cassio I mentioned—he brings good news about  
the Turks' losing their ships, but he looks sad and hopes  
that the Moor is safe at sea. Their two ships were separated  
by the foul, violent storm.

**MONTANO**

I pray to heaven that Othello is safe. For I have served under  
him, and he commands like a perfect soldier. Let's go to the  
shore, both to see the ship that's already arrived, and also  
to look out for brave Othello, even until it's so dark that we  
can't tell the blue sky from the sea.

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

Come on, let's do that. Every minute we expect more ships  
to come in.

*CASSIO enters.*

**CASSIO**

Thank you, you brave men of this warlike island, who think  
highly of the Moor. Oh, let heaven protect him from the  
elements. I lost sight of him on the dangerous sea.

**MONTANO**

Does he have a good ship?

**CASSIO**

His ship is strongly put together, and the captain is an  
expert. Therefore I have hope that he will be okay, and  
haven't resigned myself to thinking he's dead.

**A VOICE**

*[Offstage]* A sail, a sail, a sail!

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**CASSIO**

What's this noise?

**MESSENGER**


The town is empty. Everyone is standing on the shoreline,  
and they're crying out, "A sail!"


**CASSIO**

I hope the ship they see is the one carrying Othello.

*A shot is fired.*

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

They've fired their shot of courtesy . We at least know it's  
a friendly ship.

 This is a cannon shot to signal  
that an incoming ship is not arriving to  
attack.

**CASSIO**

Please sir, go out and then let us know who has arrived.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

I will.

*The SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.*

**MONTANO**

Good lieutenant, is your general married?

**CASSIO**

Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid  
That paragons description and wild fame,  
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,  
70 And in th' essential vesture of creation  
Does tire the ingener.

*Enter SECOND GENTLEMAN*

How now? Who has put in?

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

**CASSIO**

He's had most favorable and happy speed.  
75 Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
The guttered rocks and congregated sands,  
Traitors ensteeped to enclog the guiltless keel,  
As having sense of beauty, do omit  
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by  
80 The divine Desdemona.

**MONTANO**

What is she?

**CASSIO**

She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,  
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,  
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts  
85 A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,  
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,  
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,  
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,  
Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits  
90 And bring all Cyprus comfort!

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO with attendants*

Oh, behold,  
The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.  
Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven,  
95 Before, behind thee, and on every hand,  
Enwheel thee round!

**DESDEMONA**

I thank you, valiant Cassio.  
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

**CASSIO**

He is not yet arrived. Nor know I aught  
100 But that he's well and will be shortly here.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, but I fear. How lost you company?

**CASSIO**

The great contention of the sea and skies  
Parted our fellowship—

**A VOICE**

*[within]* A sail, a sail!

**CASSIO**

105 But, hark! a sail.

*A shot*

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

They give this greeting to the citadel.

**CASSIO**

Yes, and it's a good marriage. He's married to a woman that  
surpasses description and exceeds her reputation. Words  
can't express how great she is, and no artist could capture  
her natural beauty.

*The SECOND GENTLEMAN enters.*

What's the news? Who has arrived?

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

It's someone named Iago, the general's flag-bearer.


**CASSIO**


He's been fortunate to have such a speedy trip. It's as if the  
storms themselves—the high seas, the howling winds, the  
jagged rocks, and the heaped up sands—normally bent on  
wrecking ships, have recognized the beauty of the divine  
Desdemona and went easy on her ship, letting her travel  
safely.

**MONTANO**

Who is she?

**CASSIO**

The woman I told you about, our great captain's captain,  
left under bold Iago's watch. She's come here seven days  
earlier than I expected. May Jove  guard Othello and  
send his ship quickly here, so that he may bless us with his  
arrival, embrace Desdemona in love, and rekindle the fire in  
our spirits, bringing comfort to all of Cyprus.

 Jove was the chief god in ancient Rome.

*DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and attendants enter.*

Oh, look: the precious passengers of the ship have come on  
shore. You, men of Cyprus, kneel down. Hail, lady, and may  
the grace of God be all around you.

**DESDEMONA**

Thank you, brave Cassio. What news do you have of my  
husband?

**CASSIO**

He hasn't arrived yet. And I don't know anything, but I'm  
sure he's all right and will be here soon

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, but I'm worried. How did you get separated from him?

**CASSIO**

The great storm parted our ships.

**A VOICE**

*[Offstage]* A sail, a sail!

**CASSIO**

But look! A sail.

*A shot is fired.*

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

They've fired a shot as a greeting. This ship is also friendly.

This likewise is a friend.

**CASSIO**

See for the news.

*Exit a SECOND GENTLEMAN*

Good ancient, you are welcome.—Welcome, mistress.

110 *(kisses EMILIA)*

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,  
That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding  
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

**IAGO**

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips  
115 As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,  
You would have have enough.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, she has no speech!

**IAGO**

In faith, too much.  
I find it still, when I have leave to sleep.  
120 Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,  
She puts her tongue a little in her heart  
And chides with thinking.

**EMILIA**

You have little cause to say so.

**IAGO**

Come on, come on. You are pictures out of door,  
125 Bells in your parlors, wild-cats in your kitchens,  
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,  
Players in your housewifery, and hussies in your beds.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, fie upon thee, slanderer!

**IAGO**

Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk.  
130 You rise to play and go to bed to work.

**EMILIA**

You shall not write my praise.

**IAGO**

No, let me not.

**DESDEMONA**

What wouldst thou write of me, if thou should'st  
praise me?

**IAGO**

135 O gentle lady, do not put me to 't,  
For I am nothing, if not critical.

**DESDEMONA**

Come on, assay. There's one gone to the harbor?

**IAGO**

Ay, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

I am not merry, but I do beguile  
140 The thing I am by seeming otherwise.  
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

**CASSIO**

Go see what's going on.

*The SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.*

Good flag-bearer, welcome. And welcome, ma'am. *[He  
kisses EMILIA]* Now, good Iago, don't get mad that I'm  
kissing your wife hello. I was brought up to show courtesy  
that way.

**IAGO**

Sir, if she gave you as much of her lips as she gives me of  
her talkative tongue, you'd have had enough.

**DESDEMONA**

No, she doesn't talk that much!

**IAGO**

Really, she talks too much. She even talks when I'm trying  
to sleep. I admit that maybe she talks less in front of you,  
and thinks before she speaks.

**EMILIA**

You have little reason to say that.

**IAGO**

Come on, come on. You women are the picture of  
perfection out in public, but annoying as ringing bells in  
your parlors and like wild-cats in your kitchens. When  
you've been hurt, you act like saints, but when you're  
offended you act like devils. You all fool around when you  
should be doing your housewife duties, and you are hussies  
in bed.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, curses upon you, you slandering women!

**IAGO**

But it's true. I swear it's true, or else I'm a Turk <sup>3</sup>. You get  
up in the morning to play around and only work when you  
go to bed.

**EMILIA**

You're not going to say anything good about me, are you?

**IAGO**

No, I won't.

**DESDEMONA**

What would you say about me, if you had to praise me?

**IAGO**

Oh, dear lady, don't put me on the spot. I'm nothing if not  
overly critical.

**DESDEMONA**

Come on, give it a try. Has someone gone to the harbor?

**IAGO**

Yes, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

I'm not in a good mood, but I'm putting on an act and  
pretending to be jovial. Tell me, Iago, how would you praise  
me?

<sup>3</sup> As we've seen before in this play, Shakespeare follows the early modern English convention that associated Turks with cruelty.

**IAGO**

I am about it, but indeed my invention  
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze,  
It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors  
145 And thus she is delivered:  
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,  
The one's for use, the other useth it.

**DESDEMONA**

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

**IAGO**

If she be black, and thereto have a wit,  
150 She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

**DESDEMONA**

Worse and worse!

**EMILIA**

How if fair and foolish?

**IAGO**

She never yet was foolish that was fair,  
For even her folly helped her to an heir.

**DESDEMONA**

155 These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i'  
th' alehouse.  
What miserable praise hast thou for her  
That's foul and foolish?

**IAGO**

160 There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,  
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the worst best. But  
what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman  
indeed, one that in the authority of her merit did  
justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

**IAGO**

165 She that was ever fair and never proud,  
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,  
Never lacked gold and yet went never gay,  
Fled from her wish and yet said "Now I may,"  
She that being angered, her revenge being nigh,  
170 Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,  
She that in wisdom never was so frail  
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail,  
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,  
See suitors following and not look behind,  
175 She was a wight, if ever such wights were—

**DESDEMONA**

To do what?

**IAGO**

To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of  
him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you,  
180 Cassio? Is he not a most profane and liberal counselor?

**CASSIO**

He speaks home, madam. You may relish him more in the  
soldier than in the scholar.

*CASSIO takes DESDEMONA'S hand*

**IAGO**

I'm thinking. But I'm finding it hard to come up with  
something. Nonetheless, I've found some inspiration. Here:  
if she is beautiful and wise, she'll use her wisdom to make  
use of her beauty.

**DESDEMONA**

Clever praise! And what if she's unattractive and smart?

**IAGO**

If she is unattractive, but has some wits, she'll find a man  
suitable for her appearance.

**DESDEMONA**

That one's worse.

**EMILIA**

What if she's pretty and foolish?

**IAGO**

There's never been a woman that was foolish and pretty.  
For even the stupidity of such a woman would help her find  
a man.

**DESDEMONA**

These are old sayings to make fools laugh in the bars. What  
saying do you have for a woman that's both ugly and  
foolish?

**IAGO**

The ugly, foolish women play the same tricks the pretty,  
wise ones do.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, you're ignorant! You give the best praise to the worst  
women. But what would you say about a truly virtuous  
woman, one that even malicious people would have to  
admit was a good person?

**IAGO**

The woman who was beautiful but not too proud, who was  
eloquent but not too loud, who never lacked gold but never  
dressed too extravagantly, who held back her desires even  
when she could fulfill them, the woman who, when angry  
and able to get revenge nonetheless endured her  
misfortune and turned the other cheek, who was wise  
enough not to make foolish decisions, who could think and  
not share her thoughts, who could see men pursuing her  
but not pay them any attention . . . that's the sort of  
woman—

**DESDEMONA**

The sort of woman to do what?

**IAGO**

To raise foolish children and tally household expenditures.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, what a lame, bad punchline! Emilia, don't listen to him,  
even though he's your husband. What do you think, Cassio?  
Doesn't he give profane, poor advice?

**CASSIO**

He speaks bluntly, madam. He's a better soldier than a  
scholar.

*CASSIO takes DESDEMONA'S hand.*

**IAGO**

( *aside* ) He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said,  
 whisper! With as little a web as this will I ensnare as  
 185 great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do, I will  
 gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true, 'Tis so,  
 indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your  
 lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed  
 190 your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most  
 apt to play the sir in. Very good, well kissed, and  
 excellent courtesy! 'Tis so, indeed. Yet again your  
 fingers to your lips? Would they were clyster-pipes for  
 your sake!

*Trumpet within*

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

**CASSIO**

195 'Tis truly so.

**DESDEMONA**

Let's meet him and receive him.

**CASSIO**

Lo, where he comes!

*Enter OTHELLO and attendants*

**OTHELLO**

Oh my fair warrior!

**DESDEMONA**

My dear Othello!

**OTHELLO**

200 It gives me wonder great as my content  
 To see you here before me. Oh, my soul's joy!  
 If after every tempest come such calms,  
 May the winds blow till they have wakened death,  
 And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas  
 205 Olympus-high, and duck again as low  
 As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,  
 'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear  
 My soul hath her content so absolute  
 That not another comfort like to this  
 210 Succeeds in unknown fate.

**DESDEMONA**

The heavens forbid  
 But that our loves and comforts should increase,  
 Even as our days do grow.

**OTHELLO**

Amen to that, sweet powers!  
 215 I cannot speak enough of this content.  
 It stops me here, it is too much of joy.  
 And this, and this, the greatest discords be (*kissing*  
*her*)  
 That e'er our hearts shall make!

**IAGO**

220 [*aside*]  
 Oh, you are well tuned now,  
 But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,  
 As honest as I am.

**OTHELLO**

Come, let us to the castle.  
 225 News, friends! Our wars are done, the Turks are  
 drowned.  
 How does my old acquaintance of this isle?—  
 Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus,  
 I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,  
 230

**IAGO**

[*To himself*] He takes her hand. Ah, yes, whisper together.  
 This is all I need to trap Cassio like a fly in my web. Yes,  
 smile at her. I will use your own politeness against you. You  
 tell her, "Yes, you're right." If these little gestures end up  
 taking away your office of lieutenant, you'll wish you hadn't  
 been so flirtatious and gentlemanly to her. Very good, you  
 kissed her well—keep showing such courtesy to her! Yes,  
 that's right. Are you kissing your fingers again? It would be  
 better, for your sake, if those fingers were enema tubes, to  
 get rid of your B.S.

*A trumpet sounds offstage.*

I know that trumpet! It's the Moor.

**CASSIO**

Indeed it is.

**DESDEMONA**

Let's go meet and welcome him.

**CASSIO**

Look, he's coming!

*OTHELLO and attendants enter.*

**OTHELLO**

Oh, my beautiful warrior!

**DESDEMONA**

My dear Othello!

**OTHELLO**

I'm surprised, but happy to see that you made it here  
 before me. Oh, my soul is overjoyed! If this is my reward for  
 every sea-storm, then let the winds rage and blow all they  
 can, and let my ships have to climb up mountainous waves  
 and drop down from their crests as if falling from heaven to  
 hell! If I were to die now, I'd die at my happiest moment. I  
 don't think my soul will ever be as happy as this again.

**DESDEMONA**

May heaven give us even more love and comfort as we get  
 older.

**OTHELLO**

Amen to that, oh heavenly powers! I can't speak enough  
 about how happy I am. It's too much joy. [*He kisses*  
*DESDEMONA*] And let this, and this, be the only quarrels we  
 have.

**IAGO**

[*To himself*] You are happy now, but I'll ruin your happiness,  
 no matter how honest you may think I am.

**OTHELLO**

Come on, let's go to the castle. I have good news, friends!  
 The war is over, and the Turks are all drowned. How is my  
 old friend on this island doing?

[*To DESDEMONA*] Honey, you will be well loved in Cyprus.  
 They've shown nothing but love to me. Oh, my sweet lady, I

I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts.— I prithee, good Iago,  
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers.  
Bring thou the master to the citadel.  
He is a good one, and his worthiness

235 Does challenge much respect.— Come, Desdemona,  
Once more, well met at Cyprus.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants*

#### IAGO

(*to the attendant*) Do thou meet me presently at the harbor. (*to RODERIGO*) Come hither. If thou be'st  
240 valiant, as they say base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them, list me. The lieutenant tonight watches on the court of guard. First, I must tell thee this: Desdemona is directly in love with him.

#### RODERIGO

With him? Why, 'tis not possible.

#### IAGO

245 Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies. To love him still for prating? Let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she have  
250 to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be a game to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor, sympathy in years, manners and beauties. All which the Moor is defective in. Now for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find  
255 itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor. Very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice. Now sir, this granted—as it is a most pregnant and unforced position—who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? A knave very voluble, no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection. Why, none, why,  
260 none! A slipper and subtle knave, a finder of occasions that has an eye, can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself. A devilish knave. Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds  
265 look after. A pestilent complete knave, and the woman hath found him already.

#### RODERIGO

I cannot believe that in her. She's full of most blessed condition.

#### IAGO

275 Blessed fig's-end! The wine she drinks is made of grapes. If she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark that?

#### RODERIGO

Yes, that I did, but that was but courtesy.

#### IAGO

280 Lechery, by this hand, an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! When these mutabilities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, th' incorporate conclusion. Pish! But,  
285 sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from Venice.

keep on chattering on and going on and on about my happiness.

[*To IAGO*] Iago, if you don't mind, go to the bay and unload my chests from the ship. Bring the ship captain to the castle. He's a good man, and his virtue demands respect.

[*To DESDEMONA*] Come with me Desdemona. One more time: it's so nice to see you at Cyprus.

*OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.*

#### IAGO

[*To an attendant*] Meet me in a minute at the harbor.

[*To RODERIGO*] Come here. If you are brave—for after all, they say that lousy men acquire more nobility than they naturally have when they are in love—listen to me. Tonight, the lieutenant Cassio will be on guard. First of all, I have to tell you this: Desdemona is in love with him.

#### RODERIGO

With him? But that's not possible.

#### IAGO

Quiet for a second, and listen up. Remember how quickly she fell in love with the Moor, all over some bragging and made-up fantastical stories. Do you think she still loves him now for talking? Don't think this for a second. She wants something nice to look at, and she won't get that with the devil Othello. When she gets bored with having sex, she'll need to find something to inflame her passion again—someone good-looking, closer to her age, and more like her in behavior and appearance. She'll find none of this in the Moor. Without any of these desirable things, she'll get so sick of the Moor she'll want to throw up. Her very nature will compel her to find a second man. Now, sir, given all this obvious information, who do you think she will turn to if not Cassio? He's eloquent, and puts up a facade of good manners to hide his real desires. She'll choose no one but him. He's a tricky, opportunistic villain, who takes advantage of situations. He's a devilish fool. And besides, this scoundrel is handsome, young, and has everything that foolish young women look for in a man. He's an awful and complete rascal, and Desdemona's already found him.

#### RODERIGO

I can't believe this about Desdemona. She's such a good, blessed woman.

#### IAGO

Blessed? As if. She drinks the same wine we do. If she was really blessed, she never would have fallen in love with the Moor. Blessed? Nonsense! Didn't you see her playing with Cassio's hand? Didn't you notice that?

#### RODERIGO

Yes, I did notice that. But it was just courtesy.

#### IAGO

It was flirtation, the sort of thing that leads to foul thoughts and lust. Their faces were so close to each other that they almost breathed the same breath. It's horrible to think about, Roderigo! When this kind of behavior happens, the main event isn't far away—the physical consummation. Psh! But, sir, let me tell you what to do. I've brought you here from Venice. Wait for my command tonight. Cassio

Watch you tonight for the command, I'll lay 't upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favorably minister.

**RODERIGO**

Well.

**IAGO**

Sir, he's rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you. Provoke him that he may. For even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny, whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall then have to prefer them, and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

**RODERIGO**

I will do this, if you can bring it to any opportunity.

**IAGO**

I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

**RODERIGO**

Adieu.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.  
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.  
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,  
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,  
Not out of absolute lust—though peradventure  
I stand accountant for as great a sin—  
But partly led to diet my revenge,  
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
Hath leaped into my seat. The thought whereof  
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,  
And nothing can or shall content my soul  
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife.  
Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
At least into a jealousy so strong  
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace  
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
Abuse him to the Moor in the right garb  
(For I fear Cassio with my night-cape too)  
Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me  
For making him egregiously an ass  
And practicing upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused.  
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

*Exit*

doesn't know who you are. I won't be far away from you. Find some excuse to make Cassio angry, either by speaking too loudly, or mocking his discipline, or whatever way you want that seems like a good idea at the time.

**RODERIGO**

Okay.

**IAGO**

Sir, Cassio has a bad temper, and maybe he'll try to hit you. Provoke him so that he will. Then, if he hits you, I'll use that as an excuse to stir up a riot of the inhabitants of Cyprus—a riot that won't die down until Cassio is stripped of his position as lieutenant. This will give you an easier path to getting what you want, with my help, and it will get Cassio out of your way. With him standing in the way, you would have no hope of getting what you want.

**RODERIGO**

I will do this, if you give me the chance.

**IAGO**

I promise I will. Meet me later at the castle. I have to bring Othello's things in from the boat. Goodbye.

**RODERIGO**

Goodbye.

*RODERIGO exits.*

**IAGO**

I really do believe that Cassio loves Desdemona. And I think it's probable that she loves him. Although I hate the Moor, he really is steadfast, loving, and noble, and I think he'll be a good husband to Desdemona. Now, I love her too, but not just out of lust—though I'm guilty of that, too—but also in order to carry out my revenge. For I suspect the lusty Moor has slept with my wife. The thought of it gnaws my insides like a poison, and I won't be satisfied until I've gotten even with him—a wife for a wife. Or, failing that, I'll at least make the Moor so jealous that no good judgment can fix it. And I'll have Michael Cassio right where I want him to carry out that plan—as long as this piece of Venetian trash, Roderigo, does as I've told him. I'll speak ill of Cassio to Othello, and the Moor will love me and reward me for it, even though all I'll be doing is making an ass of him and destroying his peace and quiet. It's all doable, but I haven't worked out all the details yet. Evil plots never reveal themselves fully until they've worked.

*IAGO exits.*

## Act 2, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter Othello's HERALD, with a proclamation*

### Shakescleare Translation

*Othello's MESSENGER enters with an announcement.*



**HERALD**

It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph: some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him. For besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

*Exit***HERALD**

It is our noble, brave General Othello's desire that every man celebrate, since we know the Turkish fleet has been completely destroyed. Some can dance, some can make bonfires—everyone can find whatever enjoyment he likes best. Besides the good news about the Turks, we are also celebrating his marriage. This is what he asked me to announce. All the kitchens are open, and everyone is welcome to feast from now, five o'clock, until eleven o'clock. God bless the island of Cyprus and our noble general, Othello!

*The MESSENGER exits.*

## Act 2, Scene 3

**Shakespeare***Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants***OTHELLO**

Good Michael, look you to the guard tonight.  
Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop  
Not to outspout discretion.

**CASSIO**

Iago hath direction what to do,  
But notwithstanding with my personal eye  
Will I look to 't.

**OTHELLO**

Iago is most honest.  
Michael, good night. Tomorrow with your earliest  
Let me have speech with you.—  
Come, my dear love,  
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue:  
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.  
Good night.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants**Enter IAGO***CASSIO**

Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch.

**IAGO**

Not this hour, lieutenant, 'tis not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona—who let us not therefore blame. He hath not yet made wanton the night with her, and she is sport for Jove.

**CASSIO**

She's a most exquisite lady.

**IAGO**

And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

**CASSIO**

Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

**IAGO**

What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

**Shakesclease Translation***OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants enter.***OTHELLO**

Good Michael, take care of the guard duties tonight. Let's show some self-restraint and not celebrate to the point of excess.

**CASSIO**

Iago knows what he is supposed to do. But nonetheless, I will personally look after things.

**OTHELLO**

Iago is most honest. Good night, Michael. Come speak with me tomorrow as soon as you're up.

[To DESDEMONA] Come with me, my dear love. Now that we're married, the consummation is to follow. We have not yet enjoyed that benefit. Good night.

*OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.**IAGO enters.***CASSIO**

Welcome, Iago. We must go be on the lookout.

**IAGO**

Not now, lieutenant. It's not ten o'clock yet. Our general left us so early so he could spend time with his love Desdemona—and who could blame him? They haven't slept together yet, and she's beautiful enough to catch Jove's eye.

**CASSIO**

She's a most beautiful lady.

**IAGO**


And I'll bet she has a trick or two up her sleeve.

**CASSIO**

Indeed, she's a young, delicate creature.

**IAGO**

What nice eyes she has! They could provoke a war.

 Jove, the ancient Roman god first referenced in Act 2, Scene 1, was famous for having affairs with beautiful mortal women.

**CASSIO**

25 An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.

**IAGO**

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

**CASSIO**

She is indeed perfection.

**IAGO**

Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of  
30 Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

**CASSIO**

Not tonight, good Iago. I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

**IAGO**

35 Oh, they are our friends. But one cup. I'll drink for you.

**CASSIO**

I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not  
40 task my weakness with any more.

**IAGO**

What, man, 'tis a night of revels! The gallants desire it.

**CASSIO**

Where are they?

**IAGO**

Here at the door. I pray you call them in.

**CASSIO**

45 I'll do 't, but it dislikes me.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,  
With that which he hath drunk tonight already,  
He'll be as full of quarrel and offense  
As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool Roderigo,  
50 Whom love hath turned almost the wrong side out,  
To Desdemona hath tonight caroused  
Potations pottle-deep, and he's to watch.  
Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits  
(That hold their honors in a wary distance,  
55 The very elements of this warlike isle)  
Have I tonight flustered with flowing cups,  
And they watch too. Now 'mongst this flock of drunkards  
Am I to put our Cassio in some action  
That may offend the isle. But here they come.  
60 If consequence do but approve my dream  
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

*Enter CASSIO, MONTANO and gentlemen*

**CASSIO**

'Fore heaven, they have given me a rouse already.

**MONTANO**

Good faith, a little one, not past a pint, As I am a soldier.

**CASSIO**

She has an inviting eye, and yet I think she's very modest.

**IAGO**

And when she speaks, isn't it like a call to arms for lovers?

**CASSIO**

She really is perfect.

**IAGO**

Well, may she and Othello be happy in bed! Come now, lieutenant—I have a jug of wine and there are a couple of gentlemen from Cyprus here who'd gladly want to drink a toast to the health of black Othello.

**CASSIO**

Not tonight, good Iago. I'm not a very good drinker. I wish it was customary to celebrate in some other way.

**IAGO**

Oh, but they're our friends. Just one drink. I'll even drink it for you.

**CASSIO**

I've had one drink so far tonight, and it was a strong one. And see how much it's affected me? I unfortunately don't have a very good tolerance for alcohol, and I don't want to risk drinking any more.

**IAGO**

What? It's a night of celebration, man! The gentlemen want you to join.

**CASSIO**

Where are they?

**IAGO**

Here at the door. Please, call them in.

**CASSIO**

I will, but I don't like where this is going.

*CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

If I can get him to have just one drink, together with what he's already had to drink, he'll be as belligerent and testy as a badly trained as a young girl's pet dog. Now my fool Roderigo—whom love has practically turned inside out, has drunk whole pots full of wine in toasts to Desdemona—and he's on guard duty. I've gotten three men from Cyprus drunk as well, noble men who are worried about maintaining their honor (which is important in this warlike island), and they are also on guard duty. Now among this flock of drunkards, I will put Cassio, and I'll have him do something to offend the men of Cyprus. But here they come. If things turn out as I want them to, I've got smooth sailing ahead.

*CASSIO, MONTANO, and gentlemen enter.*

**CASSIO**

By heaven, they have already given me a drink.

**MONTANO**

Just a little one, really, no more than a pint I promise, on my soldier's honor.

**IAGO**

65 Some wine, ho!  
*(sings)*  
*And let me the cannikin clink, clink,*  
*And let me the cannikin clink.*  
*A soldier's a man,*  
 70 *A life's but a span,*  
*Why then let a soldier drink.*  
 Some wine, boys!

**CASSIO**

Fore heaven, an excellent song.

**IAGO**

75 I learned it in England, where indeed they are most  
 potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your  
 swag-bellied Hollander—Drink, ho!—are nothing to your  
 English.

**CASSIO**

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

**IAGO**

80 Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk;  
 he sweats not to overthrow your Almain. He gives your  
 Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

**CASSIO**

To the health of our general!

**MONTANO**

I am for it, lieutenant, and I'll do you justice.

**IAGO**

85 Oh, sweet England!  
*(sings)*  
*King Stephen was a worthy peer,*  
*His breeches cost him but a crown,*  
*He held them sixpence all too dear,*  
*With that he called the tailor lown.*  
 90 *He was a wight of high renown,*  
*And thou art but of low degree,*  
*'Tis pride that pulls the country down,*  
*Then take thine auld cloak about thee.*  
 Some wine, ho!

**CASSIO**

95 Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

**IAGO**

Will you hear 't again?

**CASSIO**

100 No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that  
 does those things. Well, heaven's above all, and there  
 be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be  
 saved.

**IAGO**

It's true, good lieutenant.

**CASSIO**

For mine own part, no offence to the general nor any  
 man of quality, I hope to be saved.

**IAGO**

And so do I too, lieutenant.

**IAGO**

Hey, more wine!  
*[Singing]*  
*And let me clink, clink the little can,*  
*And let me clink the little can,*  
*A soldier's a man,*  
*With a short life span,*  
*So why don't we soldiers drink!*  
 Some more wine, boys!

**CASSIO**

By heaven, that's an excellent song.

**IAGO**

I learned it in England, where they really are strong  
 drinkers. The Danes, the Germans, and the pot-bellied  
 Dutch—drink, everybody!—can't compare to the English in  
 drinking.

**CASSIO**

Are the English really so good at drinking?

**IAGO**

Why, an Englishman could easily drink a Dane under the  
 table, and wouldn't sweat out-drinking a German. And if a  
 Dutchman tried to go drink for drink with an Englishman,  
 the Dutchman would end up vomiting before they could  
 even refill his cup.

**CASSIO**

A toast, to the health of our general!

**MONTANO**

I'll toast to that, lieutenant! And I'll match you, drink for  
 drink.

**IAGO**

Oh, sweet England!  
*[Singing]*  
*King Stephen was a good fellow,*  
*He paid just a dollar for his pants,*  
*But still thought he'd been overcharged,*  
*So he called the tailor a rogue.*  
*He was a man with a good reputation,*  
*And you're just a lowly man,*  
*It's pride that brings the country down,*  
*So wrap yourself up in your old cloak.*  
 Some more wine!

**CASSIO**

Why, that song is even better than the last.

**IAGO**

Do you want to hear it again?

**CASSIO**

No, I find men who do things like that to be acting below  
 their social rank. Anyways, heaven is the final judge of us  
 all, and some souls must go to heaven while others go to  
 hell.

**IAGO**

That's true, good lieutenant.

**CASSIO**

As far as I'm concerned, I hope to go to heaven—no offense  
 to the general or any noble man.

**IAGO**

I hope to go to heaven, too, lieutenant.

**CASSIO**

105 Ay, but (by your leave) not before me. The lieutenant  
is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of  
this, let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our  
sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not  
think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This is my ancient, this  
110 is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk  
now. I can stand well enough, and I speak well enough.

**ALL**

Excellent well!

**CASSIO**

Why, very well then. You must not think then that I am  
drunk.

*Exit*

**MONTANO**

115 To th' platform, masters. Come, let's set the watch.

*Exit GENTLEMEN*

**IAGO**

You see this fellow that is gone before,  
He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar  
And give direction. And do but see his vice,  
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,  
120 The one as long as th' other. 'Tis pity of him.  
I fear the trust Othello puts him in  
On some odd time of his infirmity  
Will shake this island.

**MONTANO**

But is he often thus?

**IAGO**

125 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep.  
He'll watch the horologe a double set  
If drink rock not his cradle.

**MONTANO**

It were well  
The general were put in mind of it.  
130 Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature  
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio  
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

*Enter RODERIGO*

**IAGO**

*[aside]* How now, Roderigo?  
I pray you, after the lieutenant, go!

*Exit RODERIGO*

**MONTANO**

135 And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor  
Should hazard such a place as his own second  
With one of an ingraft infirmity.  
It were an honest action to say  
So to the Moor.

**IAGO**

140 Not I, for this fair island.  
I do love Cassio well, and would do much  
To cure him of this evil—

*Cry within "Help! help!"*

**IAGO**

But, hark! What noise?

**CASSIO**

Yes, but, if you don't mind, not before me. A lieutenant's  
must get into heaven before the flag-bearer. But enough of  
this, let's get down to business. Forgive us our sins, God!  
Gentlemen, let's get to work. Don't think I'm drunk now,  
gentlemen. Here's my flag-bearer. This is my right hand,  
and this is my left hand. I'm not drunk. I can stand well  
enough, and my words aren't slurred.

**ALL**

Very good!

**CASSIO**

Very well, then. You must not think that I am drunk.

*CASSIO exits.*

**MONTANO**

To the platform, gentlemen. Come on, let's take up our  
posts for tonight's guard.

*The GENTLEMEN exit.*

**IAGO**

You see this man who just left, Cassio? He is such a good  
soldier he could be a commander in and help lead Caesar's  
army. But his vice is equal to his virtue. It's too bad. I worry,  
though, that the trust Othello puts in him will cause a lot of  
trouble on this island at some point when Cassio is drunk.

**MONTANO**

But is he often this drunk?

**IAGO**

He's always drunk before going to bed. He can't sleep  
unless he's had something to drink.

**MONTANO**

The general should know about this. Perhaps he doesn't  
see this, or he only sees the virtues in Cassio and is blind to  
his faults. What do you think?

*RODERIGO enters.*

**IAGO**

*[To RODERIGO so that only he can hear]* What's going on,  
Roderigo? Please, follow the lieutenant, go!

*RODERIGO exits.*

**MONTANO**

And it's such a pity that the noble Moor has made someone  
with such a weakness for alcohol his second in command. I  
really ought to tell Othello about this.

**IAGO**

I wouldn't tell him, not if you gave me this beautiful island  
in return. I love Cassio, and would do anything to cure him  
of his alcoholism—

*Offstage, someone cries out, "Help! Help!"*

**IAGO**

But listen! What is that noise?

*Enter CASSIO, pursuing RODERIGO***CASSIO**

Zounds! You rogue! You rascal!

**MONTANO**

145 What's the matter, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**A knave teach me my duty?  
I'll beat the knave into a twiggden bottle.**RODERIGO**

Beat me?

**CASSIO**Dost thou prate, rogue? *[strikes him]***MONTANO**150 Nay, good lieutenant! I pray you, sir, hold your hand.  
*[stays him]***CASSIO**

Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

**MONTANO**

Come, come, you're drunk.

**CASSIO**

Drunk?

*They fight***IAGO**155 *(aside to RODERIGO)* Away, I say, go out, and cry a mutiny.*Exit RODERIGO*Nay, good lieutenant! Alas, gentlemen—  
Help, ho!—Lieutenant—sir, Montano—  
Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch indeed!*Bell rings*160 Who's that which rings the bell?—Diablo, ho!  
The town will rise. Fie, Fie, lieutenant,  
You'll be ashamed for ever.*Enter OTHELLO and attendants***OTHELLO**

What is the matter here?

**MONTANO**165 I bleed still,  
I am hurt to the death. He dies!**OTHELLO**

Hold, for your lives!

**IAGO**Hold, ho! Lieutenant—sir, Montano—gentlemen,  
Have you forgot all place of sense and duty?  
Hold! The general speaks to you. Hold, for shame!**OTHELLO**170 Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?  
Are we turned Turks? And to ourselves do that  
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?  
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.  
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage  
175*CASSIO enters, chasing RODERIGO.***CASSIO**

Christ! You scoundrel! You rascal!

**MONTANO**

What's the matter, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**A rogue is going to tell me what to do? I'll beat the  
scoundrel to a pulp.**RODERIGO**

Beat me?

**CASSIO**Did you say something, you rogue? *[He hits RODERIGO]***MONTANO**No, good lieutenant! Please, sir, stop hitting him! *[He holds CASSIO back]***CASSIO**

Let me go, sir, or I'll strike you on your head.

**MONTANO**

Stop that. You're drunk.

**CASSIO**

Drunk?

*CASSIO fights with MONTANO.***IAGO***[To RODERIGO so that only he can hear]* Go away, I tell you.  
Run off and shout out that there's a brawl.*RODERIGO exits.*Hey, good lieutenant! No, gentlemen! Hey, help!  
Lieutenant—sir Montano—Gentlemen, help!—Some fine  
guards these guys are.*A bell rings.*Who's ringing that bell? The devil! It's going to wake up the  
town. For shame, lieutenant, stop or you'll never live this  
down.*OTHELLO and attendants enter.***OTHELLO**

What's the matter here?

**MONTANO**

I'm bleeding. I'm mortally wounded. Cassio must die!

**OTHELLO**

Stop, for God's sake!

**IAGO**Stop, lieutenant! Sir Montano—Gentlemen, are you out of  
your minds? Have you forgotten your sense of duty? Stop!  
The general is talking to you. Stop, for shame!**OTHELLO**What is going on? What is the reason for this fight? Have we  
become Turks? Are we attacking ourselves since fate  
stopped the Turks from attacking us? You are Christians;  
stop this barbarous brawl. The next one of you to raise a fist  
must not value his life very much, for I'll kill whoever

Holds his soul light, he dies upon his motion.  
Silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle  
From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?—  
Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,  
Speak, who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

**IAGO**

180 I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,  
In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom  
Divesting them for bed. And then, but now,  
As if some planet had unwitting men,  
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breasts  
185 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak  
Any beginning to this peevish odds,  
And would in action glorious I had lost  
Those legs that brought me to a part of it.

**OTHELLO**

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

**CASSIO**

190 I pray you pardon me, I cannot speak.

**OTHELLO**

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil.  
The gravity and stillness of your youth  
The world hath noted, and your name is great  
In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter  
195 That you unlace your reputation thus  
And spend your rich opinion for the name  
Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.

**MONTANO**

Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.  
Your officer Iago can inform you,  
200 While I spare speech, which something now offends me,  
Of all that I do know. Nor know I aught  
By me that's said or done amiss this night,  
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,  
And to defend ourselves it be a sin  
205 When violence assails us.

**OTHELLO**

Now, by heaven,  
My blood begins my safer guides to rule,  
And passion, having my best judgment collied,  
Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,  
210 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you  
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know  
How this foul rout began, who set it on,  
And he that is approved in this offence,  
Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,  
215 Shall lose me. What, in a town of war  
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,  
To manage private and domestic quarrel?  
In night, and on the court and guard of safety?  
'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?

**MONTANO**

220 If partially affined or leagued in office  
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth  
Thou art no soldier.

**IAGO**

Touch me not so near.  
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth  
225 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio.  
Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth  
Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general:  
Montano and myself being in speech,  
There comes a fellow crying out for help  
230 And Cassio following him with determined sword  
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman  
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause,

moves. Silence that annoying bell. It will worry everyone on the island. What is the matter, gentlemen? Honest Iago, you look sick with worry. Tell me, who started this? I command you to tell me, if you care for me.

**IAGO**

I don't know who started it. We were all friends just a moment ago, as close as a bride and groom going to bed. But then, just now, as if some cosmic shift of the planets had affected them, they drew their swords and started lunging at each other in a bloody fight. I can't say what was the cause of it, and I wish I didn't have the legs that brought me here to take part in it.

**OTHELLO**

How have you become so out of your mind, Michael?

**CASSIO**

Please, forgive me. There's nothing I can say in my defense.

**OTHELLO**

Noble Montano, you are usually civil. You are famous for the discipline and restraint you show in your youth. Even those who are fond of criticizing can't help but praise you. What's the matter? What has caused you to throw away your reputation and trade in your good name for that of a night-brawler? Tell me.

**MONTANO**

Noble Othello, I am seriously injured. So that I save my energy by not speaking, your officer Iago can tell you all that I know. I don't know of anything I said or did wrong, unless taking care of yourself is a vice, and defending ourselves when someone attacks us is a sin.

**OTHELLO**

Now, by heaven, my anger starts to overwhelm my reason, and passion is working to take over my good judgment. I have the ability to make either of you regret this. Tell me how this foul brawl began and who started it. I'll sever my ties with whoever started this fight—even if it were my twin brother, I'd do this. We're in a town during wartime, and the citizens are all nervous, and you decide to have a fight between yourselves? At night, when you should be on guard duty? This is a horrible offense. Iago, who started the fight?

**MONTANO**

If you don't tell the truth because you're partial to Cassio, then you don't deserve the title of soldier.

**IAGO**

Don't accuse me of such a thing. I would rather have my tongue cut out of my mouth than speak ill of Michael Cassio. But I think that speaking the truth cannot wrong him. This is the truth, general: Montano and I were talking, and all of a sudden a man came crying out for help, and Cassio was chasing after him with his sword drawn. Sir, this gentleman stepped in to stop Cassio, while I chased after the shouting man, because I was worried his clamor would awaken and scare the townspeople. He was too fast for me, though, so I returned here, as I heard the clink of swords

Myself the crying fellow did pursue,  
 Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out—  
 235 The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,  
 Outran my purpose, and I returned then rather  
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords  
 And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight  
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back—  
 240 For this was brief—I found them close together  
 At blow and thrust, even as again they were  
 When you yourself did part them.  
 More of this matter cannot I report.  
 But men are men, the best sometimes forget.  
 245 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,  
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,  
 Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received  
 From him that fled some strange indignity  
 Which patience could not pass.

**OTHELLO**

250 I know, Iago,  
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,  
 Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee  
 But never more be officer of mine.—

*Enter DESDEMONA, attended*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up!  
 255 I'll make thee an example.

**DESDEMONA**

What's the matter, dear?

**OTHELLO**

All's well, sweeting,  
 Come away to bed.— [To MONTANO] Sir, for your hurts  
 Myself will be your surgeon. Lead him off.

*MONTANO is led off*

260 Iago, look with care about the town  
 And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—  
 Come, Desdemona, 'tis the soldiers' life  
 To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO*

**IAGO**

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

265 Ay, past all surgery.

**IAGO**

Marry, heaven forbid!

**CASSIO**

Reputation, reputation, reputation! Oh, I have lost my  
 reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and  
 what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my  
 270 reputation!

**IAGO**

As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some  
 bodily wound. There is more sense in that than in  
 reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false  
 imposition, oft got without merit and lost without  
 275 deserving. You have lost no reputation at all unless you  
 repute yourself such a loser. What, man, there are ways  
 to recover the general again. You are but now cast in  
 his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice,

and Cassio swearing oaths. I've never heard Cassio talk like  
 that before. When I got back here I found these two fighting,  
 just as they were when you got here and separated them.  
 That's all I know. In his rage, Cassio wronged Montano, who  
 was only trying to help, but I think that Cassio must have  
 received some strange insult from the man who ran away  
 that he simply couldn't tolerate.

**OTHELLO**

Iago, I realize that your affection for Cassio makes you  
 downplay what he has done. Cassio, I love you, but you are  
 no longer one of my officers.

*DESDEMONA enters with attendants.*

Look, my gentle wife was woken up by this! I'll make an  
 example out of you, Cassio.

**DESDEMONA**

What's the matter, dear?

**OTHELLO**

Everything is fine, my sweet. Go back to bed.

[To MONTANO] Sir, I myself will tend to your wounds.  
 Someone lead him away.

*MONTANO is taken away.*

Iago, look carefully around town, and calm down anyone  
 who feels riled up after this awful fight. Come on,  
 Desdemona, it's typical for a soldier to have his sleep  
 interrupted by strife and turmoil.

*Everyone but IAGO and CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

Are you hurt, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

Yes, beyond anything a doctor can help with.

**IAGO**

Oh God, no <sup>2</sup>! God forbid it!

**CASSIO**

I mean my reputation. Reputation, reputation! Oh, I have  
 lost my reputation! I've lost the only part of me that will live  
 on after my death, and what remains is some kind of beast.  
 My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

**IAGO**

I'm an honest man who takes things literally, so I thought  
 you had been seriously wounded. That would be worse  
 than losing your reputation. Reputation is an empty, stupid  
 idea. Often people get good reputations when they don't  
 deserve it, and people lose their reputations unfairly. You  
 haven't lost your reputation unless you consider yourself to  
 have lost it. Come on, man, there are ways to gain back the  
 general's favor. He's just in a bad mood, and he punished

<sup>2</sup> In the original text, "marry"—a reference to the Virgin Mary—is used as a mild expression of surprise or emotion.

280 even so as one would beat his offenseless dog to  
affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again and he's  
yours.

**CASSIO**

I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so  
good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so  
indiscreet an officer. Drunk? And speak parrot? And  
285 squabble? Swagger? Swear? And discourse fustian with  
one's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if  
thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee  
devil!

**IAGO**

290 What was he that you followed with your sword? What had  
he done to you?

**CASSIO**

I know not.

**IAGO**

Is 't possible?

**CASSIO**

I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly. A  
quarrel, but nothing wherefore. Oh, that men should put  
295 an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!  
That we should, with joy, pleasure revel and applause,  
transform ourselves into beasts!

**IAGO**

Why, but you are now well enough. How came you thus  
recovered?

**CASSIO**

300 It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to  
the devil wrath. One unperfectness shows me another, to  
make me frankly despise myself.

**IAGO**

Come, you are too severe a moraler. As the time, the  
place, and the condition of this country stands, I could  
305 heartily wish this had not befallen. But since it is as  
it is, mend it for your own good.

**CASSIO**

I will ask him for my place again, he shall tell me I  
am a drunkard. Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an  
answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by  
310 and by a fool, and presently a beast! Oh, strange!  
Every inordinate cup is unblessed and the ingredient is  
a devil.

**IAGO**

Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if  
it be well used. Exclaim no more against it. And, good  
315 lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

**CASSIO**

I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

**IAGO**

You or any man living may be drunk at a time, man. I  
tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now  
the general. I may say so in this respect, for that he  
320 hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation,  
mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess  
yourself freely to her, importune her help to put you in  
your place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt,  
so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her  
325 goodness not to do more than she is requested. This

you because he had to in front of the men of Cyprus, not  
because he dislikes you. It's like someone beating their dog  
in front of a strong lion, when the dog did nothing wrong,  
just to show the lion that he's powerful. Ask Othello's  
pardon, and he'll be your friend again.

**CASSIO**

I'd rather ask him to hate me than ask him to have a  
commander who is as feeble, drunk, and indiscreet as I am.  
I got drunk, and spoke nonsense, and squabbled,  
swaggered, and swore. I practically ranted at my own  
shadow. Oh, wine, you invisible spirit—if you don't have a  
name, then I will call you devil!

**IAGO**

Who was it that you were chasing after with your sword?  
What did he do to you?

**CASSIO**

I don't know.

**IAGO**

Really?

**CASSIO**

I remember everything in a big haze. I can't recall the  
particulars. I remember the fight, but not the reason for it.  
Oh, why do men drink their enemy, which robs them of  
their senses! Why do we celebrate by willingly turning  
ourselves into beasts?

**IAGO**

But you seem fine now. How did you sober up so fast?


**CASSIO**

The devil of drunkenness decided to give up his place to the  
devil of anger. One vice leads to another, and now I hate  
myself.

**IAGO**

Oh stop, you're being too hard on yourself. Given the  
circumstances, I wholeheartedly wish this hadn't  
happened. But it has happened, so make the best of the  
situation.

**CASSIO**

If I ask him for my place as lieutenant back, he'll say that I  
am a drunkard. If I had as many mouths as the Hydra  to  
ask him with, he'd say no to each one. How strange it is that  
I should be a sensible man, but occasionally foolish, and  
then just now a beast! Every drink is unblessed, and alcohol  
is a devil.

**IAGO**


Come on, good wine isn't bad if you don't drink too much of  
it. Stop swearing against wine. Now, good lieutenant, am I  
right in thinking that you know I care about you?

**CASSIO**

I know you are my friend. I can't believe I got drunk!

**IAGO**

You or any man may get drunk now and then. I'll tell you  
what to do. Our general's wife is now the one who's actually  
in charge. What I mean by this is that he is totally devoted to  
her and obsessed with contemplating and describing her  
qualities and graces. Apologize to her, and beg her to help  
you regain your place as lieutenant. She is noble, kind,  
clever, and blessed. She thinks it is wrong not to do as she is  
asked. Ask her to help mend your relationship with her  
husband, and—I'll bet anything on it—the friendship

 The Hydra was a monster with  
many heads, whom Hercules killed in  
ancient Greek mythology.



broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter, and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

**CASSIO**

330 You advise me well.

**IAGO**

I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

**CASSIO**

I think it freely, and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me.

**IAGO**

You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant, I must to the watch.

**CASSIO**

Good night, honest Iago.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
340 When this advice is free I give and honest,  
Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful  
345 As the free elements. And then for her  
To win the Moor, were to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
His soul is so enfettered to her love,  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
350 Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
When devils will the blackest sins put on  
355 They do suggest at first with heavenly shows  
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool  
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune  
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:  
360 That she repeals him for her body's lust.  
And by how much she strives to do him good  
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch  
And out of her own goodness make the net  
365 That shall enmesh them all.

*Enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

**RODERIGO**

I do follow here in the chase not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent, I have been tonight exceedingly well cudgeled,  
370 and I think the issue will be I shall have so much experience for my pains. And so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

**IAGO**

How poor are they that have not patience!  
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?  
375 Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,  
And wit depends on dilatory time.  
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee.  
And thou, by that small hurt, hath cashiered Cassio.

between Othello and you will grow stronger now than ever before.

**CASSIO**

That's good advice.

**IAGO**

I give it out of sincere kindness and affection for you.

**CASSIO**

I think you're right, and in the morning I will ask the virtuous Desdemona to plead on my behalf. But I worry for my fortunes if they hold me back.

**IAGO**


You're on the right track. Good night, lieutenant. I must go and keep a lookout.


**CASSIO**

Good night, honest Iago.

*CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

Who could say that I'm a villain, when I give free and honest advice that is helpful for Cassio in winning back the Moor's favor? For it really is easy to persuade Desdemona to help you in anything. She gives rise to as many good things as nature itself. And Othello is such a slave to his love for her that he would renounce his baptism and reject all symbols of Christian redemption to win her over. She can do whatever she wants, and whatever she desires he will carry out. How then could I be a villain, when I am advising Cassio to do what is in his best interest? That's Satan's theology! When devils do the worst sins, they first put on the pretense of goodness and innocence, as I am doing now. For while this honest fool begs Desdemona to fix his misfortune and while she pleads on his behalf to the Moor, I'll poison Othello's thoughts by whispering into his ear. I'll say that Desdemona is standing up for Cassio because she is attracted to him. The more that she argues for Cassio, the guiltier she'll seem to the Moor. In this way I'll turn her own virtue into a sort of tar , to entrap her—and everyone else—with her own goodness.

 The original text's "pitch" refers to a black, foul-smelling, and particularly sticky tar-like substance.

*RODERIGO enters.*

How are things going, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

I come here exhausted, like a dog bringing up the rear of the pack during a hunt. I've spent almost all my money, have been thoroughly beaten up tonight, and all I have for all this is some painful life experience. So, I'm going to return to Venice a little wiser and a lot poorer.

**IAGO**

How poor are those who don't have any patience! Every wound must heal gradually. You know that our plan is based on cleverness and not magic, and cleverness needs time to work. Aren't things actually going well? Cassio has beaten you up, yes. But because of this he's been fired from his position as lieutenant. The fruits that blossom first are

380 Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.  
Content thyself awhile. In troth, 'tis morning.  
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.  
Retire thee, go where thou art billeted.  
385 Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter.  
Nay, get thee gone.

*Exit RODERIGO*

Two things are to be done:  
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress.  
I'll set her on.  
Myself, the while, to draw the Moor apart  
390 And bring him jump when he may Cassio find  
Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way.  
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

*Exit*

the first to ripen, and before long, we'll reap the fruits of our labors. Be patient a while longer. It's already morning, in fact. Excitement and action make time fly. Go back to your room and get some sleep. Go, I tell you. I'll fill you in more later. Now, get going.

*RODERIGO exits.*

I must do two things. First, my wife has to advocate for Cassio to Desdemona. I'll get her to do that. Meanwhile, I need to take the Moor aside and orchestrate it so that he happens upon Cassio pleading to his wife. Yes, that's the way to do it. I have no time to waste!

*IAGO exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter CASSIO and MUSICIANS*

#### CASSIO

Masters, play here, I will content your pains.  
Something that's brief, and bid "Good morrow, general."

*They play. Enter CLOWN*

#### CLOWN

Why masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' th' nose thus?

#### MUSICIAN

5 How, sir? How?

#### CLOWN

Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

#### MUSICIAN

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

#### CLOWN

Oh, thereby hangs a tail.

#### MUSICIAN

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

#### CLOWN

10 Marry sir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you, and the general so likes your music that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

#### MUSICIAN

Well, sir, we will not.

#### CLOWN

15 If you have any music that may not be heard, to 't again. But, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

#### MUSICIAN

We have none such, sir.

### Shakescleare Translation

*CASSIO and MUSICIANS enter.*

#### CASSIO

Gentlemen, play some music here. I'll pay you for your trouble. Play a short song, and then say, "Good morning, general."

*The MUSICIANS play a song. A CLOWN enters.*

#### CLOWN

Gentlemen, have your instruments been in Naples? Is that why they have that strange nasal sound?

#### MUSICIAN

What do you mean, sir?

#### CLOWN

Tell me, are these wind instruments?

#### MUSICIAN

Yes, indeed they are, sir.

#### CLOWN

Well, that's an problem.

#### MUSICIAN

What's the problem, sir?

#### CLOWN

Indeed, sir, windbags! They're the problem. But, gentlemen, here's some money for you. The general likes your music so much that he would like you to stop playing it, for God's sake.

#### MUSICIAN


Well then, sir, we will stop.

#### CLOWN

If you have any songs that are silent, feel free to keep playing those. But, you know, the general doesn't care much for music.

#### MUSICIAN

We don't have any silent songs, sir.

 The city of Naples was associated with syphilis, and the disease would commonly damage the nose.

**CLOWN**

20 Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away. Go,  
vanish into air, away!

*Exeunt MUSICIANS*

**CASSIO**

Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

**CLOWN**

No, I hear not your honest friend, I hear you.

**CASSIO**

25 Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of  
gold for thee. If the gentlewoman that attends the  
general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio  
entreats her a little favour of speech. Wilt thou do  
this?

**CLOWN**

She is stirring, sir. If she will stir hither, I shall  
seem to notify unto her.

*Exit CLOWN*

*Enter IAGO*

**CASSIO**

30 In happy time, Iago.

**IAGO**

You have not been abed, then?

**CASSIO**

Why, no. The day had broke  
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,  
To send in to your wife. My suit to her  
35 Is that she will to virtuous Desdemona  
Procure me some access.

**IAGO**

I'll send her to you presently,  
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor  
Out of the way, that your converse and business  
40 May be more free.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank you for't.

*Exit IAGO*

I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter EMILIA*

**EMILIA**

Good morrow, good Lieutenant. I am sorry  
For your displeasure, but all will sure be well.  
45 The general and his wife are talking of it,  
And she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies  
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus  
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom  
He might not but refuse you. But he protests he loves  
50 you  
And needs no other suitor but his likings  
To take the safest occasion by the front  
To bring you in again.

**CLOWN**

Then pack up your instruments and go. Vanish into the air.  
Go!

*The MUSICIANS exit.*

**CASSIO**

Do you hear, my honest friend?

**CLOWN**

No, I don't hear your honest friend <sup>2</sup>. I hear you.

<sup>2</sup> The Clown takes Cassio's words literally here, instead of picking up the hint that the Clown should take his own advice and leave.

**CASSIO**

Please, that's enough of your jokes. Here's a little gold for  
you. If the woman who takes care of the general's wife is  
awake, tell her that a man named Cassio begs she give  
him a chance to speak with her. Will you do this?

**CLOWN**

She is awake, sir. If she happens to come this way, I'll tell  
her.

*The CLOWN exits.*

*IAGO enters.*

**CASSIO**

Just in time, Iago.

**IAGO**

You haven't gone to bed, then?

**CASSIO**

No. It was already daytime when we left each other. Iago,  
I've been bold enough to ask to speak to your wife. I will ask  
her to allow me to see the virtuous Desdemona.

**IAGO**

I'll send her to you right away. And I'll figure out a way to  
take the Moor somewhere out of the way, so that you can  
talk to her in private.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank you for this.

*IAGO exits.*

I've never known a kinder, more honest man from Florence <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cassio is a Florentine, and so suggests Iago is kind and honest like the people in his hometown.

*EMILIA enters.*

**EMILIA**

Good morning, good Lieutenant. I am sorry for what has  
happened to you, but I'm sure everything will turn out  
okay. The general and his wife are talking about the  
situation, and Desdemona is speaking up for you. Othello  
says that the man you hurt is well-known and well-liked in  
Cyprus, and that he has no choice but to refuse your  
appeal. But Othello insists that he still loves you, and  
doesn't need any persuading to put you back in your  
position when he gets the opportunity.

**CASSIO**

55 Yet I beseech you,  
If you think fit, or that it may be done,  
Give me advantage of some brief discourse  
With Desdemona alone.

**EMILIA**

60 Pray you come in.  
I will bestow you where you shall have time  
To speak your bosom freely.

**CASSIO**

I am much bound to you.

*Exeunt*

**CASSIO**

Nonetheless, I beg you—if you think it's possible and a good idea—to let me talk with Desdemona alone for a little bit.

**EMILIA**

Please, come inside. I will give you a chance to talk to her freely.

**CASSIO**

I owe you for this.

*CASSIO and EMILIA exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN*

**OTHELLO**

These letters give, Iago, to the pilot,  
And by him do my duties to the senate.  
That done, I will be walking on the works,  
Repair there to me.

**IAGO**

5 Well, my good lord, I'll do 't.

**OTHELLO**

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?

**GENTLEMEN**

We'll wait upon your lordship.

*Exeunt*

### Shakescleare Translation

*OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN enter.*

**OTHELLO**

Iago, give these letters to the captain of my ship, and tell him to extend my greetings to the senate back in Venice. Once that is done, come find me where I will be walking atop the walls.

**IAGO**

Very well, my good lord. I'll do it.

**OTHELLO**

Well then, gentlemen, shall we go see the walls of this fort?

**GENTLEMEN**

After you, my lord.

*OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA*

**DESDEMONA**

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do  
All my abilities in thy behalf.

**EMILIA**

Good madam, do. I warrant it grieves my husband  
As if the cause were his.

**DESDEMONA**

5 Oh, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,  
But I will have my lord and you again  
As friendly as you were.

**CASSIO**

Bounteous madam,  
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,  
10 He's never anything but your true servant.

### Shakescleare Translation

*DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA enter.*

**DESDEMONA**

Rest assured, good Cassio, I will do all I can for you.

**EMILIA**

Please do, good madam. The situation has my husband troubled as if the problem were his own.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, your husband's an honest fellow. Cassio, do not doubt that I will soon have you and my husband as close as you were before.

**CASSIO**

Generous madam, whatever happens to me, I'll always be your loyal servant.

**DESDEMONA**

I know 't, I thank you. You do love my lord.  
You have known him long, and be you well assured  
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off  
Than in a polite distance.

**CASSIO**

15 Ay, but, lady,  
That policy may either last so long,  
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,  
Or breed itself so out of circumstances,  
That, I being absent and my place supplied,  
20 My general will forget my love and service.

**DESDEMONA**

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here  
I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,  
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it  
To the last article. My lord shall never rest,  
25 I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience.  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift,  
I'll intermingle everything he does  
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
30 Than give thy cause away.

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

**EMILIA**

Madam, here comes my lord.

**CASSIO**

Madam, I'll take my leave.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, stay and hear me speak.

**CASSIO**

Madam, not now. I am very ill at ease,  
35 Unfit for mine own purposes.

**DESDEMONA**

Well, do your discretion.

*Exit CASSIO*

**IAGO**

Ha! I like not that.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say?

**IAGO**

Nothing, my lord, or if—I know not what.

**OTHELLO**

40 Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

**IAGO**

Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it  
That he would steal away so guilty-like  
Seeing you coming.

**OTHELLO**

I do believe 'twas he.

**DESDEMONA**

45 How now, my lord?  
I have been talking with a suitor here,  
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

**DESDEMONA**

Thank you. I know you mean that. You really do love my  
husband. You've known him for a long time, and you can be  
sure that he is only keeping his distance from you for  
political reasons.

**CASSIO**

Yes, but, my lady, I worry that he may keep this distance for  
so long—because it is easier to keep doing it, or because  
some accident or other makes it necessary—that he will  
forget my love and service to him while I am gone and  
someone else is in my place.

**DESDEMONA**

Don't worry about that. With Emilia here as my witness, I  
guarantee that you will have your place back as lieutenant.  
I assure you, when I promise to do something out of  
friendship, I deliver. My husband won't have a moment of  
rest because I'll keep him awake all night to talk his ear off  
about this. I'll lecture him until our bed feels like a school  
room and his table a confessional. I'll mention your case no  
matter what he's doing. So cheer up, Cassio. I'd rather die  
than fail on your behalf.

*OTHELLO and IAGO enter.*

**EMILIA**

Madam, here comes my husband.

**CASSIO**

Madam, I'll leave now.

**DESDEMONA**

Why don't you stay here and hear me speak?

**CASSIO**

Madam, not now. I don't have a good feeling about this, and  
don't think it's the right time.

**DESDEMONA**

Well, it's up to you.

*CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

Huh. I don't like the looks of that.

**OTHELLO**

What are you talking about?

**IAGO**

Nothing, my lord, unless—I don't know.

**OTHELLO**

Wasn't that Cassio who was just talking to my wife?

**IAGO**

Cassio, my lord? No, surely not. I can't imagine he would  
slink away looking so guilty after seeing you coming.

**OTHELLO**

I think it was him.

**DESDEMONA**

How are you, my husband? I have been talking here with a  
man who, sadly, you are displeased with.

**OTHELLO**

Who is 't you mean?

**DESDEMONA**

50 Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,  
If I have any grace or power to move you  
His present reconciliation take.  
For if he be not one that truly loves you,  
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,  
55 I have no judgment in an honest face.  
I prithee, call him back.

**OTHELLO**

Went he hence now?

**DESDEMONA**

Ay, sooth, so humbled  
That he hath left part of his grief with me  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

**OTHELLO**

60 Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But shall 't be shortly?

**OTHELLO**

The sooner, sweet, for you.

**DESDEMONA**

Shall 't be tonight at supper?

**OTHELLO**

No, not tonight.

**DESDEMONA**

65 Tomorrow dinner, then?

**OTHELLO**

I shall not dine at home,  
I meet the captains at the citadel.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn.  
On Tuesday noon, or night, or Wednesday morn.  
70 I prithee name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent,  
And yet his trespass, in our common reason  
(Save that, they say, the wars must make example  
Out of her best) is not, almost, a fault  
75 T' incur a private check. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul  
What you would ask me that I should deny  
Or stand so mamm'ring on. What? Michael Cassio  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
80 When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part, to have so much to do  
To bring him in? Trust me, I could do much—

**OTHELLO**

Prithee, no more. Let him come when he will,  
I will deny thee nothing.

**DESDEMONA**

85 Why, this is not a boon,  
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit  
To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit  
90 Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed  
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight  
And fearful to be granted.

**OTHELLO**

Who do you mean?

**DESDEMONA**

Your lieutenant, Cassio. My good husband, if I have any  
grace or power to persuade you, please accept his apology.  
I swear he truly loves you and made a mistake on accident,  
not on purpose, or else I can't judge an honest face. Please,  
call him back here.

**OTHELLO**

Was that him who just left?

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, that's right. And he was so humbled and troubled that  
now I feel sad for him. My love, call him back here.

**OTHELLO**

Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But will that time be soon?

**OTHELLO**

All the sooner because you asked, sweetheart.

**DESDEMONA**

So, will that be tonight at dinner?

**OTHELLO**

No, not tonight.

**DESDEMONA**

Tomorrow at dinner, then?

**OTHELLO**

I'm not eating dinner at home tomorrow. I'm meeting the  
captains at the castle.

**DESDEMONA**

Then do it tomorrow night, or Tuesday morning. Or  
Tuesday at noon, or Tuesday night, or even Wednesday  
morning. You name the time, but please sometime within  
the next three days. Truly, he regrets what he's done, and  
his error wasn't really that serious—except that, as they say,  
military discipline requires that you be most strict with the  
best soldiers—and should barely have even required a  
private scolding. When will Cassio come back? Tell me,  
Othello. If you asked me for something, I wouldn't just say  
no, or stand there hesitating. What do you say? Michael  
Cassio helped you when you were courting me, and  
whenever I criticized you he stood up for you. Why should it  
be so hard for him to get to talk with you? Trust me, I could  
do a lot—

**OTHELLO**

Please, don't talk anymore about this. Let Cassio come  
when he wants. I won't deny you what you want.

**DESDEMONA**

This isn't a great favor you're doing me. It's as if I'm trying  
to persuade you to put on gloves when it's cold out, or to  
eat healthy food, or to keep yourself warm, or to do  
anything that's good for you. No, when I have something to  
ask of you that will really test your love, it will be a difficult,  
serious thing, one that you wouldn't grant easily.

**OTHELLO**

I will deny thee nothing!  
Whereon I do beseech thee, grant me this,  
95 To leave me but a little to myself.

**DESDEMONA**

Shall I deny you? No. Farewell, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, my Desdemona. I'll come to thee straight.

**DESDEMONA**

Emilia, come.—Be as your fancies teach you.  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

**OTHELLO**

100 Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul  
But I do love thee! And when I love thee not  
Chaos is come again.

**IAGO**

My noble lord—

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say, Iago?

**IAGO**

105 Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,  
Know of your love?

**OTHELLO**

He did, from first to last.  
Why dost thou ask?

**IAGO**

110 But for a satisfaction of my thought,  
No further harm.

**OTHELLO**

Why of thy thought, Iago?

**IAGO**

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, yes, and went between us very oft.

**IAGO**

Indeed?

**OTHELLO**

115 Indeed? Ay, indeed! Discern'st thou aught in that?  
Is he not honest?

**IAGO**

Honest, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Honest, ay, honest.

**IAGO**

My lord, for aught I know.

**OTHELLO**

120 What dost thou think?

**IAGO**

Think, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

I will never say no to you! All I ask of you right now is that  
you leave me alone for a bit.

**DESDEMONA**

And will I say no to you? No, I won't. Goodbye, my husband.

**OTHELLO**

Goodbye, my Desdemona. I'll come see you soon.

**DESDEMONA**

Emilia, come with me. Act however you want, Othello.  
Whatever you do, I'll be obedient to you.

*EMILIA and DESDEMONA exit.*

**OTHELLO**

Oh, that crazy girl. But I'll be damned if don't love her! The  
world will end before I stop loving her.

**IAGO**

My noble lord—

**OTHELLO**

What is it, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did Michael Cassio know about your love for Desdemona  
when you were courting her?

**OTHELLO**

He did, from the very beginning. Why do you ask?

**IAGO**

Oh, no reason. I was just curious.

**OTHELLO**

Why were you curious, Iago?

**IAGO**

I didn't think he had met her.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, yes he knew her, and often carried messages between  
Desdemona and me.

**IAGO**

Really?

**OTHELLO**

What do you mean, "really?" Yes, really. You think  
something's strange about that? Isn't Cassio honest?

**IAGO**

Honest, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Honest, yes, honest.

**IAGO**

My lord, for all I know.

**OTHELLO**

What do you think?

**IAGO**

Think, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

"Think, my lord?" Alas, thou echo'st me  
 As if there were some monster in thy thought  
 Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something.  
 125 I heard thee say even now thou lik'st not that  
 When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?  
 And when I told thee he was of my counsel  
 Of my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st "Indeed?"  
 And didst contract and purse thy brow together  
 130 As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
 Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me  
 Show me thy thought.

**IAGO**

My lord, you know I love you.

**OTHELLO**

I think thou dost.  
 135 And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty  
 And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,  
 Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more.  
 For such things in a false disloyal knave  
 Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just  
 140 They are close dilations, working from the heart,  
 That passion cannot rule.

**IAGO**

For Michael Cassio,  
 I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

**OTHELLO**

I think so too.

**IAGO**

145 Men should be what they seem,  
 Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

**OTHELLO**

Certain, men should be what they seem.

**IAGO**

Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, yet there's more in this.  
 150 I prithee speak to me as to thy thinkings,  
 As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts  
 The worst of words.

**IAGO**

Good my lord, pardon me,  
 Though I am bound to every act of duty  
 155 I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.  
 Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false,  
 As where's that palace whereinto foul things  
 Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure  
 Wherein uncleanly apprehensions  
 160 Keep leets and law-days and in sessions sit  
 With meditations lawful?

**OTHELLO**

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,  
 If thou but think'st him wronged and mak'st his ear  
 A stranger to thy thoughts.

**IAGO**

165 I do beseech you,  
 Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,  
 As, I confess, it is my nature's plague  
 To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
 Shapes faults that are not, that your wisdom,  
 170 From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
 Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble

**OTHELLO**

"Think, my lord?" Come on, you're repeating everything I  
 say like a strange monster in your mind that you're afraid is  
 to hideous to show. You're hinting at something. You just  
 said earlier that you didn't like how Cassio left my wife's  
 side. What about it didn't you like? And when I told you that  
 Cassio advised me the whole time I was courting  
 Desdemona, you said, "Oh really?" And you raised your  
 eyebrows like you had some secret thought about it. If you  
 care about me at all, tell me what you're thinking.

**IAGO**

My lord, you know I care about you.

**OTHELLO**

I think you do. And it's precisely because I know you are full  
 of love and honesty and think carefully before you speak  
 that I'm even more worried about the way you're  
 hesitating. In some disloyal liar, it wouldn't mean anything,  
 but in an honest man like you, these kinds of reactions are  
 indications of thoughts that come from the heart which  
 cannot be clouded by emotion.

**IAGO**

As far as Michael Cassio goes, I think I can swear that he is  
 honest.

**OTHELLO**

I think so too.

**IAGO**

Men should be what they seem to be. And if they aren't, I  
 wish they wouldn't pretend to be anything that they're not!

**OTHELLO**

Certainly, men should be what they seem to be.

**IAGO**

Well then, I think Cassio is an honest man.

**OTHELLO**

No, there's something more going on. Please, tell me what  
 you're thinking to yourself, and speak even the worst  
 thoughts you are thinking.

**IAGO**

My good lord, pardon me. I must obey your every order, but  
 I don't have to do that which even slaves aren't obligated to  
 do—divulge my thoughts. What if my thoughts are vile and  
 untrue? After all, what palace is there that has never let a  
 foul thing inside? Who has ever had a heart so pure that  
 impure thoughts haven't held court with lawful thoughts?

**OTHELLO**

Iago, if you think that a friend of yours is in trouble but you  
 don't say anything, then you are wronging your friend.

**IAGO**

Since I am maybe wrong in my guess—and I admit it's my  
 nature to look into possible misdeeds and often I imagine  
 wrongs that aren't really there—I beg you in your wisdom  
 not to put too much stock in what I say, since I often  
 wrongly imagine things. Don't make a big deal out of my  
 smattering of uncertain observations. It would not be good  
 for you, and it wouldn't be wise, honest, or manly of me to



Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom  
175 To let you know my thoughts.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou mean?

**IAGO**

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.  
Who steals my purse steals trash. 'Tis something,  
180 nothing:  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.

**OTHELLO**

185 I'll know thy thoughts.

**IAGO**

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand,  
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

**OTHELLO**

Ha!

**IAGO**

Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy!  
190 It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger,  
But, oh, what damned minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes, yet doubts— suspects, yet soundly loves!

**OTHELLO**

195 Oh, misery!

**IAGO**

Poor and content is rich, and rich enough,  
But riches fineless is as poor as winter  
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.  
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend  
200 From jealousy!

**OTHELLO**

Why, why is this?  
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No! To be once in doubt  
205 Is to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat  
When I shall turn the business of my soul  
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,  
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous  
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
210 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances.  
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.  
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,  
For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago,  
215 I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove,  
And on the proof there is no more but this:  
Away at once with love or jealousy!

**IAGO**

I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason  
To show the love and duty that I bear you  
220 With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound,  
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.  
Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio.  
Wear your eyes thus, not jealous nor secure.  
I would not have your free and noble nature  
225

let you know my thoughts.

**OTHELLO**

What do you mean?

**IAGO**

A good reputation is the most precious jewel of a man's or a woman's soul, my dear lord. If someone steals money from me, it's not a big deal. It was mine, now it's his, and it's been held by thousands of others. But if someone steals my good reputation from me, then he really does make me truly poor, and steals something that doesn't even make him any richer.

**OTHELLO**

I want to know your thoughts.

**IAGO**

You cannot know, not even if you were squeezing my heart in your hand to make me tell you. And as long as I have my heart, I won't tell you.

**OTHELLO**

Ha!

**IAGO**

Oh, my lord, beware of jealousy! It is a green-eyed monster that mocks whoever it eats away at. A man who knows for sure that his wife is cheating on him lives in bliss, since he knows not to love his wife. But, oh, what torture it is to love but doubt your wife, suspect her of something but still love her.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, what misery!

**IAGO**

To be poor but content is actually to be quite rich. But you can have endless riches and still be as poor as anyone if you are always afraid of losing your riches. Good heaven, defend us all from jealousy!

**OTHELLO**

Why would say that? Do you think I would make jealousy my whole life, and with every change in the moon find new suspicions? No! To doubt once is to make up your mind. I'd rather turn into a goat than devote all my time to such overblown suspicions, like the sort of jealous man you're describing. It wouldn't make me jealous for you to say that my wife is pretty, eats well, enjoys the company of others, speaks her mind, sings, plays music, and dances. When a woman is virtuous, these traits are virtuous as well. And I will not worry or fear that she may be unfaithful because I am not very desirable. She knew who she was marrying. No, Iago, I won't doubt Desdemona until I see something, and if I doubt her I'll see if I can prove it. If I get proof, there's only one thing to do: get rid of either my love or my jealousy.

**IAGO**

I'm glad to hear this, because now I can show my love for you and fulfill my duty in a more frank manner. So, hear what I must tell you. I don't have any proof yet. But keep an eye on your wife, and watch her carefully with Cassio. Look at her like this: don't be too jealous or too trusting. I wouldn't want you to get taken advantage of because of your noble, kind nature. Look out. I know the people of my

Out of self-bounty be abused. Look to 't.  
I know our country disposition well.  
In Venice they do let God see the pranks  
They dare not show their husbands. Their best  
conscience

230 Is not to leave 't undone, but keep't unknown.

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou say so?

**IAGO**

She did deceive her father, marrying you,  
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,  
She loved them most.

**OTHELLO**

235 And so she did.

**IAGO**

Why, go to then.  
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,  
To seal her father's eyes up close as oak,  
He thought 'twas witchcraft. But I am much to blame.  
240 I humbly do beseech you of your pardon  
For too much loving you.

**OTHELLO**

I am bound to thee forever.

**IAGO**

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

**OTHELLO**

Not a jot, not a jot.

**IAGO**

245 Trust me, I fear it has.  
I hope you will consider what is spoke  
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved.  
I am to pray you not to strain my speech  
To grosser issues nor to larger reach  
250 Than to suspicion.

**OTHELLO**

I will not.

**IAGO**

Should you do so, my lord,  
My speech should fall into such vile success  
Which my thoughts aimed not at. Cassio's my worthy  
255 friend—  
My lord, I see you're moved.

**OTHELLO**

No, not much moved.  
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

**IAGO**

Long live she so. And long live you to think so.

**OTHELLO**

260 And yet how nature, erring from itself—

**IAGO**

Ay, there's the point. As, to be bold with you,  
Not to affect many proposèd matches  
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
Whereto we see in all things nature tends—  
265 Foh! One may smell in such a will most rank,  
Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural.  
But—pardon me— I do not in position  
Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear

country well. Women of Venice let God see the sorts of  
exploits they wouldn't dare let their husbands see. Their  
conscience doesn't stop them from doing bad things, but  
only keeps them from letting their bad deeds be known.

**OTHELLO**

Do you think so?

**IAGO**

Desdemona deceived her father in marrying you, and she  
pretended to shake in fear at your looks when she actually  
loved them.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, she did.

**IAGO**

Well, there you have it, then. Even though she was a young  
woman, she was so good at lying that she made her father  
as blind as a tree to her plans. He even thought you'd used  
witchcraft on her. But I'm partially to blame for saying this. I  
beg your pardon for loving you too much.

**OTHELLO**

I am forever in your debt.

**IAGO**

I can see this has upset you a little.

**OTHELLO**

Not at all, not at all.

**IAGO**

Trust me, I worry it has. Please consider that what I am  
saying comes from my love for you. But I see you really are  
affected by what I've said. I only meant to warn you to be a  
little suspicious. I beg you not to make more out of this than  
you should.

**OTHELLO**

I won't.

**IAGO**

If you do, my speech would have the very vile effects that I  
didn't want it to. Cassio is my deserving friend—my Lord, I  
see you're troubled.

**OTHELLO**

No, I'm not troubled. I think Desdemona is nothing but  
honest.

**IAGO**

May she be honest for a long time. And that you will  
think she's honest for a long time.

**OTHELLO**

And yet, one can act against one's nature—

**IAGO**

Yes, that's the point. At the risk of being too honest, it was  
against her nature not to like so many suitors of her own  
country, complexion, and social rank, since those who  
share such similarities are naturally drawn to each other.  
Ugh! You can practically smell a gross desire in excessive  
proportion and foul thoughts in such a person. But forgive  
me, I am talking generally and don't mean her in particular,  
although I do fear that she may return to her better

Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,  
 270 May fall to match you with her country forms,  
 And happily repent.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, farewell.  
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know more.  
 Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me, Iago.

**IAGO**

275 My lord, I take my leave. *[going]*

**OTHELLO**

*[aside]* Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless  
 Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

**IAGO**

*(returns)* My lord, I would I might entreat your honor  
 To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time.  
 280 Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place,  
 For sure, he fills it up with great ability,  
 Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,  
 You shall by that perceive him and his means.  
 Note if your lady strain his entertainment  
 285 With any strong or vehement importunity.  
 Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,  
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears—  
 As worthy cause I have to fear I am—  
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

**OTHELLO**

290 Fear not my government.

**IAGO**

I once more take my leave.

*Exit*

**OTHELLO**

This fellow's of exceeding honesty  
 And knows all quantities, with a learned spirit,  
 Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
 295 Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,  
 I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind  
 To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black  
 And have not those soft parts of conversation  
 That chamberers have, or for I am declined  
 300 Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—  
 She's gone, I am abused, and my relief  
 Must be to loathe her. Oh, curse of marriage  
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours  
 And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad  
 305 And live upon the vapor of a dungeon  
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague to great ones,  
 Prerogative are they less than the base.  
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.  
 310 Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us  
 When we do quicken. Look where she comes.

*Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

If she be false, heaven mocked itself.  
 I'll not believe 't.

**DESDEMONA**

How now, my dear Othello?  
 315 Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
 By you invited, do attend your presence.

**OTHELLO**

I am to blame.

judgment, prefer her own countrymen to you, and take  
 back her love for you.

**OTHELLO**

Goodbye, goodbye. If you notice anything more, let me  
 know. Have your wife look out, too. Leave me, Iago.

**IAGO**

My lord, I will leave now. *[He starts to leave.]*

**OTHELLO**

*[To himself]* Why did I marry? Without a doubt, this honest  
 man has seen more than he lets on, and knows  
 more—much more—than he is telling me.

**IAGO**

*[Returning]* My lord, I ask you not to worry about this  
 anymore. Give it some time. It is right for Cassio to get his  
 place as lieutenant back—for sure, he's very good at the  
 job—but if you wait for a while you will get a better idea of  
 what he's up to. Take note if your wife strongly insists that  
 you reinstate him. That would mean a lot. In the meantime,  
 just think that I'm being overly suspicious in my fears—and  
 I have good reason to think I may be—and I beg you to  
 consider Desdemona innocent.

**OTHELLO**


Don't worry about how I'll handle myself.

**IAGO**

Once again, goodbye.

*IAGO exits.*

**OTHELLO**

This man is very honest and knows human interactions very  
 well. If I find proof that Desdemona is unfaithful, I'll let her  
 go like I'm getting rid of a pet, even if the leash is my own  
 heartstrings. Maybe since I am black and don't have the  
 smooth conversational skills of gallant men, or maybe since  
 I'm getting old—but no, none of that's important. She's  
 gone, I am betrayed, and my only recourse must be to hate  
 her. Oh, this is the curse of marriage, that we can have  
 control over our delicate wives, but not their desires. I'd  
 rather be a toad who survives off the mold in a dungeon  
 than to share the thing I love with others. But that's what  
 you get for being a powerful man, as this happens more  
 often to noblemen than to commoners. It's an inescapable  
 part of fate, like death. From the moment we're born we are  
 fated to wear the horns . Look, here she comes.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.*


If she is a liar, heaven has played a trick on itself. I won't  
 believe it.

**DESDEMONA**

How are you, my dear Othello? The islanders you invited to  
 dinner are waiting for you.

**OTHELLO**

My mistake.

 Men whose wives cheated on  
 them (called "cuckolds") were  
 commonly depicted as having horns  
 on their heads.

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so faintly?  
Are you not well?

**OTHELLO**

320 I have a pain upon my forehead, here.

**DESDEMONA**

Why that's with watching, 'twill away again.  
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
It will be well. *[pulls out a handkerchief]*

**OTHELLO**

325 Your napkin is too little,  
Let it alone.

*Her handkerchief drops*

Come, I'll go in with you.

**DESDEMONA**

I am very sorry that you are not well.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

**EMILIA**

*(picks up the handkerchief)*

I am glad I have found this napkin,  
330 This was her first remembrance from the Moor.  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
Wooed me to steal it, but she so loves the token  
(For he conjured her she should ever keep it)  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
335 To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out  
And give 't Iago. What he will do with it  
Heaven knows, not I.  
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

*Enter IAGO*

**IAGO**

How now! What do you here alone?

**EMILIA**

340 Do not you chide. I have a thing for you.

**IAGO**

A thing for me? It is a common thing—

**EMILIA**

Ha?

**IAGO**

To have a foolish wife.

**EMILIA**

345 Oh, is that all? What will you give me now  
For the same handkerchief?

**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

**EMILIA**

What handkerchief?  
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,  
That which so often you did bid me steal.

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so faintly? Are you okay?

**OTHELLO**

I have a headache, here by my forehead <sup>2</sup>.

**DESDEMONA**

Well, that's from staying up too late. It will go away soon.  
Let me just tie this handkerchief tight around your head  
and it will feel better within an hour. *[She pulls out a handkerchief]*

**OTHELLO**

Your handkerchief is too small. Leave it alone.

*DESDEMONA's handkerchief drops.*

Come on, I'll go inside with you.

**DESDEMONA**

I am very sorry that you aren't feeling well.

*OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.*

**EMILIA**

*[She picks up DESDEMONA's handkerchief]* I am glad I have  
found this handkerchief. This was Desdemona's first gift  
from the Moor. My stubborn husband has asked me to steal  
it a hundred times, but she loves it so much (for Othello  
asked her never to lose it) that she always keeps it with her  
to kiss and talk to. I'll have the embroidered pattern copied  
and give it to Iago. God knows what he will do with it. God  
only knows. I certainly don't. I just like to make him happy.

*IAGO enters.*

**IAGO**

What's going on? What are you doing here alone?

**EMILIA**

Don't scold me. I have something for you.

**IAGO**

You have a thing for me? It is a common thing <sup>3</sup>...

**EMILIA**

What?

**IAGO**

... to have a foolish wife.

**EMILIA**

Oh, is that it? What will you give me now for the  
handkerchief itself?

**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

**EMILIA**

What handkerchief? The one the Moor first gave to  
Desdemona, the one you so often asked me to steal.

<sup>2</sup> Othello refers to the place from which a cuckold's horns were imagined to grow.

<sup>3</sup> "Thing" is Elizabethan slang for female genitalia. Thus, Iago implies that his wife is "common," or sleeps with other men.

**IAGO**

350 Hast stolen it from her?

**EMILIA**

No, but she let it drop by negligence  
And, to th' advantage, I being here, took 't up.  
Look, here it is.

**IAGO**

A good wench, give it me.

**EMILIA**

355 What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest  
To have me filch it?

**IAGO**

Why, what is that to you?

**EMILIA**

If it be not for some purpose of import,  
Give 't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad  
360 When she shall lack it.

**IAGO**

Be not acknown on 't,  
I have use for it. Go, leave me.

*Exit EMILIA*

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin  
And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
365 Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.  
The Moor already changes with my poison.  
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons  
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
370 But with a little act upon the blood  
Burn like the mines of sulfur.

*Enter OTHELLO*

I did say so.  
Look, where he comes. Not poppy nor mandragora  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
375 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

**OTHELLO**

Ha! Ha! False to me?

**IAGO**

Why, how now, general? No more of that.

**OTHELLO**

Avaunt! Be gone! Thou hast set me on the rack.  
380 I swear 'tis better to be much abused  
Than but to know 't a little.

**IAGO**

How now, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

What sense had I in her stol'n hours of lust?  
I saw 't not, thought it not, it harmed not me.  
385 I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and  
merry.  
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.  
He that is robbed, not wanting what is stol'n,  
Let him not know't, and he's not robbed at all.

**IAGO**

390 I am sorry to hear this.

**IAGO**

You've stolen it from her?

**EMILIA**

No, she let it drop carelessly. And, since I happened to be  
here, I took the opportunity to pick it up. Look, here it is.

**IAGO**

That's a good girl, give it to me.

**EMILIA**

What will you do with it? Why have you been so eager for  
me to steal it?

**IAGO**

Why do you care?

**EMILIA**

If you don't have an important purpose for it, then give it  
back to me. Poor Desdemona, she'll be so upset when she  
realizes it's missing.

**IAGO**

Don't tell her what happened to it. I have a use for it. Go on,  
leave me alone.

*EMILIA exits.*

I will leave this handkerchief in Cassio's room, and let him  
find it there. Unimportant, trifling matters count as strong  
evidence to the jealous. This may have significant  
consequences. The Moor is already being changed by my  
poisonous advice. Dangerous suspicion are like poisons  
that don't even taste very bad at first, but slowly act on the  
blood and burn the insides before long like unquenchable  
sulfur.

*OTHELLO enters.*

Just as I said. Look, here he comes. No exotic plant or herb,  
nor any sleeping medicine in the world, will return to you  
that sweet restful sleep you enjoyed just yesterday.

**OTHELLO**

Ha! Ha! Desdemona, unfaithful to me?

**IAGO**

Why, what is going on, General? Don't talk like that.

**OTHELLO**

Away! Get away from me! You have tortured me. I swear it's  
better to be horribly betrayed and not realize it than to  
know a bit about it.

**IAGO**

What is going on, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Was I completely senseless during the hours she was  
cheating on me? I didn't see anything, and I didn't suspect  
anything. So, it didn't do me any harm. I slept well after, ate  
well, and was happy and carefree. I didn't see Cassio's  
kisses on her lips. If a man is ever robbed but doesn't  
realize what has been stolen, let him not know he's been  
robbed. And then it's as if the robbery never happened.

**IAGO**

I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**

I had been happy if the general camp,  
 Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,  
 So I had nothing known. Oh, now forever  
 Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!  
 395 Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars  
 That makes ambition virtue! Oh, farewell!  
 Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
 The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,  
 The royal banner, and all quality,  
 400 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!  
 And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
 The immortal Jove's dead clamors counterfeit,  
 Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.

**IAGO**

Is 't possible, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

405 Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,  
 Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof  
 Or by the worth of mine eternal soul  
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog  
 Than answer my waked wrath!

**IAGO**

410 Is 't come to this?

**OTHELLO**

Make me to see 't, or at the least so prove it  
 That the probation bear no hinge nor loop  
 To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!

**IAGO**

My noble lord—

**OTHELLO**

415 If thou dost slander her and torture me,  
 Never pray more. Abandon all remorse.  
 On horror's head horrors accumulate,  
 Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed,  
 For nothing canst thou do damnation add  
 420 Greater than that.

**IAGO**

Oh, grace! Oh, heaven forgive me!  
 Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?  
 God buy you, take mine office. O wretched fool  
 That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice!  
 425 O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,  
 To be direct and honest is not safe.  
 I thank you for this profit, and from hence  
 I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest.

**IAGO**

430 I should be wise, for honesty's a fool  
 And loses that it works for.

**OTHELLO**

By the world,  
 I think my wife be honest and think she is not.  
 I think that thou art just and think thou art not.  
 435 I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh  
 As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black  
 As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,  
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,  
 I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

**OTHELLO**

I would have been happy if the whole camp of soldiers,  
 trench-diggers and all, had tasted her sweet body, if only I  
 didn't know about it. Oh, now I can say farewell to a  
 peaceful mind! Farewell to being content! Farewell to the  
 soldiers in uniform and the big wars that allow me to fulfill  
 my ambitions! Oh, farewell! Farewell the neighing horses  
 and the shrill war trumpets, the war drums that stir the  
 spirit, the ear-piercing flute, the royal banners, pride, the  
 pomp and circumstance, and everything else that's good  
 about war! And you deadly cannons, whose rude blasts are  
 as loud as Jove's thunderbolts, farewell! Othello's military  
 career is finished.

**IAGO**

Can this be possible, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Villain, you'd better be sure that my wife turns out to be a  
 whore. You'd better be sure of it. Give me proof that I can  
 see with my own eyes, or I swear on my soul that you'll wish  
 you had been born a dog rather than have to answer to my  
 anger.

**IAGO**

Has it come to this?

**OTHELLO**

Give me evidence, or at least prove it beyond an ounce of  
 doubt—or else you'll regret it!

**IAGO**

My noble lord—

**OTHELLO**

If you are going to slander Desdemona and torture me, you  
 can give up on praying, and showing any remorse, because  
 it won't help you. Go ahead and pile more sins on top of the  
 ones you've already committed, do things so horrible  
 they'll make heaven cry and astound everyone on earth.  
 For nothing you could do would add more to your  
 damnation than if you should slander Desdemona more.

**IAGO**

Oh, grace! Oh, heaven forgive me! Are you human? Do you  
 have any sense, or a soul? Goodbye, I resign as flag-bearer.  
 Oh what a fool I am for being honest to a fault! Oh this  
 monstrous world! Take note, take note, everyone: it is not  
 safe to be direct and honest. Thank you for teaching me this  
 lesson. From here on out, I'll love no friend, since showing  
 love for your friends causes such hate.


**OTHELLO**


No, stay. You should be honest.

**IAGO**

I should be wise, because being honest is foolish and  
 causes someone to lose all that he works for.

**OTHELLO**

By the world, part of me thinks my wife is honest, and  
 another part of me thinks she isn't. Part of me thinks you're  
 trustworthy, and another part of me thinks you're not. I  
 need some proof. Her reputation, which was as pure and  
 fair as Diana's , is now besmirched and black as my face.  
 If I can find any ropes, knives, poison, fire, or streams you  
 can drown in, I won't endure this dishonor. If only I could be  
 satisfied in this!

 Diana was the ancient Roman goddess of, among other things, virginity.

**IAGO**

440 I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion.  
I do repent me that I put it to you.  
You would be satisfied?

**OTHELLO**

Would? Nay, and I will.

**IAGO**

And may, but how? How satisfied, my lord?  
445 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on,  
Behold her topped?

**OTHELLO**

Death and damnation! Oh!

**IAGO**

It were a tedious difficulty, I think,  
To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then,  
450 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster  
More than their own! What then? How then?  
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?  
It is impossible you should see this,  
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,  
455 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross  
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,  
If imputation and strong circumstances  
Which lead directly to the door of truth  
Will give you satisfaction, you may have 't.

**OTHELLO**

460 Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

**IAGO**

I do not like the office.  
But, sith I am entered in this cause so far,  
Pricked to 't by foolish honesty and love,  
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately  
465 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,  
I could not sleep. There are a kind of men  
So loose of soul that in their sleeps will mutter  
Their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio.  
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,  
470 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."  
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,  
Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,  
As if he plucked up kisses by the roots  
That grew upon my lips, lay his leg  
475 Over my thigh, and sigh, and kiss, and then  
Cry "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"

**OTHELLO**

Oh, monstrous! Monstrous!

**IAGO**

Nay, this was but his dream.

**OTHELLO**

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

**IAGO**

480 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.  
And this may help to thicken other proofs  
That do demonstrate thinly.

**OTHELLO**

I'll tear her all to pieces!

**IAGO**

485 Nay, yet be wise, yet we see nothing done,  
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,  
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief  
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

**IAGO**

I see, sir, that passion is eating away at you. I regret that I told you about this. You say that you wish you could be satisfied?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, and I will be.

**IAGO**

But how? How will you be satisfied, my lord? Would you, like a voyeur, inappropriately watch and look on as she is having sex?

**OTHELLO**

Death and damnation! Oh!

**IAGO**

It would be very difficult, I think, to arrange it so you could watch the two of them sleep together. They'd be damned if anyone else saw them having sex. So, what now? What should we do? What should I say? How could you be satisfied that you know the truth? It is impossible that you should see them in the act, even if they were frisky as goats, monkeys, or wolves in heat, as lustful as drunk idiots. But nonetheless, I tell you, if you would be satisfied to find strong circumstantial evidence pointing to the truth, you could then find such satisfaction.

**OTHELLO**

Give me some proof that Desdemona is disloyal.

**IAGO**

I don't like this task. But since I'm already so deeply involved in this, thanks to foolish honesty and concern for you, I will go on. I was recently spending the night in Cassio's bedroom and couldn't sleep because of a raging toothache. Now, some men have such a loose soul that they mutter things in their sleep. Cassio is one of them. I heard him say in his sleep, "Sweet Desdemona, let's be careful and hide our love." And then, sir, he clutched and grabbed my hand, crying "Oh sweet woman!" and he kissed me hard as if with his kisses he was trying to pull up some plant by the roots that was growing on my lips. He laid his leg over my thigh and sighed, and kissed, and then cried out, "Curse fate for giving you to the Moor!"

**OTHELLO**

Oh, this is terrible! Terrible!

**IAGO**

But this was only his dream.

**OTHELLO**

But his actions suggests something he had already done.

**IAGO**

It's very suspicious, even though it's only a dream. And this may support and strengthen other, shakier evidence.

**OTHELLO**

I'll tear Desdemona to pieces!

**IAGO**

No, be smart. We still haven't seen anything actually happen. She may still turn out to be honest. Just tell me this: have you occasionally seen a handkerchief decorated with strawberries in your wife's hand?

**OTHELLO**

I gave her such a one, 'twas my first gift.

**IAGO**

490 I know not that, but such a handkerchief—  
I am sure it was your wife's—did I today  
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

**OTHELLO**

If it be that—

**IAGO**

If it be that, or any that was hers,  
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

**OTHELLO**

495 Oh, that the slave had forty thousand lives!  
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.  
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago,  
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven—'tis gone.  
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!  
500 Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

**IAGO**

Yet be content.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, blood, blood, blood!

**IAGO**

505 Patience, I say. Your mind may change.

**OTHELLO**

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,  
510 Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up. Now, by yon marble heaven,  
In the due reverence of a sacred vow  
515 I here engage my words. *(he kneels)*

**IAGO**

Do not rise yet.  
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
You elements that clip us round about,  
Witness that here Iago doth give up  
520 The execution of his wit, hands, heart,  
To wronged Othello's service. Let him command,  
And to obey shall be in me remorse,  
What bloody business ever.

**OTHELLO**

I greet thy love  
525 Not with vain thanks but with acceptance bounteous,  
And will upon the instant put thee to 't.  
Within these three days let me hear thee say  
That Cassio's not alive.

**IAGO**

My friend is dead,  
530 'Tis done at your request. But let her live.

**OTHELLO**

Damn her, lewd minx! Oh, damn her, damn her!  
Come, go with me apart. I will withdraw  
To furnish me with some swift means of death  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

**OTHELLO**

I gave her such a handkerchief. It was my first gift to her.

**IAGO**

I didn't know that, but I saw Cassio use such a  
handkerchief—I'm sure it was your wife's—to wipe his beard  
earlier today.

**OTHELLO**

If it really was that handkerchief—

**IAGO**

If it's the same one, or any handkerchief of Desdemona's, it  
is another piece of evidence weighing against her.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, if only that wretch Cassio had forty thousand lives, so I  
could kill him all those times! Once isn't enough for my  
revenge. Now I see that my suspicions are true. Look, Iago, I  
let go of all my fond love; it's all gone. Black vengeance,  
come to me from the depths of hell! Oh love, give way to  
cruel hate! May my chest swell up with hate, as deadly as  
the venom of poisonous snakes!

**IAGO**

Calm down, now.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, blood, blood, blood!

**IAGO**

Be patient, I'm telling you. You might change your mind.

**OTHELLO**

I'll never change my mind, Iago. Just like how the Black Sea  
never ebbs back but keeps flowing on with its icy waters  
through the Propontic sea and onward to the Hellespont,  
so my bloody thoughts only move forward with a violent  
current and never look back. My anger is like a tide and if it  
ever recedes back to love it is swallowed up again by a huge  
wave of revenge. Now, by heaven, with all the reverence of  
a sacred oath, I here make a vow. *[He kneels down]*

**IAGO**

Don't get up yet. *[He kneels down as well]* May the stars in  
the sky, and the sky itself be my witnesses: Iago hereby  
dedicates all of his wit, strength, and heart to helping  
Othello, who has been wronged. Whatever he commands, I  
will obey, whatever bloody task he gives me.

**OTHELLO**

Rather than just giving you empty thanks for your vow, I will  
take up your generous offer and give you an order right  
now. Within three days, let me hear you say that Cassio is  
dead.

**IAGO**

Your wish is my command. My friend Cassio will die. But let  
Desdemona live.

**OTHELLO**

Damn her, that lusty flirt! Oh damn her, damn her! Come  
on, come leave with me. I will go to figure out some quick  
way to kill the beautiful devil. Now you are my lieutenant.



IAGO

535 I am your own for ever.

*Exeunt*

IAGO

I am loyal to you forever.

*OTHELLO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and CLOWN*

DESDEMONA

Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

CLOWN

I dare not say he lies anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why, man?

CLOWN

5 He's a soldier, and for one to say a soldier lies,  
'tis stabbing.

DESDEMONA

Go to. Where lodges he?

CLOWN

To tell you where he lodges is to tell you where I lie.

DESDEMONA

Can anything be made of this?

CLOWN

10 I know not where he lodges, and for me to devise a  
lodging and say he lies here, or he lies there, were to  
lie in mine own throat.

DESDEMONA

Can you inquire him out and be edified by report?

CLOWN

I will catechize the world for him, that is, make  
questions, and by them answer.

DESDEMONA

15 Seek him, bid him come hither. Tell him I have moved my  
lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well.

CLOWN

To do this is within the compass of man's wit, and  
therefore I will attempt the doing it.*Exit*

DESDEMONA

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

20 I know not, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse  
Full of crusadoes. And but my noble Moor  
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness

## Shakescleare Translation

*DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and a CLOWN enter.*

DESDEMONA

Do you know where Lieutenant Cassio lies?



CLOWN

I daresay he doesn't lie anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why?

CLOWN

He's a soldier, and to accuse a soldier of [lying](#)  is as bad  
as stabbing him. *The Clown takes Desdemona's  
question of where Cassio "lies"—or  
lodges—in the literal sense of telling  
falsehoods.*

DESDEMONA

Oh, come on. I mean where does he sleep?

CLOWN

To tell you where he sleeps would be to tell you where I lie.

DESDEMONA

That doesn't make any sense.

CLOWN

I don't know where he sleeps, so for me to say that he  
sleeps somewhere would be lying.

DESDEMONA

Can you ask around and find out?

CLOWN

I will interrogate all the world about him, and make  
everyone answer my questions.

DESDEMONA

Find him and tell him to come to me. Tell him I have  
persuaded my husband on his behalf, and I hope that  
everything will be resolved.

CLOWN

To do that is within the scope of a man's ability. And  
therefore I'll give it a try.*The CLOWN exits.*

DESDEMONA

Where could I have lost that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

I don't know, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I would rather have lost my purse full of coins.  
Losing my handkerchief would be enough to make my  
husband jealous, if he were less loyal and more of a jealous

As jealous creatures are, it were enough  
25 To put him to ill thinking.

**EMILIA**

Is he not jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born  
Drew all such humors from him.

**EMILIA**

Look where he comes.

*Enter OTHELLO*

**DESDEMONA**

30 I will not leave him now till Cassio  
Be called to him.—How is 't with you, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Well, my good lady.— *[aside]* Oh, hardness to dissemble!—  
How do you, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Well, my good lord.

**OTHELLO**

35 Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

It hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

**OTHELLO**

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart.  
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires  
A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,  
40 Much castigation, exercise devout,  
For here's a young and sweating devil here,  
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,  
A frank one.

**DESDEMONA**

You may indeed say so,  
45 For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

**OTHELLO**

A liberal hand. The hearts of old gave hands,  
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

**DESDEMONA**

I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

**OTHELLO**

What promise, chuck?

**DESDEMONA**

50 I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

**OTHELLO**

I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me.  
Lend me thy handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

Here, my lord.

man.

**EMILIA**

Is he not a jealous man?

**DESDEMONA**

Who, Othello? I think he got so much sunlight where he was  
born that it burned the jealousy out of him.

**EMILIA**

Look, he's coming here.

*OTHELLO enters.*

**DESDEMONA**

I won't stop bothering him now until he reinstates Cassio.

*[To OTHELLO]* How are you doing, my husband?

**OTHELLO**

I'm doing well, my good lady.

*[To himself]* Oh, it's so hard to pretend I'm fine!

*[To DESDEMONA]* How are you, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Well, my good husband.

**OTHELLO**

Give me your hand. It's moist, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, because I am young and haven't experienced any  
sorrow.

**OTHELLO**

Warm and moist skin means that you are fertile and have a  
generous heart. This hand of yours suggests that you need  
to be secluded, to fast and to pray. You need some  
discipline, for someone with these kinds of sweating hands  
commonly rebels against authority. It's a good hand, an  
open one.

**DESDEMONA**

You could say that, for it was that hand that gave you my  
heart.

**OTHELLO**

A giving hand. It used to be that people's hearts controlled  
whether they gave someone their hand in marriage. But  
now people give away their hands without consulting their  
hearts.

**DESDEMONA**

I can't speak to that. Now come on, remember your  
promise.

**OTHELLO**

What promise, dear?

**DESDEMONA**

I have sent someone to tell Cassio to come speak to you.

**OTHELLO**

I have a cold and a runny nose. Lend me your handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

Here, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That which I gave you.

**DESDEMONA**

55 I have it not about me.

**OTHELLO**

Not?

**DESDEMONA**

No, indeed, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That's a fault. That handkerchief  
Did an Egyptian to my mother give,  
60 She was a charmer and could almost read  
The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it  
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father  
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it  
Or made gift of it, my father's eye  
65 Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt  
After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me  
And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,  
To give it her. I did so, and take heed on 't,  
Make it a darling like your precious eye.  
70 To lose 't or give 't away were such perdition  
As nothing else could match.

**DESDEMONA**

Is 't possible?

**OTHELLO**

'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it.  
A sibyl, that had numbered in the world  
75 The sun to course two hundred compasses,  
In her prophetic fury sewed the work.  
The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,  
And it was dyed in mummy which the skillful  
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

**DESDEMONA**

80 Indeed? Is 't true?

**OTHELLO**

Most veritable, therefore look to 't well.

**DESDEMONA**

Then would to Heaven that I had never seen 't!

**OTHELLO**

Ha! Wherefore?

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

**OTHELLO**

85 Is 't lost? Is 't gone? Speak, is 't out o' th' way?

**DESDEMONA**

Bless us!

**OTHELLO**

Say you?

**DESDEMONA**

It is not lost, but what and if it were?

**OTHELLO**

How!

**OTHELLO**

No, give me the one I gave to you.

**DESDEMONA**

I don't have it with me.

**OTHELLO**

You don't?

**DESDEMONA**

No, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That's not good. My mother was given that handkerchief by an Egyptian woman who could read people's minds. She told my mother that as long as she had the handkerchief, she would be desirable and my father would be helplessly in love with her, but if she lost it or gave it away, my father would hate her and he would go after other women. Before my mother died, she gave the handkerchief to me and told me to give it to my wife whenever I married. I did this, and so keep it close like a precious treasure. To lose that handkerchief or give it away would be a sin greater than any other.

**DESDEMONA**

Is this true?

**OTHELLO**

It is true. There's magic in the sewing. A prophetess who lived to the age of two hundred sewed the handkerchief while she was in a trance. The worms that made the silk were magical, and it was tinted in dye extracted from embalmed virgins' hearts.

**DESDEMONA**

Really? Is this true?

**OTHELLO**

Absolutely, so look after that handkerchief carefully.

**DESDEMONA**

God, I wish I'd never seen it!

**OTHELLO**

Aha! Why do you wish that?

**DESDEMONA**

Why are you talking in fits in starts—and so impulsively, too?

**OTHELLO**

Is the handkerchief lost? Is it gone? Tell me, have you lost it?

**DESDEMONA**

God help me.

**OTHELLO**

What do you say?

**DESDEMONA**

It isn't lost, but what if it were?

**OTHELLO**

What?

**DESDEMONA**

90 I say, it is not lost.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch 't, let me see 't.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.  
This is a trick to put me from my suit.  
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

**OTHELLO**

95 Fetch me the handkerchief—my mind misgives.

**DESDEMONA**

Come, come,  
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

100 A man that all his time  
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,  
Shared dangers with you—

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

In sooth, you are to blame.

**OTHELLO**

Zounds!

*Exit*

**EMILIA**

105 Is not this man jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

I ne'er saw this before.  
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief,  
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

**EMILIA**

110 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.  
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food.  
To eat us hungerly, and when they are full,  
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!

*Enter CASSIO and IAGO*

**IAGO**

There is no other way. 'Tis she must do 't,  
And, lo, the happiness! Go and importune her.

**DESDEMONA**

115 How now, good Cassio, what's the news with you?

**CASSIO**

Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you  
That by your virtuous means I may again  
Exist, and be a member of his love  
Whom I, with all the office of my heart  
120 Entirely honor. I would not be delayed.  
If my offence be of such mortal kind  
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,  
Nor purposed merit in futurity,  
Can ransom me into his love again,  
125 But to know so must be my benefit.

**DESDEMONA**

I'm telling you, it's not lost.

**OTHELLO**

Go get it, then. Let me see it.

**DESDEMONA**

Well, sir, I could do that, but I won't right now. You're trying  
to trick me so I forget about persuading you regarding  
Cassio. Please, let Cassio be your lieutenant again.

**OTHELLO**

Bring me the handkerchief. I am worried.

**DESDEMONA**

Come on. You'll never find a better man for the job than  
Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

Cassio has always had good fortune because of your love  
for him. He and you have faced dangers together.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

To tell the truth, it's all your fault.

**OTHELLO**

Christ!

*OTHELLO exits.*

**EMILIA**

Doesn't that look like a jealous man?

**DESDEMONA**

I've never seen him like this. There really must be some  
magic in that handkerchief. I am really sad and unlucky that  
I lost it.

**EMILIA**

It takes just a year or two for a man's true colors to become  
apparent. They're nothing but hungry stomachs, and we  
women are the food. All they want is to get their fill of us,  
and when they've had enough they throw us back up. Look,  
here comes Cassio and my husband.

*CASSIO and IAGO enter.*

**IAGO**

There's no other way. She must be the one to do it. And  
what luck, here she is! Go and ask her.

**DESDEMONA**

How are you, Cassio? What's going on with you?

**CASSIO**

Madam, only my case from before. I beg you to use your  
virtuous powers to help me return to the good graces of  
Othello, whom I honor with all of my heart. I want this to  
happen quickly. If my offense was so bad that neither my  
past service nor my present regret, nor the future good  
deeds I promise can buy back his love, then I at least would  
like to know this now. If that is the case then I will pretend  
to be content, and settle on a new career to try my fortunes  
there.

So shall I clothe me in a forced content,  
And shut myself up in some other course,  
To fortune's alms.

**DESEMONA**

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio,  
130 My advocacy is not now in tune.  
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him  
Were he in favor as in humor altered.  
So help me every spirit sanctified  
As I have spoken for you all my best  
135 And stood within the blank of his displeasure  
For my free speech. You must awhile be patient.  
What I can do I will, and more I will  
Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.

**IAGO**

Is my lord angry?

**EMILIA**

140 He went hence but now,  
And certainly in strange unquietness.

**IAGO**

Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon  
When it hath blown his ranks into the air  
And, like the devil, from his very arm  
145 Puffed his own brother— and is he angry?  
Something of moment then, I will go meet him.  
There's matter in 't indeed, if he be angry.

**DESEMONA**

I prithee, do so.

*Exit IAGO*

Something, sure, of state,  
150 Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice  
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
Hath puddled his clear spirit, and in such cases  
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so,  
155 For let our finger ache and it endues  
Our other healthful members even to that sense  
Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,  
Nor of them look for such observances  
As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
160 I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul,  
But now I find I had suborned the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely.

**EMILIA**

Pray heaven it be  
165 State matters, as you think, and no conception  
Nor no jealous toy concerning you.

**DESEMONA**

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

**EMILIA**

But jealous souls will not be answered so.  
They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
170 But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster  
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

**DESEMONA**

Heaven keep the monster from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Lady, amen.

**DESEMONA**

Alas, dearest Cassio, my pleading on your behalf isn't  
working right now. My husband is not acting like himself. If  
his physical appearance were as transformed as his inner  
character is now, I wouldn't even recognize him. So help me  
God, I have spoken up for you as best I could and he has  
looked down on me because of it. You must be patient for a  
while. I will do what I can, and I will even do more than I  
would dare do for myself. Let that be enough for you.

**IAGO**

Is Othello angry?

**EMILIA**

He was just here, and he is certainly strangely bothered.

**IAGO**

Can he be angry? I have seen him remain calm when a  
cannon has blown his soldiers into the air and, like the  
devil, blown his own brother out of his arms. And *now* he's  
angry? It must be about a serious matter. I will go see him. If  
he's angry, it must really be something significant.

**DESEMONA**

Please do go see him.

*IAGO exits.*

It must be something government-related—either having to  
do with Venice or some secret thing that's now come to  
light in Cyprus—that has put him in this mood. When this  
happens, men take out their tempers on less important  
things, when they're really upset with bigger issues. That's  
what happens when we hurt our finger, and it makes other  
parts of our bodies seem to hurt. No, we shouldn't idolize  
men, or expect them to always be as nice as they are on  
their wedding day. Oh, Emilia, curse me: I'm so foolish that I  
thought Othello was being unkind, but I was clearly falsely  
accusing him.

**EMILIA**

I pray to heaven that he is upset over some government  
matter, as you think is the case, and not over some jealous  
idea about you.

**DESEMONA**

God forbid! I've given him no reason to be jealous.

**EMILIA**

But jealous souls need no evidence. They aren't jealous  
because of a reason, but merely because they are jealous  
people. Jealousy is a monster that gives birth to itself.

**DESEMONA**

May heaven keep that monster away from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Amen, my lady.

**DESEMONA**

175 I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk hereabout.  
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit  
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank your ladyship.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

*Enter BIANCA*

**BIANCA**

Save you, friend Cassio!

**CASSIO**

180 What make you from home?  
How is 't with you, my most fair Bianca?  
Indeed, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

**BIANCA**

185 And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.  
What, keep a week away? Seven days and nights?  
Eight score eight hours? And lovers' absent hours  
More tedious than the dial eightscore times!  
Oh weary reckoning!

**CASSIO**

190 Pardon me, Bianca,  
I have this while with leaden thoughts been pressed,  
But I shall, in a more continue time,  
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,  
(*giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief*)  
Take me this work out.

**BIANCA**

195 O Cassio, whence came this?  
This is some token from a newer friend!  
To the felt absence now I feel a cause.  
Is 't come to this? Well, well.

**CASSIO**

200 Go to, woman,  
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth  
From whence you have them. You are jealous now  
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.  
No, in good troth, Bianca.

**BIANCA**

Why, whose is it?

**CASSIO**

205 I know not neither, I found it in my chamber.  
I like the work well. Ere it be demanded,  
As like enough it will, I would have it copied.  
Take it and do 't, and leave me for this time.

**BIANCA**

Leave you! Wherefore?

**CASSIO**

210 I do attend here on the general  
And think it no addition, nor my wish,  
To have him see me womaned.

**BIANCA**

Why, I pray you?

**CASSIO**

Not that I love you not.

**DESEMONA**

I will go find him. Cassio, stay around here. If I find him in a good mood, I'll plead your case and try my hardest to get you your job back.

**CASSIO**

My lady, I humbly thank you.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.*

*BIANCA enters.*

**BIANCA**

Hello, my friend Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What are you doing away from home? How are you, my most beautiful Bianca? I was actually just on my way to your house, my sweet love.

**BIANCA**

And I was on my way to yours, Cassio. Why have you been away for a week? Seven days and nights? One hundred and sixty-eight hours? And hours that lovers spend apart pass eight times more slowly than normal. How tiresome to count the hours going by!

**CASSIO**

Pardon me, Bianca. I've been busy with heavy thoughts. But, when I have some time, I will make up for being away for so long. Sweet Bianca, copy out the pattern on this. [*He gives her DESDEMONA's handkerchief*]

**BIANCA**

Oh, Cassio, where did you get this from? This is some gift from another woman! Now I see why you haven't come to see me. Has it come to this? Well, well, well.

**CASSIO**

Oh please, woman. Throw your vile guesses back to hell, where they came from. You are jealous now and think that this handkerchief is from some mistress. No, in truth, it isn't, Bianca.

**BIANCA**

Whose is it, then?

**CASSIO**

I don't know. I found it in my bedroom, and I like the pattern on it. Before someone asks for it back, I want to have the pattern copied. Take it and do it, and leave me alone for a bit.

**BIANCA**

Leave you! Why?

**CASSIO**

I am waiting on the general here, and I don't think it would be very good for him to see me with a woman.

**BIANCA**

Why?

**CASSIO**

It's not that I don't love you.

**BIANCA**

But that you do not love me.  
I pray you bring me on the way a little  
215 And say if I shall see you soon at night.

**CASSIO**

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you,  
For I attend here. But I'll see you soon.

**BIANCA**

'Tis very good. I must be circumstanced.

*Exeunt*

**BIANCA**

But that you don't love me. Please come with me just a little  
ways, and tell me if I will see you soon at night.

**CASSIO**

I can't go with you very far, for I must wait here. But I will  
see you soon.

**BIANCA**

That's good enough. I have to take what I can get given the  
circumstances.

*BIANCA and CASSIO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

**IAGO**

Will you think so?

**OTHELLO**

Think so, Iago?

**IAGO**

What,  
To kiss in private?

**OTHELLO**

5 An unauthorized kiss!

**IAGO**

Or to be naked with her friend in bed  
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

**OTHELLO**

Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!  
It is hypocrisy against the devil.  
10 They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,  
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

**IAGO**

So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip.  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief—

**OTHELLO**

What then?

**IAGO**

15 Why then 'tis hers, my lord, and, being hers,  
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.

**OTHELLO**

She is protectress of her honor too.  
May she give that?

**IAGO**

Her honor is an essence that's not seen,  
20 They have it very oft that have it not.  
But for the handkerchief—

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.  
Thou saidst—Oh, it comes o'er my memory,  
As doth the raven o'er the infectious house,  
25

### Shakescleare Translation

*OTHELLO and IAGO enter.*

**IAGO**

Do you think so?

**OTHELLO**

Think what, Iago?

**IAGO**

What, that they kissed in private?

**OTHELLO**

An inappropriate kiss!

**IAGO**

Or because she was naked in bed with a friend for just an  
hour or more, not meaning any harm?

**OTHELLO**

Iago, naked in bed and not meaning any harm? That would  
be like tricking the devil. If they were acting this way but  
had virtuous intentions, they were tempted by the devil and  
they were tempting God to damn them.

**IAGO**

As long as they haven't actually *done* anything, it's just a  
pardonable sin. But, if I give my wife a handkerchief . . .

**OTHELLO**

What then?

**IAGO**

Then it belongs to her, my lord. And since it is hers, she may  
give it to any man she wants.

**OTHELLO**

Her honor belongs to her, too. Can she give that away, as  
well?

**IAGO**

Her honor is part of her inner essence that can't be seen.  
Often people have an honorable reputation but aren't really  
honorable. But as for the handkerchief—

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I wish I had forgotten about it. You told me—oh,  
it comes back to my memory, like the bad omen of a raven  
coming over a house where someone is sick—that Cassio

Boding to all—he had my handkerchief.

**IAGO**

Ay, what of that?

**OTHELLO**

That's not so good now.

**IAGO**

What if I had said I had seen him do you wrong?  
Or heard him say—as knaves be such abroad,  
30 Who having, by their own importunate suit,  
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,  
Convincèd or supplied them, cannot choose  
But they must blab—

**OTHELLO**

Hath he said any thing?

**IAGO**

35 He hath, my lord, but be you well assured  
No more than he'll unsweat.

**OTHELLO**

What hath he said?

**IAGO**

Why, that he did—I know not what he did.

**OTHELLO**

What? what?

**IAGO**

40 Lie—

**OTHELLO**

With her?

**IAGO**

With her, on her, what you will.

**OTHELLO**

Lie with her? Lie on her? We say “lie on her” when they  
belie her! Lie with her—that's fulsome.  
45 Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief! To confess, and  
be hanged for his labor. First to be hanged, and then to  
confess—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest  
herself in such shadowing passion without some  
instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish!  
50 Noses, ears, and lips. Is 't possible?  
Confess!—Handkerchief!—Oh, devil!—

*Falls in a trance*

**IAGO**

Work on, My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are  
caught,  
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,  
55 All guiltless, meet reproach.— What, ho! My lord!  
My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter CASSIO*

How now, Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What's the matter?

**IAGO**

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.  
60 This is his second fit. He had one yesterday.

had my handkerchief.

**IAGO**

Yes, so what?

**OTHELLO**

That is not so good, now.

**IAGO**

What if I had told you that I saw him do you wrong? Or what  
if I heard him say so—there are some villains out there who,  
once they have seduced or satisfied some mistress with  
their flirting and doting, can't help but brag about it—

**OTHELLO**

Has he said something?

**IAGO**

My lord, he has—but you can be sure that he'll deny it.

**OTHELLO**

What did he say?

**IAGO**

Well, he said that he did—I don't know what he did.

**OTHELLO**

What? What?

**IAGO**

He said he did lie—

**OTHELLO**

With Desdemona?

**IAGO**

With her, on her, however you want to say it.

**OTHELLO**

Lie with her? Lie on her? To lie *on* someone is to tell lies  
about that person! To lie *with* her—that's obscene. First the  
handkerchief, and now this confession! Should he confess  
first and then be executed? No, I'll kill him first and let him  
confess later. I am trembling with anger, and nature  
wouldn't make my body do this without some reason. It  
must be more than a rumor if it's making me tremble like  
this. Ugh! Noses, ears, and lips. Could this be true? That he  
would admit to it—and the handkerchief! Oh, devil!

*OTHELLO is afflicted with a seizure.*

**IAGO**

[*To himself*] Keep on working, my harmful medicine, keep  
on working! This is how gullible fools are tricked, and many  
trustworthy and chaste women, completely innocent, are  
punished in situations like this.

[*To OTHELLO*] Hey! My lord! My lord! Othello!

*CASSIO enters.*

Hey there, Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What's the matter?

**IAGO**

My lord has fallen into a seizure. This is the second time he's  
had one of these fits. He had one yesterday.



**CASSIO**

Rub him about the temples.

**IAGO**

No, forbear.

The lethargy must have his quiet course.

If not, he foams at mouth and by and by

65 Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.

Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

He will recover straight. When he is gone

I would on great occasion speak with you.

*Exit CASSIO*

How is it, general? Have you not hurt your head?

**OTHELLO**

70 Dost thou mock me?

**IAGO**

I mock you not, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

**OTHELLO**

A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.

**IAGO**

There's many a beast then in a populous city,

75 And many a civil monster.

**OTHELLO**

Did he confess it?

**IAGO**

Good sir, be a man,

Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked

May draw with you. There's millions now alive

80 That nightly lie in those unproper beds

Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.

Oh, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,

To lip a wanton in a secure couch,

And to suppose her chaste. No, let me know,

85 And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, thou art wise! 'Tis certain.

**IAGO**

Stand you awhile apart,

Confine yourself but in a patient list.

Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief—

90 A passion most resulting such a man—

Cassio came hither. I shifted him away

And laid good 'scuses upon your ecstasy,

Bade him anon return and here speak with me,

The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,

95 And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns

That dwell in every region of his face.

For I will make him tell the tale anew

Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when

He hath, and is again to cope your wife.

100 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience,

Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,

And nothing of a man.

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou hear, Iago?

I will be found most cunning in my patience,

105 But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

**CASSIO**

Rub his temples.

**IAGO**

No, hold on. We have to let the fit run its course. Otherwise

he'll foam at the mouth and break out in a fit of savage

madness. Look, he's moving. Stay away for a bit. He'll

recover soon. When he is gone, I would really like to talk to


you in private.

*CASSIO exits.*

How are you, General? Have you hurt your head?

**OTHELLO**

Are you mocking me ?

 Othello thinks that Iago might be referring to Othello having been cuckolded, as growing horns could be described as "hurting one's head".

**IAGO**

No, I swear to God! I wish you would bear your misfortune

like a man!

**OTHELLO**

A man who's been cheated on isn't a man; he has the  
cuckold's horns, and so is a monstrous beast.

**IAGO**

Well then, there are many monsters in big cities, and many  
monsters that pass for men.

**OTHELLO**

Did Cassio confess to it?

**IAGO**

Good sir, be a man. Think about it: every married man has  
experienced what you're going through. There are millions  
of wives now living who sleep in disgraced beds which they  
swear belong only to their husbands. But you're better off.  
It's even worse—a curse from hell—to kiss your wife in bed  
thinking that she is chaste when she isn't. No, I'd rather  
know if my wife were cheating on me. Then I'd know exactly  
what sort of person I am and what sort of person my wife is.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, you are certainly wise!

**IAGO**

Stay away from her for a while. Be patient. While you were  
overwhelmed by your grief—a passionate feeling you are  
prone to—Cassio was here. I sent him away and made some  
excuse for your fit of passion. I told him to come back here  
and speak with me, and he promised to do so. Hide nearby  
and watch the sneers and visible expressions of scorn all  
over his face, as I ask him to tell me again about where,  
how, how often, how long ago, and when he has slept and  
will again sleep with your wife. Just watch his expression.  
Please, be patient, or else you'll show that you are  
completely ruled by your emotions and not a real man.

**OTHELLO**

Listen to me, Iago: I will be patient and cunning. But—do  
you hear me?—I will take violent action later.

**IAGO**

That's not amiss,  
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

*OTHELLO withdraws*

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,  
A huswife that by selling her desires  
110 Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature  
That dotes on Cassio, as 'tis the strumpet's plague  
To beguile many and be beguiled by one.  
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain  
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

*Enter CASSIO*

115 As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad.  
And his unbookish jealousy must construe  
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behavior  
Quite in the wrong.— How do you now, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

120 The worse that you give me the addition  
Whose want even kills me.

**IAGO**

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on 't.  
Now if this suit lay in Bianca's power  
How quickly should you speed!

**CASSIO**

Alas, poor caitiff!

**OTHELLO**

125 Look how he laughs already!

**IAGO**

I never knew woman love man so.

**CASSIO**

Alas, poor rogue, I think indeed she loves me.

**OTHELLO**

Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

**IAGO**

Do you hear, Cassio?

**OTHELLO**

130 Now he importunes him  
To tell it o'er. Go to, well said, well said.

**IAGO**

She gives it out that you shall marry her.  
Do you intend it?

**CASSIO**

Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

135 Do ye triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

**CASSIO**

I marry her! What? A customer? Prithee bear some

**IAGO**

That's not wrong. But wait for a bit. Will you step back and hide?

*OTHELLO steps back and hides, so that he cannot hear IAGO but can still see him.*

Now I will question Cassio about Bianca, a loose girl that makes a living by selling herself to men. The whore loves Cassio, and it's her bad luck to attract many men but be attracted to just one. When he is asked about her, he can't help but laugh. Here he comes.

*CASSIO enters.*

*[To himself]* As Cassio smiles while we talk, Othello will go mad. And his unrestrained jealousy will misinterpret poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and jovial behavior.

*[To CASSIO]* How are you doing now, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

I'm doing worse now since you called me lieutenant, when it's killing me that I don't have that title anymore.

**IAGO**

Ask Desdemona to help you, and you'll surely get it back.

*[To CASSIO so only he can hear]* Now, if it were Bianca who had the power to help you, I imagine you'd be running off to her as fast as you could!

**CASSIO**

Ha, that poor woman!

**OTHELLO**

Look how he's laughing already!

**IAGO**

I've never seen a woman love a man as much as [she](#) <sup>2</sup> loves you.

<sup>2</sup> Iago refers to Bianca in this conversation with Cassio, but Othello—not having heard well the first time—believes Iago and Cassio are referring to Desdemona.

**CASSIO**

Alas, the poor girl, I think she really does love me.

**OTHELLO**

Now he denies his crime a bit, and laughs it off.

**IAGO**

Have you heard, Cassio?

**OTHELLO**

Now Iago is asking Cassio to tell the story again. Go on, well said, well said.

**IAGO**

She is saying that you're going to marry her. Do you intend to?

**CASSIO**

Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Are you celebrating like a triumphant Roman general? Are you triumphing after your conquest?

**CASSIO**

Me, marry her? A prostitute? Please, think a little more

charity to my wit. Do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

So, so, so, so! They laugh that win!

**IAGO**

140 Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

**CASSIO**

Prithce say true!

**IAGO**

I am a very villain else.

**OTHELLO**

Have you scored me? Well.

**CASSIO**

145 This is the monkey's own giving out. She is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

**OTHELLO**

Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.

**CASSIO**

150 She was here even now. She haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck—

**OTHELLO**

Crying "O dear Cassio!" as it were. His gesture imports it.

**CASSIO**

155 So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so shakes, and pulls me! Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. Oh, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

**CASSIO**

Well, I must leave her company.

**IAGO**

160 Before me! Look, where she comes.

*Enter BIANCA*

**CASSIO**

'Tis such another fitchew. Marry, a perfumed one.—What do you mean by this haunting of me?

**BIANCA**

165 Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There, give it your hobby-horse. Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on 't.

**CASSIO**

How now, my sweet Bianca! How now, how now?

highly of me; don't think I'm that stupid. Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Aha, so there! He's laughing like he's won her over!

**IAGO**

Really, rumor has it that you are going to marry her.

**CASSIO**

Please, is that true?

**IAGO**

I swear it is, or else I'm a villain.

**OTHELLO**

Have you wronged me? Well, then.

**CASSIO**

The monkey herself must be spreading this rumor. She is convinced I will marry her, driven by her own love and self-flattery. I haven't promised her anything.

**OTHELLO**

Iago is signaling to me. Now Cassio is beginning the story.

**CASSIO**

She was here just now. She follows me everywhere. The other day I was talking along the shore with some Venetians, and the silly girl came to me and—I swear—she hangs around my neck like this—

**OTHELLO**

He looks like he's crying out, "Oh dear Cassio!" That's what his gestures indicate.

**CASSIO**

She hangs on me like this and cries on my shoulder and shakes and pulls me like this! Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Now he's talking about how she dragged him to my bedroom. Oh, Cassio, I'm going to cut off your nose and throw it to some dog.

**CASSIO**

Well, I must stop spending time with her.

**IAGO**

My goodness! Look, she's coming.

*BIANCA enters.*

**CASSIO**

Just the prostitute we were talking about. And she's wearing perfume. Why are you following me around like this?

**BIANCA**

Let the devil and his wife follow you around! Why did you give me that handkerchief just recently? I was an idiot to accept it. You want me to copy the embroidery? What a likely story, that you found it in your room and didn't know who left it there! This is a gift from some woman, and you want *me* to copy out the embroidery? There, give it back to your new mistress. Wherever you got it from, I'm not copying any of it.

**CASSIO**

What's the matter, my sweet Bianca? What's the matter?

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

**BIANCA**

If you'll come to supper tonight, you may. If you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

175 After her, after her.

**CASSIO**

I must, she'll rail in the street else.

**IAGO**

Will you sup there?

**CASSIO**

Yes, I intend so.

**IAGO**

180 Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very fain speak with you.

**CASSIO**

Prithce come, will you?

**IAGO**

Go to! Say no more.

*Exit CASSIO*

**OTHELLO**

*[advancing]* How shall I murder him, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

**OTHELLO**

185 Oh Iago!

**IAGO**

And did you see the handkerchief?

**OTHELLO**

Was that mine?

**IAGO**

190 Yours by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

**OTHELLO**

I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman!

**IAGO**

Nay, you must forget that.

**OTHELLO**

195 Ay, let her rot and perish and be damned tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone. I strike it and it hurts my hand. Oh, the world hath not a sweeter creature, she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

**IAGO**

Nay, that's not your way.

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, that's my handkerchief!

**BIANCA**

If you will come have dinner with me tonight, then okay. If you don't come to dinner then just keep on waiting until I call for you next—which will be never.

*BIANCA exits.*

**IAGO**

Go after her, go after her.

**CASSIO**

I must. Otherwise, she'll make a ruckus in the street.

**IAGO**

Will you go to dinner with her?

**CASSIO**

Yes, I intend to go.

**IAGO**

Well, I'd like to get a chance to see you later, because I really would like to speak with you.

**CASSIO**

Please come to the diner, then. Will you?

**IAGO**

Stop talking and go after her!

*CASSIO exits.*

**OTHELLO**

*[Coming forward out of hiding]* How should I murder him, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did you see how he laughed about his crime?

**OTHELLO**

Oh, Iago!

**IAGO**

And did you see the handkerchief?

**OTHELLO**

Was that my handkerchief?

**IAGO**

I swear on my hand, it was yours. And look how much he cares about your foolish wife! She gave him her handkerchief, and he turns around and gives it to a whore.

**OTHELLO**

If I could, I'd spend nine years killing him slowly. She was a fine woman! A beautiful woman! A sweet woman!

**IAGO**

You must forget about that.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, let her rot and perish and go to hell tonight, for she will not live past tonight. No, my heart has turned to stone. If I beat my chest, it hurts my hand. Oh, there's not a sweeter creature in the world! She could be the wife of an emperor and he'd obey her commands.

**IAGO**

No, that's not like you to obey a woman.

**OTHELLO**

200 Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate with her needle, an admirable musician. Oh, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

**IAGO**

She's the worse for all this.

**OTHELLO**

205 Oh, a thousand thousand times—and then of so gentle a condition!

**IAGO**

Ay, too gentle.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

**IAGO**

210 If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend, for if it touch not you it comes near nobody.

**OTHELLO**

I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?

**IAGO**

Oh, 'tis foul in her.

**OTHELLO**

With mine officer!

**IAGO**

215 That's fouler.

**OTHELLO**

Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again—This night, Iago!

**IAGO**

220 Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

**OTHELLO**

Good, good, the justice of it pleases! Very good!

**IAGO**

And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You shall hear more by midnight.

**OTHELLO**

Excellent good.

*A trumpet within*

225 What trumpet is that same?

**IAGO**

I warrant something from Venice. 'Tis Lodovico, this, comes from the duke. See, your wife's with him.

*Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and attendants*

**LODOVICO**

Save you, worthy general!

**OTHELLO**

With all my heart, sir.

**OTHELLO**

Let her be hanged! I'm just calling her what she is now. Such a skilled sewer, such an admirable musician. Oh, she could sing so well she'd charm a savage bear to gentleness! She's so clever and intelligent!

**IAGO**

All these traits make her even worse.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, they make her a thousand times worse! And she has such a gentle nature!

**IAGO**

Yes, too gentle.

**OTHELLO**

That's certainly true. But what a pity this is, Iago! Oh, Iago, the pity!

**IAGO**

If you still care about her after her sinfulness, give her permission to cheat on you. If it doesn't bother you, it doesn't harm anyone.

**OTHELLO**

I will chop her up into little bits! Cheat on me, will she?

**IAGO**

Oh, it's really a foul thing for her to do.

**OTHELLO**

With my own lieutenant!

**IAGO**

That's even worse.

**OTHELLO**

Iago, get me some poison this very night. I won't speak to her, so her body and beauty don't trick my mind again. Get me the poison tonight, Iago!

**IAGO**

Don't poison her. Strangle her in her bed—the very bed she contaminated with her affair.

**OTHELLO**

Good idea! Poetic justice! Very good!

**IAGO**

And as for Cassio, let me handle him. You'll hear more about it by midnight.

**OTHELLO**

Very good.

*A trumpet sounds off-stage.*

What is that trumpet?

**IAGO**

It must be some news from Venice. Here comes Lodovico, from the Duke. Look, your wife is with him.

*LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and attendants enter.*

**LODOVICO**

Hello, noble General.

**OTHELLO**

Hello, sir.

**LODOVICO**

230 The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

*(gives him a letter)*

**OTHELLO**

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

**DESDEMONA**

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

**IAGO**

I am very glad to see you, signior. Welcome to Cyprus.

**LODOVICO**

I thank you. How does lieutenant Cassio?

**IAGO**

235 Lives, sir.

**DESDEMONA**

Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord  
An unkind breach, but you shall make all well.

**OTHELLO**

Are you sure of that?

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

240 *[reads]* "This fail you not to do, as you will—"

**LODOVICO**

He did not call, he's busy in the paper.  
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

**DESDEMONA**

A most unhappy one. I would do much  
T' atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

245 Fire and brimstone!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Are you wise?

**DESDEMONA**

What, is he angry?

**LODOVICO**

250 Maybe the letter moved him,  
For, as I think, they do command him home,  
Deputing Cassio in his government.

**DESDEMONA**

By my troth, I am glad on 't.

**OTHELLO**

Indeed!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

255 I am glad to see you mad.

**LODOVICO**


The Duke and Senators of Venice send their greetings.


*LODOVICO gives OTHELLO a letter.*

**OTHELLO**

I kiss the letter that contains their commands.

**DESDEMONA**

And what's the news, good [cousin](#)  Lodovico?

 Lodovico, like Gratiano, is one of Desdemona's father Brabantio's kinsmen.

**IAGO**

I am very glad to see you, sir. Welcome to Cyprus.

**LODOVICO**

Thank you. How is Lieutenant Cassio doing?

**IAGO**

He's alive, sir.

**DESDEMONA**

Cousin, there's a rift now between my husband and him.  
But you can mend it.

**OTHELLO**

Are you sure about that?

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

*[Reading the letter]* "Don't fail to do this, since you will—"

**LODOVICO**

He wasn't talking to you, Desdemona. He's busy reading the letter. Is there really a dispute between my lord and Cassio?

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, a most unhappy one. I would do anything to repair their friendship, because of my love for Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

Fire and brimstone!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Do you have any sense?

**DESDEMONA**

What, is he angry?

**LODOVICO**

Maybe the letter upset him. I think they've ordered him to return home and leave Cassio in charge here.

**DESDEMONA**

Truthfully, I'm glad about that.

**OTHELLO**

Really!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

I'm glad to see that you are angry.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, sweet Othello—

**OTHELLO**

Devil! *[strikes her]*

**DESDEMONA**

I have not deserved this.

**LODOVICO**

260 My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,  
Though I should swear I saw 't. 'Tis very much.  
Make her amends, she weeps.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, devil, devil!  
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.  
265 Out of my sight!

**DESDEMONA**

I will not stay to offend you.

**LODOVICO**

Truly, an obedient lady.  
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

**OTHELLO**

Mistress!

**DESDEMONA**

270 My lord?

**OTHELLO**

What would you with her, sir?

**LODOVICO**

Who, I, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.  
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,  
275 And turn again. And she can weep, sir, weep.  
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,  
Very obedient. *(To DESDEMONA)* Proceed you in your  
tears.  
*(To LODOVICO)* Concerning this, sir— *(To DESDEMONA)* Oh,  
280 well-painted passion!  
*(To LODOVICO)* I am commanded home. *(To DESDEMONA)* Get  
you away,  
I'll send for you anon. *(To LODOVICO)* Sir, I obey the  
mandate  
285 And will return to Venice. *(To DESDEMONA)* Hence,  
avaunt!

*Exit DESDEMONA*

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight  
I do entreat that we may sup together.  
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!

*Exit*

**LODOVICO**

290 Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate  
Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature  
Whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue  
The shot of accident nor dart of chance

**DESDEMONA**

Why, sweet Othello—

**OTHELLO**

You devil! *[He hits DESDEMONA]*

**DESDEMONA**

I haven't done anything to deserve this.

**LODOVICO**

My lord, no one in Venice would believe you just did  
that—even if I swore that I saw it with my own eyes. This is  
no small matter. Apologize to her. She's crying.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, devil, devil! If the whole world were filled with the tears  
of women, they'd all be fake tears! Get out of my sight!

**DESDEMONA**

I will not stay, if it offends you.

**LODOVICO**

She is truly an obedient lady. I beg you, my lord, call her  
back.

**OTHELLO**

Mistress!

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

What do you want with her, sir?

**LODOVICO**

Me, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you're the one who wanted me to have her turn around  
and come back here. She can turn around all right; she's  
very good at turning on you. And she can weep, sir. And  
she's obedient, as you say, very obedient.

*[To DESDEMONA]* Keep on crying.

*[To LODOVICO]* About this letter, sir.

*[To DESDEMONA]* Oh you are pretending really well!

*[To LODOVICO]* I have been ordered to come home.


*[To DESDEMONA]* Go away. I'll call for you later.

*[To LODOVICO]* Sir, I obey my orders and will return to  
Venice.

*[To DESDEMONA]* Get away from here! Away!

*DESDEMONA exits.*

Cassio will take over for me here. And, sir, tonight I ask you  
to have dinner together with me. Welcome to Cyprus, sir.  
Oh, goats and monkeys!

 These two animals were  
associated with sexual licentiousness.

*OTHELLO exits.*

**LODOVICO**

Is this the same noble Moor that our whole senate thinks so  
highly of? Is this the person who supposedly could not be  
shaken by passion? The man whose solid virtue was  
invulnerable to anything chance or fortune could throw at

Could neither graze nor pierce?

**IAGO**

295 He is much changed.

**LODOVICO**

Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?

**IAGO**

He's that he is. I may not breathe my censure  
What he might be. If what he might he is not,  
I would to heaven he were!

**LODOVICO**

300 What? Strike his wife?

**IAGO**

'Faith, that was not so well. Yet would I knew  
That stroke would prove the worst!

**LODOVICO**

Is it his use?  
Or did the letters work upon his blood  
305 And new-create his fault?

**IAGO**

Alas, alas!  
It is not honesty in me to speak  
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,  
And his own courses will denote him so  
310 That I may save my speech. Do but go after  
And mark how he continues.

**LODOVICO**

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

*Exeunt*

it?

**IAGO**

He has changed a lot.

**LODOVICO**

Does he still have his wits? Has he gone crazy, too?

**IAGO**

He is as he is. I can't say a bad word about what he might be  
like. If he is not what he has the potential to be, then I wish  
to heaven he was!

**LODOVICO**

What was that about? Why did he hit his wife?

**IAGO**

That really was not so good. But I wish I could say that was  
the worst he'll do.

**LODOVICO**

Does he usually hit her like that? Or did the letter he was  
reading raise his temper and make him so angry that he hit  
her?

**IAGO**

Alas, alas! It is not right for me to tell you about what I have  
seen and learned. You will see for yourself, and his actions  
will show you what he is like, so that I don't have to tell you.  
Go follow after him, and just watch how he acts.

**LODOVICO**

I'm sorry I misjudged him.

*LODOVICO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA*

**OTHELLO**

You have seen nothing then?

**EMILIA**

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

**EMILIA**

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard  
5 Each syllable that breath made up between them.

**OTHELLO**

What, did they never whisper?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

Nor send you out o' th' way?

### Shakescleare Translation

*OTHELLO and EMILIA enter.*

**OTHELLO**

You haven't seen anything, then?

**EMILIA**

I haven't heard anything either, and I haven't suspected  
anything.

**OTHELLO**

But you've seen Desdemona and Cassio together.

**EMILIA**

But I didn't see anything wrong then, and I heard every  
syllable they uttered to each other.

**OTHELLO**

What, did they never whisper so you couldn't hear?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

And they never sent you away?



**EMILIA**

Never.

**OTHELLO**

10 To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That's strange.

**EMILIA**

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other  
15 Remove your thought, it doth abuse your bosom.  
If any wretch have put this in your head  
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse  
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true  
There's no man happy. The purest of their wives  
20 Is foul as slander.

**OTHELLO**

Bid her come hither. Go.

*Exit EMILIA*

She says enough, yet she's a simple bawd  
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,  
A closet, lock and key, of villainous secrets.  
25 And yet she'll kneel and pray, I have seen her do 't.

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA***DESDEMONA**

My lord, what is your will?

**OTHELLO**

Pray you, chuck, come hither.

**DESDEMONA**

What is your pleasure?

**OTHELLO**

Let me see your eyes.  
30 Look in my face.

**DESDEMONA**

What horrible fancy's this?

**OTHELLO**

(*to EMILIA*) Some of your function, mistress,  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door.  
Cough or cry "hem" if any body come.  
35 Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch!

*Exit EMILIA***DESDEMONA**

Upon my knee, what doth your speech import?  
I understand a fury in your words,  
But not the words.

**OTHELLO**

Why, what art thou?

**DESDEMONA**

40 Your wife, my lord. Your true and loyal wife.

**OTHELLO**

Come, swear it, damn thyself.

**EMILIA**

Never.

**OTHELLO**

She didn't send you away to go get her fan, her gloves, her mask? Nothing?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That's strange.

**EMILIA**

I would bet that Desdemona is honest, my lord. I'd bet my soul on it. If you think otherwise, throw away this suspicion—it is poisoning your heart. If any wretch has put the idea in your head, may God curse him the way he cursed the snake 🐍. If Desdemona is not honest, chaste, and true, then no woman is, and no man is happy with his wife.

📖 Here, Emilia makes a biblical reference to God's punishment of the serpent after the Fall of Man.

**OTHELLO**

Tell her to come here. Go.

*EMILIA exits.*

She says Desdemona is faithful, but the stupidest girl could say as much. Desdemona is a sneaky whore, a locked closet full of villainous secrets. And the whole time she'll kneel and pray like a good woman. I have seen her do it.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.***DESDEMONA**

My lord, what do you want?

**OTHELLO**

Please, dear, come here.

**DESDEMONA**

What would you like?

**OTHELLO**

Let me see your eyes. Look into my face.

**DESDEMONA**

What horrible things are you imagining?

**OTHELLO**

[*To EMILIA*] Do your job, mistress, and leave us lovers alone. Shut the door. Cough or say "ahem" if anyone comes. That's your job, your job 📌! Go!

📖 Othello's description of Emilia's job compares Emilia to the keeper of a brothel.

*EMILIA exits.***DESDEMONA**

I beg you here on my knees—tell me, what do you mean by your speech? I can see that you are angry, but I don't understand what you mean.

**OTHELLO**

Well, what are you?

**DESDEMONA**

I am your wife, my lord. Your true and loyal wife.

**OTHELLO**

Come and swear that's true, damn yourself by making a

Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves  
Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double damned,  
Swear thou art honest!

**DESDEMONA**

45 Heaven doth truly know it.

**OTHELLO**

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

**DESDEMONA**

To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?

**OTHELLO**

Ah, Desdemona, away, away, away!

**DESDEMONA**

Alas the heavy day, why do you weep?  
50 Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?  
If haply you my father do suspect  
An instrument of this your calling back,  
Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,  
Why, I have lost him too.

**OTHELLO**

55 Had it pleased heaven  
To try me with affliction, had they rained  
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,  
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips,  
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,  
60 I should have found in some place of my soul  
A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me  
The fixed figure for the time of scorn  
To point his slow and moving finger at!  
Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.  
65 But there where I have garnered up my heart,  
Where either I must live or bear no life,  
The fountain from the which my current runs  
Or else dries up—to be discarded thence!  
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads  
70 To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,  
Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin,—  
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

**DESDEMONA**

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,  
75 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,  
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet  
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er  
been born!

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

**OTHELLO**

80 Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
Made to write "whore" upon? What committed?  
Committed? O thou public commoner!  
I should make very forges of my cheeks  
That would to cinders burn up modesty  
85 Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?  
Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,  
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets  
Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth  
And will not hear 't. What committed!  
90 Impudent strumpet!

**DESDEMONA**

By heaven, you do me wrong!

false oath. Otherwise, since you look so angelic, the devils  
themselves would be afraid to seize you. So doubly damn  
yourself by swearing falsely that you are honest!

**DESDEMONA**

Heaven knows the truth.

**OTHELLO**

Heaven knows the truth: that you are false as hell.

**DESDEMONA**

To whom, my lord? With whom have I been unfaithful? How  
am I false?

**OTHELLO**

Ah, Desdemona, go away, away, away!

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, this is a sad day. Why are you crying? Am I the cause of  
these tears, my lord? If you suspect that my father has  
something to do with your being called back home, don't  
blame me for it. If he has cut ties with you, well then he has  
cut ties with me, too.

**OTHELLO**

If God had decided to give me some affliction, if he had put  
all kinds of shameful sores on my bare head, had made me  
extremely poor, and made me a prisoner with no hope, I  
would have found a way to endure it. But, alas, to make me  
a laughing-stock forever, and an object of scorn! And yet, I  
could even endure that too, very well. But to do something  
to my heart, on which my life depends, which pumps all the  
blood through my veins, to dry it up and turn into a basin  
for foul toads to wallow and couple in! The very god of  
Patience could look at my heart with her young, rosy lips,  
and her complexion would turn grim as hell!

**DESDEMONA**

I hope my noble lord thinks I am honest.

**OTHELLO**

Oh yes, as honest as a swarm of flies all reproducing  
together in the blowing wind. Oh, you weed, you are so  
lovely and smell so sweet that it hurts to look at you. I wish  
you had never been born!

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, what sin have I committed without knowing about it?

**OTHELLO**

Did God create in you a beautiful blank slate just to write  
"whore" on it? What sin did you commit? Commit? Oh, you  
public prostitute! If I even spoke of what you did, my mouth  
would burn up modesty itself just by uttering the words.  
What sin have you committed? Heaven and the moon itself,  
the wind and the depths of the earth all turn away and  
don't want to hear about it. What sin have you committed?  
You shameless whore!

**DESDEMONA**

By heaven, you accuse me wrongly!

**OTHELLO**

Are you not a strumpet?

**DESDEMONA**

No, as I am a Christian.  
If to preserve this vessel for my lord  
95 From any other foul unlawful touch  
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

**OTHELLO**

What, not a whore?

**DESDEMONA**

No, as I shall be saved.

**OTHELLO**

Is 't possible?

**DESDEMONA**

100 Oh, heaven forgive us!

**OTHELLO**

I cry you mercy, then,  
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice  
That married with Othello.— You, mistress,  
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter  
105 And keep the gate of hell!

*Enter EMILIA*

You, you, ay, you!  
We have done our course. There's money for your pains.  
I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel.

*Exit*

**EMILIA**

Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?  
110 How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

**DESDEMONA**

Faith, half asleep.

**EMILIA**

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

**DESDEMONA**

With who?

**EMILIA**

Why, with my lord, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

115 Who is thy lord?

**EMILIA**

He that is yours, sweet lady.

**DESDEMONA**

I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.  
I cannot weep, nor answers have I none,  
But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight  
120 Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember,  
And call thy husband hither.

**EMILIA**

Here's a change indeed!

*Exit*

**OTHELLO**

Are you not a whore?

**DESDEMONA**

No, I swear on my Christianity. If the definition of not being  
a whore is to preserve my virginity for my husband and not  
let any other foul man unlawfully touch me, then I am not  
one.

**OTHELLO**

What, not a whore?

**DESDEMONA**

No I am not, on my word as a good Christian.

**OTHELLO**

Can this be true?

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, God forgive us!

**OTHELLO**

I beg your pardon, then. I mixed you up with that cunning  
whore from Venice who married that man Othello. You,  
madam, must be Saint Peter's diabolical counterpart, the  
gate-keeper of hell!

*EMILIA enters.*

Oh, you now! We're all done in here. Here's the money I owe  
you for it. Please now, keep this little rendezvous a secret. 3

3 Othello continues to talk as if Emilia runs a brothel, and has arranged an illicit meeting between Othello and her prostitute Desdemona.

*OTHELLO exits.*

**EMILIA**

Alas, what is this gentleman talking about? How are you  
doing, madam? My good lady, are you okay?

**DESDEMONA**

I've practically fainted, to tell the truth.

**EMILIA**

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

**DESDEMONA**

With who?

**EMILIA**

With my lord, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

Who is your lord?

**EMILIA**

Your husband, sweet lady.

**DESDEMONA**

I have no husband. Do not talk to me, Emilia. I cannot weep,  
and I have nothing to say besides what could be expressed  
by tears. Please, make my bed tonight with the sheets from  
my wedding night. Remember to do this, and call your  
husband here.

**EMILIA**

Everything has changed so much!

*EMILIA exits.*

**DESDEMONA**

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.  
How have I been behaved that he might stick  
125 The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

*Enter EMILIA with IAGO*

**IAGO**

What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't with you?

**DESDEMONA**

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes  
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks.  
He might have chid me so, for, in good faith,  
130 I am a child to chiding.

**IAGO**

What is the matter, lady?

**EMILIA**

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,  
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
That true hearts cannot bear it.

**DESDEMONA**

135 Am I that name, Iago?

**IAGO**

What name, fair lady?

**DESDEMONA**

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

**EMILIA**

He called her "whore." A beggar in his drink  
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

**IAGO**

140 Why did he do so?

**DESDEMONA**

I do not know. I am sure I am none such.

**IAGO**

Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

**EMILIA**

Hath she forsook so many noble matches,  
Her father and her country, and her friends,  
145 To be called "whore"? Would it not make one weep?

**DESDEMONA**

It is my wretched fortune.

**IAGO**

Beshrew him for 't!  
How comes this trick upon him?

**DESDEMONA**

Nay, heaven doth know.

**EMILIA**

150 I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,  
Some busy and insinuating rogue,  
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,  
Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else!

**IAGO**

Fie, there is no such man. It is impossible.

**DESDEMONA**

It's appropriate that I am treated like this, very appropriate.  
What have I ever done to make him find the smallest thing  
to complain about?

*EMILIA and IAGO enter.*

**IAGO**

What do you want, madam? How are things going with you?

**DESDEMONA**

I can't tell. Those who teach young children do it in a gentle  
way with easy tasks. He should have scolded me in this kind  
of a gentle way, for I am truly like a child who has been  
scolded.

**IAGO**

What is the matter, lady?

**EMILIA**

Alas, Iago, my lord has called her a whore, and called her  
such serious, spiteful names that someone with a true heart  
couldn't bear to hear them.

**DESDEMONA**

Am I that name, Iago?

**IAGO**

What name, fair lady?

**DESDEMONA**

The one my lord called me.

**EMILIA**

He called her "whore." A drunken beggar wouldn't call his  
girl such a name.

**IAGO**

Why did he call you this?

**DESDEMONA**

I do not know. I am sure I am not such a thing.

**IAGO**

Do not weep, do not weep. Alas, what a terrible day!

**EMILIA**

Did she reject so many noble suitors and turn her back on  
her father, her country, and her friends just to be called a  
whore? Wouldn't that make anyone weep?

**DESDEMONA**

It is my wretched fate.

**IAGO**

Damn him for this! What has happened to him?

**DESDEMONA**

Only God knows.

**EMILIA**

I would bet my life that some villain—some scheming,  
insinuating rogue, some deceitful, double-crossing  
rogue—has slandered Desdemona in order to get some  
military position. If I'm wrong, let me be hanged!

**IAGO**

But there is no man who would do such a thing. It is  
impossible.

**DESDEMONA**

155 If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

**EMILIA**

A halter pardon him and hell gnaw his bones!  
 Why should he call her "whore?" Who keeps her company?  
 What place? What time? What form? What likelihood?  
 The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,  
 160 Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.  
 O heavens, that such companions thou'dst unfold,  
 And put in every honest hand a whip  
 To lash the rascals naked through the world  
 Even from the east to th' west!

**IAGO**

165 Speak within door.

**EMILIA**

Oh, fie upon them! Some such squire he was  
 That turned your wit the seamy side without  
 And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

**IAGO**

You are a fool. Go to.

**DESDEMONA**

170 Alas Iago,  
 What shall I do to win my lord again?  
 Good friend, go to him. For, by this light of heaven,  
 I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
 If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
 175 Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
 Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
 Delighted them, or any other form,  
 Or that I do not yet, and ever did,  
 And ever will— though he do shake me off  
 180 To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,  
 Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,  
 And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
 But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore,"  
 It does abhor me now I speak the word.  
 185 To do the act that might the addition earn  
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

**IAGO**

I pray you, be content, 'tis but his humor.  
 The business of the state does him offence,  
 And he does chide with you.

**DESDEMONA**

190 If 'twere no other—

**IAGO**

'Tis but so, I warrant.

*Trumpets sound*

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper.  
 The messengers of Venice stays the meat.  
 Go in, and weep not. All things shall be well.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

*Enter RODERIGO*

195 How now, Roderigo!

**RODERIGO**

I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

**IAGO**

What in the contrary?

**DESDEMONA**

If there is any such man, may God have mercy on him!

**EMILIA**

Let him get his mercy from a noose, and let devils in hell  
 gnaw on his bones! Why should Othello call Desdemona a  
 whore? Who does she sleep with? Where? When? How?  
 What proof is there? The Moor has been tricked by some  
 absolutely villainous lowlife—some base, well-known fool,  
 some vile man. Oh God, if only you would reveal the evil  
 people in the world and give every honest person a whip to  
 lash the rascals with as they run naked east to west across  
 the whole globe!

**IAGO**

Quiet down.

**EMILIA**

Oh, curse those evil people! It was a person like this who  
 got inside your head and made you suspect that I cheated  
 on you with the Moor.

**IAGO**

You are a fool. Get out of here.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, Iago, what should I do to win back my husband? Good  
 friend, go to him. For I swear by heaven, I do not know what  
 I did to lose him. I kneel down here and swear it: if I ever  
 betrayed his love, either by some actual deed or even by  
 just thinking about doing something; if my eyes, ears, or  
 anything else ever delighted in any other man; if I never  
 really loved him or don't love him now, or won't continue to  
 love him dearly (even as he tries to divorce me), then may I  
 lose all comforts! Unkindness is powerful—and his  
 unkindness could kill me—but it can never change my love  
 for him. I cannot say "whore." The word catches in my  
 throat even as I try to say it now. Not all the pleasures in the  
 world could make me do the act that would earn me that  
 name.

**IAGO**

I beg you, don't get upset. Othello is just in a bad mood.  
 State business has angered him, and he's just taking out his  
 anger on you.

**DESDEMONA**

If there were no other reason—

**IAGO**

That's it, I promise.

*Trumpets sound offstage.*

Listen, these trumpets announce that dinner is ready. The  
 messenger from Venice is waiting on the food. Go inside,  
 and don't cry. Everything will be okay.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.*

*RODERIGO enters.*

How are things, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

I don't think you've been honest with me.

**IAGO**

Why not?

**RODERIGO**

200 Every day thou daff'st me with some device, Iago, and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it, nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffered.

**IAGO**

Will you hear me, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

205 I have heard too much, and your words and performances are no kin together.

**IAGO**

You charge me most unjustly.

**RODERIGO**

210 With naught but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver Desdemona would half have corrupted a votaress. You have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance, but I find none.

**IAGO**

Well, go to. Very well.

**RODERIGO**

215 "Very well," "go to"! I cannot go to, man, nor 'tis not very well. Nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

**IAGO**

Very well.

**RODERIGO**

220 I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation. If not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

**IAGO**

You have said now.

**RODERIGO**

225 Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

**IAGO**

230 Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even from this instant to build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou hast taken against me a most just exception, but yet I protest I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

**RODERIGO**

It hath not appeared.

**IAGO**

235 I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever—I mean purpose, courage and valor—this night show it. If thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

**RODERIGO**

Well, what is it? Is it within reason and compass?

**RODERIGO**

Every day you play some trick on me, Iago. And it seems to me now that you are making things more difficult for me rather than giving me any advantage or hope of success. I won't tolerate this any longer, and as for what you've already done and what I've foolishly suffered because of you, I'm not just going to take it peacefully.

**IAGO**

Will you listen to me, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

I have heard you speak too much, and your actions and words don't match up.

**IAGO**

You accuse me unjustly.

**RODERIGO**

I accuse you with nothing but the truth. I have spent all my money. The jewels you took from me to send to Desdemona would have been enough to corrupt a nun. You told me she received them, and promised that, in return, I would see hope and encouragement by her immediate affection. But I have seen nothing.

**IAGO**

Well, fine.

**RODERIGO**

"Fine!" Things aren't "fine," man. Things are not going very well. No, things are going horribly, and now I've been tricked into a big mess.

**IAGO**

Very well.

**RODERIGO**

It is *not* very well, I tell you. I will tell everything to Desdemona. If she will return my jewels, I will give up on courting her and take back my unlawful advances. If she doesn't, I'll seek repayment from you.

**IAGO**

You've spoken your piece, now.

**RODERIGO**

Yes, and I've said just what I intend to do.

**IAGO**

Well, now I see you have a backbone, and I think more highly of you now than ever before. Give me your hand, Roderigo. Your accusation against me is understandable, but I still insist that I have behaved honestly in helping you with your situation.

**RODERIGO**

It doesn't appear that way.

**IAGO**

I admit it doesn't seem that way, and you are not stupid or unjustified to have suspicions. But, Roderigo, if you have courage, dedication, and bravery—which I now more than ever think you do—then prove it tonight. If you do not spend the next night with Desdemona, then feel free to take me away and devise ways to kill me.

**RODERIGO**

Well, what is your plan? Is it reasonable?

**IAGO**

240 Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to  
depute Cassio in Othello's place.

**RODERIGO**

Is that true? Why, then Othello and Desdemona return  
again to Venice.

**IAGO**

245 Oh, no, he goes into Mauritania and taketh away with  
him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered  
here by some accident—wherein none can be so determinate  
as the removing of Cassio.

**RODERIGO**

How do you mean, removing of him?

**IAGO**

250 Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place:  
knocking out his brains.

**RODERIGO**

And that you would have me to do!

**IAGO**

255 Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He  
supps tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to  
him. He knows not yet of his honorable fortune. If you  
will watch his going thence (which I will fashion to  
fall out between twelve and one) you may take him at  
your pleasure. I will be near to second your attempt,  
and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at  
it, but go along with me. I will show you such a  
260 necessity in his death that you shall think yourself  
bound to put it on him. It is now high suppertime, and  
the night grows to waste. About it!

**RODERIGO**

I will hear further reason for this.

**IAGO**

And you shall be satisfied.

*Exeunt*


**IAGO**


Sir, a special order has come from Venice to put Cassio in  
charge here, in Othello's place.

**RODERIGO**

Is that true? Then Othello and Desdemona are returning to  
Venice.

**IAGO**

Oh, no, he is going to Mauritania,  and taking the fair  
Desdemona with him, unless some freak accident keeps  
him here. And nothing would serve this purpose more than  
the removal of Cassio.

 Mauritania is a country in North  
Africa.

**RODERIGO**

What do you mean by "removal?"

**IAGO**

Well, I mean making him incapable of taking Othello's  
place. Knocking out his brains.

**RODERIGO**

And you want me to do that!

**IAGO**

Yes, if you dare do something that would help yourself.  
Cassio is having dinner tonight with a prostitute, and I am  
going to go meet him there. He doesn't know yet about his  
good luck with this promotion. If you will be on the lookout  
for him there (and I'll make it so he is walking by between  
twelve and one o'clock) you can get him. I'll be nearby to  
help you, and he'll be surrounded by us. Come on, don't  
stand there dumbfounded. Go along with me. I will prove to  
you that you absolutely *must* kill Cassio, and you will realize  
you have no choice but to do it. It is now almost dinner  
time, and time is wasting. Go do it!

**RODERIGO**

I'll come and hear what reasons you have for doing this.

**IAGO**

You won't regret it.

*RODERIGO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA and attendants*

**LODOVICO**

I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, pardon me, 'twill do me good to walk.

**LODOVICO**

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

**DESDEMONA**

Your honor is most welcome.

**OTHELLO**

5 Will you walk, sir?—O Desdemona—

### Shakescleare Translation

*OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and attendants  
enter.*

**LODOVICO**

Sir, I beg you: don't trouble yourself any further.

**OTHELLO**

I beg your pardon, but it will be good for me to walk.

**LODOVICO**

Good night, madam. I humbly thank you, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

You are most welcome, your Honor.

**OTHELLO**

Will you walk with me, sir? And oh, Desdemona—

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Get you to bed on th' instant, I will be returned  
Forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there, look 't be  
done.

**DESDEMONA**

10 I will, my lord.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants*

**EMILIA**

How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.

**DESDEMONA**

He says he will return incontinent,  
And hath commanded me to go to bed  
And bid me to dismiss you.

**EMILIA**

15 Dismiss me?

**DESDEMONA**

It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.  
We must not now displease him.

**EMILIA**

Ay. Would you had never seen him!

**DESDEMONA**

20 So would not I. My love doth so approve him  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—  
Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor.

**EMILIA**

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

**DESDEMONA**

25 All's one. Good Father, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me  
In one of these same sheets.

**EMILIA**

Come, come! You talk!

**DESDEMONA**

30 My mother had a maid called Barbary,  
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her. She had a song of "Willow,"  
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune  
And she died singing it. That song tonight  
Will not go from my mind. I have much to do  
But to go hang my head all at one side  
35 And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.

**EMILIA**

Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

**DESDEMONA**

No, unpin me here.  
This Lodovico is a proper man.

**EMILIA**

A very handsome man.

**DESDEMONA**

40 He speaks well.

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Go to bed right away. I will come back soon. Dismiss your  
servant there in the bedroom. Make sure you do this.

**DESDEMONA**

I will, my lord.

*OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants exit.*

**EMILIA**

How is it going now? Othello looks gentler than before.

**DESDEMONA**

He said he's coming back immediately and commanded me  
to go to bed and dismiss you for the night.

**EMILIA**

Dismiss me?

**DESDEMONA**

That's what he ordered. Therefore, good Emilia, give me my  
night gown and then goodbye. We must not displease  
Othello now.

**EMILIA**

Okay. I wish you had never seen him!

**DESDEMONA**

I don't wish that. My love for him is so strong that I don't  
mind—please help unpin this for me—even his  
stubbornness, his reprimands, his frowns.

**EMILIA**

I have made your bed with the sheets from your wedding  
night, as you asked.

**DESDEMONA**

All right. Good God, how foolish our minds can be! If I die  
before you, please wrap me in one of these same sheets.

**EMILIA**

Oh come on! You're just saying that.

**DESDEMONA**

My mother had a maid named Barbary. She was in love, and  
the man she loved turned out to be crazy and abandoned  
her. She had a song called "Willow," an old song that  
expressed what she had experienced, and she died singing  
it. I can't stop thinking of that song tonight. I almost can't  
help but droop my head and sing it just like poor Barbary.  
Please, hurry.

**EMILIA**

Should I go and get your nightgown?

**DESDEMONA**

No, just unpin this for me here. That Lodovico is a good  
man.

**EMILIA**

A very handsome man.

**DESDEMONA**

He's well-spoken.



**EMILIA**

I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

**DESDEMONA**

*(singing)*

*The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
45 Sing all a green willow.  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans,  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
50 Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones  
Sing willow, willow, willow—  
Lay by these—  
Willow, willow—  
Prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon—  
55 Sing all a green willow must be my garland.  
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve—  
Nay, that's not next—Hark! Who is 't that knocks?*

**EMILIA**

It's the wind.

**DESDEMONA**

*(sings)*

*60 I called my love false love but what said he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
If I court more women you'll couch with more men—  
So, get thee gone, good night. Mine eyes do itch,  
Doth that bode weeping?*

**EMILIA**

*65 'Tis neither here nor there.*

**DESDEMONA**

I have heard it said so. Oh, these men, these men!  
Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—  
That there be women do abuse their husbands  
In such gross kind?

**EMILIA**

*70 There be some such, no question.*

**DESDEMONA**

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

**EMILIA**

Why, would not you?

**DESDEMONA**

No, by this heavenly light!

**EMILIA**

*75 Nor I neither, by this heavenly light.  
I might do 't as well i' th' dark.*

**DESDEMONA**

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

**EMILIA**

The world's a huge thing. It is a great price for a small vice.

**DESDEMONA**

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

**EMILIA**

I know a lady in Venice who would have walked barefoot to Palestine just to touch his lower lip.

**DESDEMONA**

*[Singing]*

*The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Everyone sing a green willow.  
With her hand on her chest and her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured along with her  
moans,  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones,  
Sing willow, willow, willow—  
Put these things down over there, Emilia.  
[Singing]  
Willow, willow—  
Please, hurry up, he'll come any minute now.  
[Singing]  
Everyone sing a green willow must be my garland.  
Let nobody blame him, I approve of his scorn—  
No, that's not the next line. Listen! Who is that knocking at  
the door?*

**EMILIA**

It's just the wind

**DESDEMONA**

*[Singing]*

*I called my love false love, but what did he say then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow.  
If I court more women, you'll sleep with more men—  
Okay, you can go now, good night. My eyes itch. Does that  
mean I'm going to cry?*

**EMILIA**

It might, or it might not.

**DESDEMONA**

I've heard that it means that. Oh these men, these men! Tell  
me, Emilia: do you think that there are women who deceive  
and cheat on their husbands as badly as men do to women?

**EMILIA**

No question, there are some.

**DESDEMONA**

Would you ever cheat on your husband, for all the world?

**EMILIA**

Well, wouldn't you?

**DESDEMONA**

No, by the light of heaven!

**EMILIA**

Well I wouldn't do it by light either. I might do it in the dark,  
though.

**DESDEMONA**

Would you really do such a thing for all the world?

**EMILIA**

All the world is a huge thing. It would be a great reward for a  
little misdeed.

**DESDEMONA**

In truth, I think you wouldn't do it.

**EMILIA**

80 In troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I had  
done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a  
joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns,  
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for  
the whole world? Why, who would not make her husband a  
85 cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture  
purgatory for 't.

**DESDEMONA**

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong  
For the whole world.

**EMILIA**

Why the wrong is but a wrong i' th' world, and having  
90 the world for your labor, 'tis a wrong in your own  
world, and you might quickly make it right.

**DESDEMONA**

I do not think there is any such woman.

**EMILIA**

Yes, a dozen, and as many to th' vantage as would store  
the world they played for.  
95 But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us. Or say they strike us,  
100 Or scant our former having in despite.  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them. They see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
105 As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth. Is 't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too. And have not we affections,  
110 Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well, else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

**DESDEMONA**

Good night, good night. Heaven me such uses send,  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

*Exeunt*

**EMILIA**

In truth, I think I should do it, and then undo it after. Really,  
I wouldn't do such a thing for a ring, or for fine linen, or for  
gowns and petticoats, or for caps, or for any little gift. But  
for the whole world? Why, who would not cheat on her  
husband in order to make him king of the world? I'd risk  
being punished in purgatory for it.

**DESDEMONA**

The devil may take me if I should ever do such a wrong for  
the whole world.

**EMILIA**

But the wrong is just a wrong in the world, so if the world is  
yours, then it is a wrong in *your own* world. And then you  
could quickly make it right.

**DESDEMONA**

I don't think there is any such woman who would do it.

**EMILIA**

Yes—there are a dozen, and in fact as many as would  
populate the whole world that they wagered for. But I think  
that if wives are unfaithful, it is their husbands' fault. Let's  
say they stop sleeping with us and give themselves to other  
women instead, or break out in fits of jealousy and impose  
restraints on us. Or let's say they hit us, or spitefully cut  
back on our allowance. Why, we feel resentment, and  
although we have some grace, we can still have some  
revenge, too. Let husbands know that their wives have  
good sense just like them. They see and smell and can taste  
both sweet and sour, just like their husbands can. What are  
they doing when they switch us out for other women? Is it  
for fun? I think so. And does physical attraction lead to it? I  
think so. Is it a weakness to do this wrong? I think so, too.  
And don't we have physical attractions, desire for fun, and  
weakness, just like men? They should treat us well, or else  
they should know that whatever bad things we do, we are  
only following their example.

**DESDEMONA**

Good night, good night. May heaven send me the ability not  
to behave badly by following bad examples, but to behave  
well by avoiding bad examples.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter IAGO and RODERIGO*

**IAGO**

Here, stand behind this bulk, straight will he come.  
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.  
Quick, quick! Fear nothing. I'll be at thy elbow.  
It makes us, or it mars us. Think on that,  
5 And fix most firm thy resolution.

**RODERIGO**

Be near at hand, I may miscarry in 't.

**IAGO**

Here, at thy hand. Be bold, and take thy stand.

### Shakescleare Translation

*IAGO and RODERIGO enter.*

**IAGO**

Here, stand behind this wall. He'll come soon. Keep your  
sword unsheathed, and then drive it into him. Quick, quick!  
Don't be scared. I'll be at your side. We win or lose  
everything with this. Think about that, and be firmly  
resolved for the task.

**RODERIGO**

Be nearby, since I might mess this up.

**IAGO**

I'll be here, right by your side. Be bold, and make a stand.

*Withdraws***RODERIGO**

I have no great devotion to the deed  
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons.  
10 'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

**IAGO**

(*aside*) I have rubbed this young quat almost to the  
sense,  
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio  
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,  
15 Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,  
He calls me to a restitution large  
Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him  
As gifts to Desdemona.  
It must not be. If Cassio do remain  
20 He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes me ugly. And besides, the Moor  
May unfold me to him—there stand I in much peril.  
No, he must die. But so, I hear him coming.

*Enter CASSIO***RODERIGO**

I know his gait, 'tis he.—Villain, thou diest!

*Thrusts at CASSIO***CASSIO**

25 That thrust had been mine enemy indeed  
But that my coat is better than thou know'st  
I will make proof of thine.

*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO***RODERIGO**

Oh, I am slain!

*IAGO from behind wounds CASSIO in the legs, exits***CASSIO**

I am maimed for ever. Help, ho! Murder! Murder!

*Enter OTHELLO***OTHELLO**

30 The voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

**RODERIGO**

Oh, villain that I am!

**OTHELLO**

It is even so.

**CASSIO**

Oh, help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

**OTHELLO**

'Tis he. Oh, brave Iago, honest and just,  
35 That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!  
Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,  
And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come.  
For, of my heart, those charms, thine eyes, are  
blotted.  
40 Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be  
spotted.

*Exit**Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO**IAGO steps back.***RODERIGO**

I don't have any great dedication to do this deed, but Iago  
has given me satisfactory reasons to do it. It's just one man  
to kill. Go forth, my sword: he will die.

**IAGO**

[*To himself*] I rubbed this young pimple as much as I can,  
and he's getting angry. Now, whether he kills Cassio or  
Cassio kills him, or they each kill each other, it's all good for  
me. If Roderigo lives, he will make me pay him back for all  
the gold and jewels I took from him as gifts for Desdemona.  
I can't have that. If Cassio survives, his beauty every day  
makes me seem ugly by comparison. And besides, the Moor  
might tell him what I've said about him—that would be very  
dangerous for me. No, he must die. But I hear him coming.

*CASSIO enters.***RODERIGO**

I know his walk. It's him. Villain, time for you to die!

*RODERIGO thrusts his sword at CASSIO.***CASSIO**

That thrust would have been quite bad for me indeed,  
except that my coat is thicker than you realize. Now I'll put  
your coat to the test.

*CASSIO draws his sword and stabs RODERIGO.***RODERIGO**

Oh, I've been killed!

*IAGO stabs CASSIO in the legs from behind and then exits.***CASSIO**

I am crippled forever. Help, hey! Murder! Murder!

*OTHELLO enters.***OTHELLO**

It's the voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

**RODERIGO**

Oh, I am a villain.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you are.

**CASSIO**

Oh, help, hey! Bring some light! I need a doctor!

**OTHELLO**

It's him. Oh, brave Iago, you are honest and just, to care so  
much for a wrong done to your friend! You teach me by your  
example. Unchaste woman, your dear boyfriend lies dead,  
and your own damned fate hurries your way. Whore, I'm  
coming for you. Your charms, your eyes, are erased from my  
heart. Your bed, stained with lust, will soon be stained with  
your lusty blood.

*OTHELLO exits.**LODOVICO and GRATIANO enter.*

**CASSIO**

What, ho! No watch? No passage? Murder! Murder!

**GRATIANO**

'Tis some mischance, the cry is very direful.

**CASSIO**

Oh, help!

**LODOVICO**

45 Hark!

**RODERIGO**

Oh, wretched villain!

**LODOVICO**

Two or three groan. 'Tis heavy night,  
These may be counterfeits. Let's think 't unsafe  
To come in to the cry without more help.

**RODERIGO**

50 Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.

**LODOVICO**

Hark!

*Enter IAGO*

**GRATIANO**

Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

**IAGO**

Who's there? Whose noise is this that ones on murder?

**LODOVICO**

We do not know.

**IAGO**

55 Do not you hear a cry?

**CASSIO**

Here, here! For heaven's sake, help me!

**IAGO**

What's the matter?

**GRATIANO**

[*To LODOVICO*] This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

**LODOVICO**

The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.

**IAGO**

60 [*To CASSIO*] What are you here that cry so grievously?

**CASSIO**

Iago? Oh, I am spoiled, undone by villains!  
Give me some help.

**IAGO**

Oh, me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

**CASSIO**

65 I think that one of them is hereabout,  
And cannot make away.

**IAGO**

Oh, treacherous villains!—  
[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO*]

**CASSIO**

What's going? No one on guard? No one passing by?  
Murder! Murder!

**GRATIANO**

Something's wrong. That cry is very serious.

**CASSIO**

Oh, help!

**LODOVICO**

Look!

**RODERIGO**

Oh, that wretched villain!

**LODOVICO**

Two or three people are groaning. It's the middle of the  
night—they might be trying to trick us. Let's not rush in  
unsafely by ourselves, without any other help.

**RODERIGO**

Will nobody come? I'm going to bleed to death.

**LODOVICO**

Look!

*IAGO enters.*

**GRATIANO**

Here comes someone in his night shirt, with a light and  
weapons.

**IAGO**

Who's there? Whose voice is it that keeps saying murder?

**LODOVICO**

We don't know.

**IAGO**

Don't you hear a cry?

**CASSIO**

Over here! For heaven's sake, help me!

**IAGO**

What's the matter?

**GRATIANO**

[*To LODOVICO*] This is Othello's flag-bearer, I think.

**LODOVICO**

This is him, a very brave man.

**IAGO**

[*To CASSIO*] Who are you that's crying out in such pain?

**CASSIO**

Iago? Oh, I have been ruined and undone by villains! Give  
me some help.

**IAGO**

Oh my, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

**CASSIO**

I think one of them is around here, and cannot run away.

**IAGO**

Oh, treacherous villains!

What are you there? Come in, and give some help.

**RODERIGO**

Oh, help me there!

**CASSIO**

70 That's one of them.

**IAGO**

O murd'rous slave! O villain!

*Stabs RODERIGO*

**RODERIGO**

O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!

**IAGO**

Kill men i' th' dark! Where be these bloody thieves?  
How silent is this town!— Ho! murder! murder!—  
75 What may you be? Are you of good or evil?

**LODOVICO**

As you shall prove us, praise us.

**IAGO**

Signior Lodovico?

**LODOVICO**

He, sir.

**IAGO**

I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

**GRATIANO**

80 Cassio!

**IAGO**

How is 't, brother!

**CASSIO**

My leg is cut in two.

**IAGO**

Marry, heaven forbid!  
Light, gentlemen, I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter BIANCA*

**BIANCA**

85 What is the matter, ho? Who is 't that cried?

**IAGO**

Who is 't that cried?

**BIANCA**

Oh, my dear Cassio!  
My sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect  
90 Who they should be that have thus mangled you?

**CASSIO**

No.

**GRATIANO**

I am sorry to find you thus. I have been to seek you.

[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO*] Who are you over there?  
Come here and give some help.

**RODERIGO**

Oh, help me!

**CASSIO**

That's one of the villains that did this to me.

**IAGO**

Oh, murdering scoundrel! Oh, villain!

*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*

**RODERIGO**

Oh, damned Iago! You inhuman dog!

**IAGO**

Where are these bloody thieves who are killing men in the dark? This town is so silent! Hey! Murder! Murder! Who are you? Are you good or evil?

**LODOVICO**

Judge us by our actions.

**IAGO**

Sir Lodovico?

**LODOVICO**

That's me, sir.

**IAGO**

I ask for your forgiveness. This here is Cassio, hurt by some villains.

**GRATIANO**

Cassio!

**IAGO**

How are you, brother?

**CASSIO**

My leg has been cut in half.

**IAGO**

No, heaven forbid! Gentlemen, give me some light so I can bind the wound with my shirt.

*BIANCA enters.*

**BIANCA**

Hey, what is the matter? Who is it that cried out?

**IAGO**

Who is it that cried out?

**BIANCA**

Oh, my dear Cassio! My sweet Cassio! Oh, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

You notorious whore! Cassio, do you have any idea who attacked you?

**CASSIO**

No.

**GRATIANO**

I am sorry to find you like this. I've been out looking for you.

**IAGO**

Lend me a garter. So.—Oh, for a chair,  
To bear him easily hence!

**BIANCA**

95 Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash  
To be a party in this injury.—  
Patience awhile, good Cassio.— Come, come,  
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?  
100 Alas, my friend and my dear countryman  
Roderigo! No—yes, sure! Yes, 'tis Roderigo.

**GRATIANO**

What, of Venice?

**IAGO**

Even he, sir. Did you know him?

**GRATIANO**

Know him? Ay.

**IAGO**

105 Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon,  
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners  
That so neglected you.

**GRATIANO**

I am glad to see you.

**IAGO**

How do you, Cassio?—Oh, a chair, a chair!

**GRATIANO**

110 Roderigo!

**IAGO**

He, he, 'tis he.

*A chair is brought in*

Oh, that's well said—the chair!  
Some good man bear him carefully from hence.  
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.— *(to BIANCA)* For you,  
115 mistress,  
Save you your labor.—He that lies slain here, Cassio,  
Was my dear friend. What malice was between you?

**CASSIO**

None in the world, nor do I know the man.

**IAGO**

*[To BIANCA]*

120 What, look you pale?—Oh, bear him out o' the air.—

*CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off*

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?—Stay you, good  
gentlemen.—Look you pale, mistress?—  
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.—  
Behold her well. I pray you, look upon her.  
125 Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness  
Will speak, though tongues were out of use.

*Enter EMILIA*

**EMILIA**

Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter, husband?

**IAGO**

Lend me a stocking. There. Oh, if only we had a chair, to  
carry him off easily!

**BIANCA**

Alas, he is fainting! Oh, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

All of you gentlemen, I suspect that this piece of trash has  
played a role in Cassio's injury. Hold on just a bit, good  
Cassio. Come on, give me some light. Do we know this face  
or not? Alas, it is my friend and my dear countryman  
Roderigo! No, it can't be—yes, it is for sure! Yes, it's  
Roderigo.

**GRATIANO**

Roderigo from Venice?

**IAGO**

That's the man, sir. Do you know him?

**GRATIANO**

Know him? Yes.

**IAGO**

Sir Gratiano, is that you? I beg your pardon. This bloody  
incident has made it so that I couldn't treat you with proper  
manners.

**GRATIANO**

I am glad to see you.

**IAGO**

Are you okay, Cassio? Oh, we need a chair, a chair!

**GRATIANO**

Roderigo!

**IAGO**

It's him, yes, him

*A chair is brought onstage.*

Ah, well done, the chair! Some good man carry him away  
carefully. I'll go get the general's doctor.

*[To BIANCA]* As for you, mistress, don't bother trying to  
help. Cassio, the man who lies murdered here was my dear  
friend. What bad blood was there between the two of you?

**CASSIO**

None at all, and I don't even know him.

**IAGO**

*[To BIANCA]* What, are you looking pale? Someone carry  
him off.

*CASSIO and RODERIGO are carried off.*

Do you see the fright in her eyes? Stay here, good  
gentlemen. Do you look a little pale, mistress? Keep  
watching her; we'll hear more about what happened soon.  
Watch her carefully. I beg you, look at her. Do you see,  
gentlemen? Guiltiness speaks, even when the guilty person  
holds his or her tongue.

*EMILIA enters.*

**EMILIA**

Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter, husband?

**IAGO**

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark  
By Roderigo and fellows that are 'scaped.  
130 He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

**EMILIA**

Alas, good gentleman! Alas, good Cassio!

**IAGO**

This is the fruits of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,  
Go know of Cassio where he supped tonight.—  
[To BIANCA] What, do you shake at that?

**BIANCA**

135 He supped at my house, but I therefore shake not.

**IAGO**

Oh, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

**EMILIA**

Oh, fie upon thee, strumpet!

**BIANCA**

I am no strumpet, but of life as honest  
As you that thus abuse me.

**EMILIA**

140 As I! Fie upon thee!

**IAGO**

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.—  
Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.  
Emilia, run you to the citadel  
And tell my lord and lady what hath happed.—  
145 Will you go on afore?  
(aside)  
This is the night  
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

*Exeunt*

**IAGO**

Cassio has been attacked here in the dark by Roderigo and  
some men who have run away. Cassio was almost killed,  
and Roderigo is dead.

**EMILIA**

Alas, he was a good gentleman! And alas, poor Cassio!

**IAGO**

This is what you get from whoring around. Please, Emilia,  
go ask Cassio where he had dinner tonight.

[To BIANCA] Why do you shake with worry at that?

**BIANCA**

He had dinner at my house, but that's not why I'm shaking.

**IAGO**

Oh did he? I order you, come with me.

**EMILIA**

Oh, shame on you, whore!

**BIANCA**

I am no whore. I am as chaste as you who accuse me.

**EMILIA**

As chaste as me? Shame on you!

**IAGO**

Kind gentlemen, let's go make sure poor Cassio's wounds  
get tended to. Come on, mistress, you must tell us another  
story. Emilia, run to the castle and tell Othello and  
Desdemona what has happened. Will you go on ahead?

[To himself] This is the night that either makes me, or  
utterly ruins me.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*DESDEMONA asleep in bed Enter OTHELLO with a light*

**OTHELLO**

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,  
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow  
5 And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.  
Put out the light, and then put out the light.  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore  
10 Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose  
I cannot give it vital growth again,  
15 It must needs wither. I'll smell thee on the tree.  
Oh, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.  
Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee  
And love thee after. (kissing her) One more, and that's

### Shakescleare Translation

*DESDEMONA is asleep in bed. OTHELLO enters with a lit candle.*

**OTHELLO**

That's the reason for this, that's the reason, my soul. I won't  
say the reason to the chaste stars in the sky, but it is the  
reason. But I won't shed her blood, or scar that skin of hers  
that is whiter than snow and as smooth as alabaster. Still,  
she must die or else she'll betray more men. Extinguish the  
light, and then extinguish her light. If I extinguish you,  
flame, I can light you again if I have second thoughts. But as  
for you—you most artfully, excellently fashioned  
woman—once I put out your light, I don't know of any  
magical fire that can bring your life back. When I have  
plucked the rose of your life, I can't re-plant it again—it  
must wither. I'll smell you while you're still alive. Oh, your  
gentle breath almost persuades Justice herself to put away  
her sword! One more, one more kiss. If you look like this  
when you are dead, I will kill you and love you after. [He  
kisses DESDEMONA] One more, and that's the last. There  
was never anything so sweet and yet so deadly as you. I  
can't help but weep, but that is not a sign of pity. This  
sorrow is like that of God, who must strike down the

the last.  
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly,  
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

**DESDEMONA**

Who's there? Othello?

**OTHELLO**

25 Ay, Desdemona.

**DESDEMONA**

Will you come to bed, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Ay, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

If you bethink yourself of any crime  
30 Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,  
Solicit for it straight.

**DESDEMONA**

Alack, my lord, what do you mean by that?

**OTHELLO**

Well, do it, and be brief. I will walk by.  
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.  
35 No, heavens forbend, I would not kill thy soul!

**DESDEMONA**

Talk you of killing?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, I do.

**DESDEMONA**

Then heaven  
Have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

40 Amen, with all my heart.

**DESDEMONA**

If you say, I hope you will not kill me.

**OTHELLO**

Hmh!

**DESDEMONA**

And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then  
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,  
45 Since guiltiness I know not. But yet I feel I fear.

**OTHELLO**

Think on thy sins.

**DESDEMONA**

They are loves I bear to you.

**OTHELLO**

Ay, and for that thou diest.

**DESDEMONA**

That death's unnatural that kills for loving.  
50 Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?

creatures he loves. She's waking up.

**DESDEMONA**

Who's there? Othello?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, Desdemona.

**DESDEMONA**

Will you come to bed, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

If you can think of any crime you haven't atoned for, make  
amends with God right now.

**DESDEMONA**

My lord, what do you mean by that?

**OTHELLO**

Just do it. And quickly. I will walk around. I would not want  
to kill you when you haven't prepared your soul by  
confessing and repenting. No, heaven forbid it, I would not  
send your soul to hell.

**DESDEMONA**

You're talking about killing?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, I am.

**DESDEMONA**

Then heaven have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

Amen, I wholeheartedly agree.

**DESDEMONA**

Then I hope you will not kill me.

**OTHELLO**

Hmph!

**DESDEMONA**

And yet I fear you, because when your eyes roll like that I  
know you're in a deadly mood. I don't know why I should  
be afraid, since I am not guilty of anything. But I am afraid  
nonetheless.

**OTHELLO**

Think about your sins.

**DESDEMONA**

My only sin is my love for you.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, and that's why you're going to die.

**DESDEMONA**

It's not a natural thing to kill someone for loving. Alas, why  
are you biting your lower lip? Some bloodthirsty passion is



Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.  
These are portents, but yet I hope, I hope  
They do not point on me.

**OTHELLO**

Peace, and be still.

**DESDEMONA**

55 I will so. What's the matter?

**OTHELLO**

That handkerchief  
Which I so loved and gave thee, thou gav'st  
To Cassio.

**DESDEMONA**

60 No, by my life and soul!  
Send for the man and ask him.

**OTHELLO**

Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury.  
Thou art on thy deathbed.

**DESDEMONA**

Ay—but not yet to die!

**OTHELLO**

65 Presently.  
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin,  
For to deny each article with oath  
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception  
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, heaven have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

70 I say "amen."

**DESDEMONA**

And have you mercy too! I never did  
Offend you in my life, never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love. I never gave him token.

**OTHELLO**

75 By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.  
O perjured woman, thou dost stone my heart,  
And mak'st me call what I intend to do  
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice!  
I saw the handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

80 He found it then,  
I never gave it him. Send for him hither,  
Let him confess a truth.

**OTHELLO**

He hath confessed.

**DESDEMONA**

What, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

85 That he hath used thee.

**DESDEMONA**

How? Unlawfully?

**OTHELLO**

Ay.

shaking your whole body. These are bad signs, but I hope  
they do not point to something that is going to happen to  
me.

**OTHELLO**

Be quiet, and stay still.

**DESDEMONA**

I will. What's the matter?

**OTHELLO**

That handkerchief that I loved so much and gave to you,  
you gave to Cassio.

**DESDEMONA**

No, I swear on my life and soul! Send for him and ask him.

**OTHELLO**

You sweet soul, careful now, be careful about lying. You are  
on your deathbed.

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, but it's not yet time for me to die!

**OTHELLO**

It will be soon. Therefore confess your sin openly. Your  
denial of every part of it can do nothing to remove the  
horrible idea that I have in my head. You are about to die.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, heaven have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

I say amen to that.

**DESDEMONA**

And you have mercy, too! I never did anything to offend you  
in my life. I never loved Cassio except in a general way, as a  
friend. I never gave him a token of my affection.

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand. Oh, you lying  
woman! You turn my heart to stone and make me call what  
I intend to do a murder, instead of a sacrifice! I saw the  
handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

Then he must have found it. I never gave it to him. Send for  
him to come here, and let him tell you the truth.

**OTHELLO**

He has confessed.

**DESDEMONA**

What, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

He has confessed that he has had sex with you.

**DESDEMONA**

What? Adulterous sex with me?

**OTHELLO**

Yes.

**DESDEMONA**

He will not say so.

**OTHELLO**

90 No, his mouth is stopped. Honest Iago  
Hath ta'en order for 't.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh! My fear interprets. What, is he dead?

**OTHELLO**

Had all his hairs been lives  
My great revenge had stomach for them all.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, he is betrayed and I undone.

**OTHELLO**

95 Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

**OTHELLO**

Down, strumpet!

**DESDEMONA**

Kill me tomorrow—let me live tonight!

**OTHELLO**

Nay, if you strive—

**DESDEMONA**

100 But half an hour!

**OTHELLO**

Being done, there is no pause.

**DESDEMONA**

But while I say one prayer!

**OTHELLO**

It is too late. *[he smothers her]*

**EMILIA**

*[within]* My lord, my lord! What, ho! My lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

105 What noise is this?—Not dead? Not yet quite dead?  
I that am cruel am yet merciful,  
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.  
So, so.

**EMILIA**

*[within]* What, ho! My lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

110 Who's there?

**EMILIA**

*[within]* O good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, 'tis Emilia.— *(to EMILIA)* By and by.— She's dead.—  
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death,  
The noise was high. Ha! No more moving?  
115 Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were 't good?  
I think she stirs again—No. What's best to do?  
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife—

**DESDEMONA**

He would not say that.

**OTHELLO**

No, he cannot speak. Honest Iago has taken care of that.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh! I am afraid I know what you mean by that. What, is he dead?

**OTHELLO**

If he had had as many lives as hairs on his head, I would have had enough revenge for each one of them.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, he has been betrayed, and now I am ruined.

**OTHELLO**

Enough, whore! Do you dare to weep for him in front of me?

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, my lord, banish me, but do not kill me.

**OTHELLO**

Get down, whore!

**DESDEMONA**

Kill me tomorrow—let me live tonight!

**OTHELLO**

No, if you struggle—

**DESDEMONA**

Just half an hour!

**OTHELLO**

Once I've started this, I cannot stop.

**DESDEMONA**

Let me say just one prayer!

**OTHELLO**

It is too late. *[OTHELLO smothers DESDEMONA]*

**EMILIA**

*[Offstage]* My lord, my lord! What is going on? My lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

What is this noise? Is she not dead? Not quite dead yet? I may be cruel, but I am merciful too: I don't want you to die slowly and painfully. So here.

**EMILIA**

*[Offstage]* Hey! My lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Who's there?

**EMILIA**

*[Offstage]* Oh, my good lord, I want to have a word with you!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, it is Emilia.

*[To EMILIA]* One minute.

*[To himself]* She's dead. Emilia is likely coming to tell me about Cassio's death. There was a lot of noise outside. Ha!

My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.  
Oh, insupportable! Oh, heavy hour!  
120 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse  
Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe  
Should yawn at alteration.

**EMILIA**

*[within]*

I do beseech you

125 That I may speak with you, O good my lord!

**OTHELLO**

I had forgot thee—Oh, come in, Emilia.  
Soft, by and by. Let me the curtains draw.  
Where art thou?

*Unlocks the door. Enter EMILIA*

What's the matter with thee now?

**EMILIA**

130 O my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

**OTHELLO**

What, now?

**EMILIA**

But now, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

It is the very error of the moon,  
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont  
135 And makes men mad.

**EMILIA**

Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian  
Called Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed!

**EMILIA**

No, Cassio is not killed.

**OTHELLO**

140 Not Cassio killed! Then murder's out of tune,  
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, falsely, falsely murdered!

**EMILIA**

Alas, what cry is that?

**OTHELLO**

That? What?

**EMILIA**

145 Out and alas, that was my lady's voice.

*Opens the bedcurtains*

Help! Help, ho, help! O lady, speak again!  
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

**DESDEMONA**

A guiltless death I die.

Not moving anymore, Desdemona? Still as the grave.  
Should Emilia come in here? Would that be good? Is  
Desdemona moving again? No. What should I do? If she  
comes in, she'll definitely want to speak to my wife. My  
wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife. Oh, this is  
unbearable! Oh, what a terrible time! I think there should  
be a huge eclipse now of both the sun and the moon, and  
the ground itself should break open at what has happened.

**EMILIA**

*[Offstage]* I beg you to let me speak with you, my good lord!

**OTHELLO**

I forgot you were out there. Come in, Emilia. Quietly, now.  
Let me draw the bed curtains. Where are you?

*OTHELLO unlocks the door. EMILIA enters.*

What's the matter with you now?

**EMILIA**

Oh, my good lord, foul murders have been committed  
outside!

**OTHELLO**

What? Just now?

**EMILIA**

Just now, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

This has something to do with the odd path of the moon. It  
is closer to the earth than normal, and this makes men  
crazy.

**EMILIA**

My lord, Cassio has killed a young Venetian named  
Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed!

**EMILIA**

No, Cassio is not killed.

**OTHELLO**

Cassio isn't killed? Then the murder was botched, and  
sweet revenge hasn't gone as planned.

**DESDEMONA**

Oh, I have been unjustly murdered!

**EMILIA**

Alas, what is that cry?

**OTHELLO**

That? What?

**EMILIA**

Oh no, that was my lady's voice.

*EMILIA opens the curtains of the bed.*

Help! Hey, help, help! Oh, my lady, say something! Sweet  
Desdemona! Oh, sweet mistress, say something!

**DESDEMONA**

I die as an innocent.

**EMILIA**

Oh, who hath done this deed?

**DESDEMONA**

150 Nobody. I myself. Farewell.  
Commend me to my kind lord. Oh, farewell!

*Dies*

**OTHELLO**

Why, how should she be murdered?

**EMILIA**

Alas, who knows?

**OTHELLO**

You heard her say herself it was not I.

**EMILIA**

155 She said so. I must needs report the truth.

**OTHELLO**

She's like a liar gone to burning hell.  
'Twas I that killed her.

**EMILIA**

Oh, the more angel she,  
And you the blacker devil!

**OTHELLO**

160 She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

**EMILIA**

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

**OTHELLO**

She was false as water.

**EMILIA**

Thou art rash as fire,  
To say that she was false. Oh, she was heavenly true!

**OTHELLO**

165 Cassio did top her, ask thy husband else.  
Oh, I were damned beneath all depth in hell,  
But that I did proceed upon just grounds  
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

170 Thy husband.

**EMILIA**

That she was false to wedlock?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, with Cassio. Had she been true,  
If heaven would make me such another world  
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,  
175 I'd not have sold her for it.

**EMILIA**

My husband?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, 'twas he that told me on her first.  
An honest man he is, and hates the slime  
That sticks on filthy deeds.

**EMILIA**

Oh, who has done this to you?

**DESDEMONA**

Nobody. I did it to myself. Farewell. Send my love to my  
kind lord. Oh, farewell!

*DESDEMONA dies.*

**OTHELLO**

Why, how could she have been murdered?

**EMILIA**

Alas, who knows?

**OTHELLO**

You heard her say herself that it wasn't me.

**EMILIA**

She said so. I must tell the truth.

**OTHELLO**

Then she's gone to hell as a liar. I'm the one who killed her.

**EMILIA**

Oh, this makes her even more of an angel, and you more of  
a devil!

**OTHELLO**

She strayed, and she was a whore.

**EMILIA**

You slander her, and you are a devil.

**OTHELLO**

She was as unfaithful as water is inconstant.

**EMILIA**

You are as impetuous as fire to say that she was unfaithful.  
She was heavenly faithful and honest!

**OTHELLO**

Cassio slept with her; you can ask your husband. I would be  
damned to hell if I didn't seek out just punishment to this  
end. Your husband knew all about this.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, your husband.

**EMILIA**

He knew that she was unfaithful in her marriage?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, with Cassio. If she had been faithful, I wouldn't have  
traded her for an entire world made entirely of gemstones.

**EMILIA**

My husband?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, he was the one who told me about her first. He is an  
honest man, and hates the slime of filthy bad deeds.

**EMILIA**

180 My husband!

**OTHELLO**

What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.

**EMILIA**

O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!  
My husband say that she was false!

**OTHELLO**

He, woman.

185 I say "thy husband"—dost understand the word?  
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

**EMILIA**

If he say so, may his pernicious soul  
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th' heart.  
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

*OTHELLO draws his sword***OTHELLO**

190 Ha!

**EMILIA**

Do thy worst.  
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
Than thou wast worthy her.

**OTHELLO**

Peace, you were best.

**EMILIA**

195 Thou hast not half that power to do me harm  
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!  
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed—  
I care not for thy sword, I'll make thee known  
Though I lost twenty lives.— Help! Help, ho! Help!  
200 The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder!

*Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO***MONTANO**

What is the matter? How now, general?

**EMILIA**

Oh, are you come, Iago? You have done well,  
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

**GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**EMILIA**

205 *(to IAGO)* Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.  
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false.  
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.  
Speak, for my heart is full.

**IAGO**

I told him what I thought, and told no more  
210 Than what he found himself was apt and true.

**EMILIA**

But did you ever tell him she was false?

**IAGO**

I did.

**EMILIA**

You told a lie, an odious, damnèd lie.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

Why are you repeating yourself, woman? I said your  
husband.

**EMILIA**

Oh, my mistress—a villain has played tricks with love. My  
husband said she was unfaithful!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, him, woman. I said "your husband"—do you  
understand the words? My friend, your husband, the  
honest, honest Iago.

**EMILIA**

If Iago said this, then let his malicious soul rot slowly day  
after day! He lies down to his heart. She was too attached to  
her filthy marriage to you to be unfaithful.

*OTHELLO draws his sword.***OTHELLO**

Ha!

**EMILIA**

Do your worst. This deed you have done is not justified. It is  
no more worthy of heaven than you were worthy of her.

**OTHELLO**

You'd better be quiet.

**EMILIA**

You don't have enough strength to do me half as much  
harm as I can endure. Oh, you fool! You idiot! You are as  
ignorant as dirt! You've done something so awful . . . I don't  
care about your sword. I'd spread the news of this even if I  
was killed twenty times. Help! Hey, help! The Moor has  
killed my mistress! Murder! Murder!

*MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO enter.***MONTANO**

What is the matter? What is going on, general?

**EMILIA**

Oh, you've come, Iago? You've done really well, since other  
men credit you for their murders .

**GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**EMILIA**

*[To IAGO]* Refute what this villain has said, if you are a man.  
He says that you told him his wife was unfaithful. I know  
you did not; you aren't that much of a villain. Speak, for my  
heart can't bear your silence any longer.

**IAGO**

I told him what I thought, and said no more than that which  
he himself found out to be true.

**EMILIA**

But did you ever tell him that she was unfaithful?

**IAGO**

I did.

**EMILIA**

You told a lie—a horrible, damned lie. I swear by my soul, it

Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.  
 215 She false with Cassio! Did you say with Cassio?

**IAGO**

With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

**EMILIA**

I will not charm my tongue, I am bound to speak.  
 My mistress here lies murdered in her bed—

**ALL**

Oh, heavens forbend!

**EMILIA**

220 And your reports have set the murder on.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stare not, masters, it is true, indeed.

**GRATIANO**

'Tis a strange truth.

**MONTANO**

Oh, monstrous act!

**EMILIA**

Villainy, villainy, villainy!  
 225 I think upon 't, I think I smell 't, Oh, villainy!  
 I thought so then, I'll kill myself for grief.  
 Oh, villainy, villainy!

**IAGO**

What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

**EMILIA**

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.  
 230 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.  
 Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

**OTHELLO**

Oh! Oh! Oh!

**EMILIA**

Nay, lay thee down and roar,  
 For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent  
 235 That e'er did lift up eye.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, she was foul!—  
 I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,  
 Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopped.  
 I know this act shows horrible and grim.

**GRATIANO**

Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead,  
 Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief  
 Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,  
 This sight would make him do a desperate turn,  
 Yea, curse his better angel from his side  
 245 And fall to reprobation.

**OTHELLO**

'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows  
 That she with Cassio hath the act of shame  
 A thousand times committed. Cassio confessed it,  
 And she did gratify his amorous works  
 250 With that recognizance and pledge of love  
 Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand,  
 It was a handkerchief, an antique token  
 My father gave my mother.

was a lie, a wicked lie. Desdemona, unfaithful with Cassio!  
 Did you say with Cassio?

**IAGO**

Yes, with Cassio, mistress. Now come on, hold your tongue.

**EMILIA**

I will not hold my tongue. I must speak. My mistress lies  
 here murdered in her bed—

**ALL**

Heaven forbid!

**EMILIA**

And the news you spread led to the murder.

**OTHELLO**

Don't look so amazed, gentlemen. It is really true.

**GRATIANO**

It's a strange truth.

**MONTANO**

What a monstrous act!

**EMILIA**

Wickedness, wickedness, wickedness! I think about it, and I  
 think I can smell it, oh wickedness! I suspected it earlier. I  
 could kill myself out of grief. Oh, wickedness, wickedness!

**IAGO**

What, are you crazy? I order you to go back home.

**EMILIA**

Good gentlemen, give me permission to speak. It is proper  
 for me to obey my husband, but not in this case. Maybe I  
 will never go home, Iago.

**OTHELLO**

Oh! Oh! Oh!

**EMILIA**

Yes, lie down and roar with grief, since you have killed the  
 sweetest innocent girl that ever lived.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, she was foul! I barely knew you, Uncle Gratiano, but  
 there lies your niece, whose life I have just recently stopped  
 with these very hands. I know this act seems horrible and  
 grim.

**GRATIANO**

Poor Desdemona! I am glad your father is dead. Your  
 marriage was painful to him, and his grief cut his life short.  
 If he were alive now, this sight would put him in a  
 downward spiral. Yes, he would curse his good conscience  
 and stoop to damnation.

**OTHELLO**

It is pitiful, but Iago knows that Desdemona had shamefully  
 cheated on me with Cassio a thousand times. Cassio  
 confessed it, and she repaid his love with a token, the  
 pledge of love that I first gave her. I saw it in his hand. It was  
 a handkerchief, an antique my father gave to my mother.

**EMILIA**

Oh, heaven! Oh, heavenly powers!

**IAGO**

255 Zounds, hold your peace.

**EMILIA**

'Twill out, 'twill out.—I peace?  
No, I will speak as liberal as the north.  
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,  
All, all cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

**IAGO**

260 Be wise, and get you home.

*Draws his sword*

**EMILIA**

I will not.

**GRATIANO**

Fie! Your sword upon a woman?

**EMILIA**

O thou dull Moor! That handkerchief thou speak'st of  
I found by fortune and did give my husband.  
265 For often, with a solemn earnestness—  
More than indeed belonged to such a trifle—  
He begged of me to steal it.

**IAGO**

Villainous whore!

**EMILIA**

270 She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it  
And I did give 't my husband.

**IAGO**

Filth, thou liest!

**EMILIA**

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.—  
(to *OTHELLO*)  
O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool  
275 Do with so good a wife?

**OTHELLO**

Are there no stones in heaven  
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!

*He runs at IAGO. IAGO stabs EMILIA*

**GRATIANO**

The woman falls! Sure he hath killed his wife.

**EMILIA**

Ay, ay. Oh, lay me by my mistress' side.

*Exit IAGO*

**GRATIANO**

280 He's gone, but his wife's killed.

**MONTANO**

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,  
Which I have recovered from the Moor.  
Come, guard the door without. Let him not pass,  
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,  
285 For 'tis a damned slave.

**EMILIA**

Oh God! Oh heavenly powers!

**IAGO**

Christ, keep quiet.

**EMILIA**

The truth will come out, the truth will come out. Me, be  
quiet? No, I will speak as freely as the north wind blows. I  
don't care if all angels and devils and humans cry out that I  
am shameful for disobeying my husband, I will still speak  
out.

**IAGO**

Be smart and go back home.

*IAGO draws his sword.*

**EMILIA**

I will not go.

**GRATIANO**

Shame! You draw your sword against a woman?

**EMILIA**

Oh, you stupid Moor! I found the handkerchief you speak  
of by chance, and gave it to my husband. For he often  
eagerly and earnestly begged me to steal it. He was more  
concerned about it than one would expect for such a little  
thing.

**IAGO**

Evil whore!

**EMILIA**

Did Desdemona give it to Cassio? No. I found it and gave it  
to my husband.

**IAGO**


Filth, you are lying!


**EMILIA**

I swear by heaven, I do not lie, I do not, gentlemen.

[*To OTHELLO*] Oh, you murdering fool! How did such a fool  
as you get such a good wife?

**OTHELLO**

Doesn't Jove  have any thunderbolts he can use to strike  
down this complete villain?

 *Othello refers to the mythological  
god of thunder whom we have seen  
referenced before in this play.*

*OTHELLO runs at IAGO. IAGO stabs EMILIA.*

**GRATIANO**

The woman has fallen down! He's surely killed his own wife.

**EMILIA**

Yes, yes. Oh, lay me down next to Desdemona.

*IAGO exits.*

**GRATIANO**

He's run off, and his wife has been killed.

**MONTANO**

He is a terrible villain. Take this weapon that I have  
obtained from the Moor. Go, guard the outer door. Don't let  
Iago get out. Kill him instead. I'll chase after the same  
villain, for he is a damned scoundrel.

*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO***OTHELLO**

I am not valiant neither,  
But ever puny whipster gets my sword.  
But why should honor outlive honesty?  
Let it go all.

**EMILIA**

- 290 What did thy song bode, lady?  
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.  
And die in music.  
(*singing*) Willow, willow, willow—  
Moor, she was chaste, she loved thee, cruel Moor.  
295 So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.  
So speaking as I think, alas, I die.

*Dies***OTHELLO**

I have another weapon in this chamber,  
It was a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper.  
Oh, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

**GRATIANO**

- 300 [*within*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear.  
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

**OTHELLO**

Look in upon me then and speak with me,  
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Enter GRATIANO***GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**OTHELLO**

- 305 Behold, I have a weapon.  
A better never did itself sustain  
Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day  
That with this little arm and this good sword  
I have made my way through more impediments  
310 Than twenty times your stop. But, oh, vain boast!  
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.  
Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed.  
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,  
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
315 Do you go back dismayed? 'tis a lost fear.  
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,  
And he retires. Where should Othello go?—  
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starred wench,  
Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt  
320 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven  
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,  
Even like thy chastity. O cursed, cursed slave!  
Whip me, ye devils,  
From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
325 Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulfur,  
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—  
Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! Oh! Oh!

*Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO carried in a chair, and officers  
with IAGO, prisoner*

**LODOVICO**

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

**OTHELLO**

That's he that was Othello. Here I am.

**LODOVICO**

- 330 Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

*MONTANO and GRATIANO exit.***OTHELLO**

I'm not very strong if some puny little man can take my  
sword from me. But then again, why should my honor live  
on after my honesty is dead? I'll let it all go.

**EMILIA**

What did your song foretell, my lady? Listen, can you hear  
me? I will be like a swan and die while singing.  
[*Singing*] Willow, willow, willow— Moor, she was chaste and  
she loved you, cruel Moor. I speak the truth, so my soul will  
go to heaven. And so, alas, I die—speaking my honest  
thoughts.

*EMILIA dies.***OTHELLO**

I have another weapon in this room. It is a sword from  
Spain, hardened in an icy stream. Oh, here it is. Uncle, I  
must come out of the room.

**GRATIANO**

[*Offstage*] If you try to get by, you'll pay for it. You have no  
weapon, and so you'll surely get hurt.

**OTHELLO**

Then come in here and speak with me. Or, unarmed as I am,  
I will attack you.

*GRATIANO enters.***GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**OTHELLO**

Look, I have a weapon. A better sword has never graced a  
soldier's scabbard. I remember times when, with this little  
arm and good sword of mine, I made my way through  
obstacles more than twenty times as tough as you. But  
what a pointless boast that is! Who can control his fate? I  
can't now. Don't worry, even though I am carrying a  
weapon. This is the end of my journey, the end of the rope,  
and my final destination. Are you backing off, frightened?  
You have nothing to fear. You could strike at me with  
nothing more than a reed, and I'd draw back. Where could  
Othello run to? Do you see how you look now? Oh, you  
woman with an unlucky fate, as pale as your white  
nightgown! When we meet on Judgment Day, this look of  
yours will throw my soul out of heaven and into hell, where  
devils will snatch it. You are cold, my girl, cold like your  
chastity, which never gave in to the heat of desire. Oh  
cursed, cursed villain! Devils, whip me until I no longer see  
this horrible sight! Blow me around in winds, burn me in  
sulfur flames, wash me in gulfs of liquid fire! Oh,  
Desdemona! Desdemona! Dead! Oh! Oh!

*LODOVICO, MONTANO, and CASSIO (carried in a chair) enter  
with officers bringing IAGO as a prisoner.*

**LODOVICO**

Where is this impulsive and most unfortunate man?

**OTHELLO**

You speak of Othello. Here I am.

**LODOVICO**

And where is that poisonous snake? Bring the villain



*IAGO is brought forward*

**OTHELLO**

I look down towards his feet, but that's a fable.  
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

*Stabs IAGO*

**LODOVICO**

Wrench his sword from him.

*They take OTHELLO's sword*

**IAGO**

I bleed, sir, but not killed.

**OTHELLO**

335 I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live,  
For in my sense 'tis happiness to die.

**LODOVICO**

O thou Othello, thou was once so good,  
Fall'n in the practice of a cursèd slave,  
What shall be said to thee?

**OTHELLO**

340 Why, anything.  
An honorable murderer, if you will,  
For naught I did in hate, but all in honor.

**LODOVICO**

This wretch hath part confessed his villainy.  
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

**OTHELLO**

345 Ay.

**CASSIO**

Dear general, I never gave you cause.

**OTHELLO**

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.  
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil  
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

**IAGO**

350 Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.  
From this time forth I never will speak word.

**LODOVICO**

What, not to pray?

**GRATIANO**

Torments will ope your lips.

**OTHELLO**

Well, thou dost best.

**LODOVICO**

355 Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,  
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter  
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,  
And here another. The one of them imports  
The death of Cassio to be undertook  
360 By Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, villain!

forward.

*IAGO is brought forward.*

**OTHELLO**

I see his feet, so it must just be a fairy tale that the devil has  
hooves. If you are a devil, then I cannot kill you.

*OTHELLO stabs IAGO.*

**LODOVICO**

Take his sword away from him.

*They take OTHELLO's sword away from him.*

**IAGO**

I am bleeding, but I haven't been killed, sir.

**OTHELLO**

Good. I want you to live, because for me death is sweet  
now.

**LODOVICO**

Oh, Othello, you used to be so good, and now you've fallen  
under the control of a cursed villain. What can I say to you?

**OTHELLO**

Anything. Call me an honorable murderer, if you wish, since  
I didn't do anything out of hate but instead out of a sense of  
honor.

**LODOVICO**

This wretched man has confessed to some of his evil  
doings. Did you and he conspire to kill Cassio?

**OTHELLO**

Yes.

**CASSIO**

Dear general, I gave you no reason to kill me.

**OTHELLO**

I believe you, and I ask for your forgiveness. Will you please  
ask that half-devil why he has tricked me and ruined my  
soul and body?

**IAGO**

Ask me nothing. You know what you know. From now on I  
will never speak again.

**LODOVICO**

Not even to pray?

**GRATIANO**

We can make you speak with torture.

**OTHELLO**

Do your best, then.

**LODOVICO**

Sir, let me explain what has happened, which I don't think  
you know. Here is a letter that was found in dead Roderigo's  
pocket. And here is another. One of them says that Roderigo  
should kill Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, you villain!

**CASSIO**

Most heathenish and most gross!

**LODOVICO**

Now here's another discontented paper  
Found in his pocket too, and this, it seems,  
365 Roderigo meant to have sent this damnèd villain  
But that, belike, Iago in the interim  
Came in and satisfied him.

**OTHELLO**

O thou pernicious caitiff!  
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief  
370 That was my wife's?

**CASSIO**

I found it in my chamber,  
And he himself confessed but even now  
That there he dropped it for a special purpose  
Which wrought to his desire.

**OTHELLO**

375 O fool! fool! fool!

**CASSIO**

There is besides in Roderigo's letter  
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him  
Brave me upon the watch, whereon it came  
That I was cast. And even but now he spake,  
380 After long seeming dead—Iago hurt him,  
Iago set him on.

**LODOVICO**

(*to OTHELLO*) You must forsake this room and go with us.  
Your power and your command is taken off  
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,  
385 If there be any cunning cruelty  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest  
Till that the nature of your fault be known  
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring him away.

**OTHELLO**

390 Soft you, a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,  
395 Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well.  
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,  
Perplexed in the extreme. Of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
400 Richer than all his tribe. Of one whose subdued eyes,  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this,  
And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
405 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him, thus.

*Stabs himself*

**LODOVICO**

Oh, bloody period!

**GRATIANO**

410 All that is spoke is marred.

**OTHELLO**

[*To DESDEMONA*]

**CASSIO**

Filthiest heathen!

**LODOVICO**

And now here's the other paper from his pocket, an angry  
letter. It seems Roderigo meant to send it to Iago, but the  
damned villain likely killed him before he had the chance.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, you malicious wretch! Cassio, how did you come across  
my wife's handkerchief?

**CASSIO**

I found it in my room, and Iago himself just confessed that  
he left it there on purpose as part of his plan.

**OTHELLO**

I'm a fool! A fool! A fool!

**CASSIO**

Moreover, Roderigo's letter describes how Iago told him to  
offend me while I was on guard duty, the thing that made  
me lose my title of lieutenant. And just now, even though he  
seemed to be dead, Roderigo spoke and said that Iago  
tricked him and urged him to on.

**LODOVICO**

[*To OTHELLO*] You must leave this room and come with us.  
You have been stripped of your power and command, and  
Cassio now rules over Cyprus. As for this scoundrel, he will  
get whatever clever, cruel torture we can devise to cause  
him a lot of pain for a long time. You will stay a prisoner  
until the Venetian government hears of your crime. Come  
on, bring him away.

**OTHELLO**

Wait, let me say a word or two before you go. I have served  
the government of Venice well, and they know it. But  
nothing more about that. I beg you, in your letters, when  
you relate the story of these unfortunate deeds, speak of  
me as I am. Don't downplay my crime, but don't exaggerate  
it maliciously. Speak of me as a man who loved not wisely,  
but too much; a man who was not easily made jealous, but  
was manipulated and tricked into extreme jealousy; a man  
who behaved like a vile Indian <sup>2</sup> that throws away a pearl  
worth more than his whole tribe. Speak of me as a man  
who is not used to crying, but whose eyes now drop tears  
like the Arabian trees that drip with medicinal sap. Write  
this, and also say that one time in Aleppo a malicious Turk  
wearing a turban beat a Venetian, flouting the Venetian  
state, and so I grabbed the circumcised Turkish dog by his  
throat and struck him down like this.

*OTHELLO stabs himself.*

**LODOVICO**

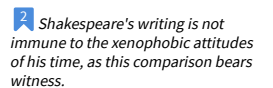
What a bloody conclusion!

**GRATIANO**

Everything he said is tarnished by what he's done.

**OTHELLO**

[*To DESDEMONA*] I kissed you before I killed you. Now that I

 Shakespeare's writing is not immune to the xenophobic attitudes of his time, as this comparison bears witness.

I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,  
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

*Kisses DESDEMONA, dies*

**CASSIO**

415 This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon,  
For he was great of heart.

**LODOVICO**

*(to IAGO)*

O Spartan dog,  
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea,  
Look on the tragic loading of this bed.  
420 This is thy work. The object poisons sight,  
Let it be hid.— Gratiano, keep the house  
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
For they succeed on you.— T o you, lord governor,  
Remains the censure of this hellish villain:  
425 The time, the place, the torture. Oh, enforce it!  
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state  
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

*Exeunt*

am killing myself, I must die with a kiss.

*OTHELLO kisses DESDEMONA and dies.*

**CASSIO**

I feared this would happen because he was a brave man,  
but I didn't think he had a weapon.

**LODOVICO**

*[To IAGO]* You cruel dog, look at the tragic contents of this  
bed—worse than pain, starvation, or the tempestuous sea.  
This is your doing. It hurts to look at this. Cover the bodies.

*[To GRATIANO]* Gratiano, guard the house and take the  
Moor's possessions, for you inherit them all.

*[To CASSIO]* And you, my lord governor, will decide how to  
punish this hellish villain. You can pick the time, the place,  
and the kind of torture. And then enforce the punishment! I  
will go to a ship immediately, and tell the Venetian  
government about these tragic events with a heavy heart.

*They exit.*

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